



"God's Word, the Light of Life"



a Bible Study for every day of the year
First Baptist Church, North Conway, NH, Ladies' Bible Studies 2022

“God’s Word, the Light of Life”

“Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” Psalm 119:105

Welcome to a year of daily Bible study developed with women in mind!

The theme for our work this year is, “God’s Word, the Light of Life.” This theme was chosen to fit with one verse from the Bible, Psalm 119:105 *“Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”*

This verse has been a favorite for believers for centuries, but what does it really mean? In order to find out, we will be taking an intensive look at the five main words used in this verse: word, lamp, feet, light, and path. When we get to the other side of our exhaustive study of each of these, we will put them back together and see that God is, truly, the Light of Life! I hope you are excited about all the amazing things God is going to teach us from His Word. Time in His Word is never wasted and is of tremendous value in this life and for all of eternity.

The first word we will look at is “Word” (confusing, huh!). There are, of course, hundreds and hundreds of Bible references with “word” in them, but in this first section, we will focus only on those found in Psalm 119. Why Psalm 119? Well, for one thing, our theme verse is found here. For another, the entire focus of Psalm 119 is God’s amazing Word and how much we should cherish it and appreciate it.

Psalm 119 is, as I’m sure you’re aware, an alphabetical poem—in Hebrew, of course. The Hebrew alphabet has 22 letters and the psalmist wrote 22 sections in this psalm, each beginning with a successive letter in the Hebrew alphabet. This was to help students memorize it, but some scholars have suggested that the author was so awe-filled at the theme of God’s Word that nothing less than the full range of language would suffice to talk about it. Psalm 119 is the longest psalm as well as the longest chapter in the Bible.

There are many verses in Psalm 119 that use our word, “word” and I will note which they are at the beginning of each section. I will also note the Hebrew alphabet letter that begins each section (this Hebrew alphabet letter does not correspond with the letter beginning the word in English, so don’t look for it!).

PLEASE NOTE: questions and comments are taken from the English Standard Version (courtesy of biblegateway.com). It is okay to use any translation you want, but not all questions may make as much sense from another translation.

Fact: it is actually very helpful to use many translations when studying the Bible. Sometimes one translation might make better sense to us than another. You should be aware, though, that NONE of our English translations are “THE” inspired one! The inspired Word of God is the original Hebrew (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament) documents. Having said that, some of the newer translations (NOT paraphrases, such as “The Message”) are more accurate, having used better copies to work from than some of our “older” English translations. Even though we are using English translations of Hebrew and Greek documents, it is STILL the Word of God and is therefore authoritative and able to teach us, instruct us, and help us live lives that bring God great glory.

Bible Study Questions Hack: there is a simple trick to get all the answers “correct”: simply write down what the Bible verse noted says! This Bible study doesn’t really have “opinion” questions, because the only opinion that really matters is God’s.

Feel free to contact me with questions, comments, or concerns at writeloriebrown@gmail.com. You can find tremendous resources on our church website, firstbaptistnorthconway.org and on our YouTube channel: FBC North Conway (where we also livestream all our services).

By His Grace, Lorie Brown
January 1, 2022

Saturday, January 1, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Psalm 119:1-8 (ALEPH) (This is the only section that does not contain our word, “word.”)

- v.1 Blessed are they whose way is _____, who walk in the law of the _____.
- v.2 Blessed are those who _____ His testimonies, who _____ Him with their _____ heart.
- v.3 who also do no _____, but walk in his ways!
- v.4 You have commanded Your precepts to be kept _____.
- v.5 Oh that _____ ways may be _____ in keeping Your statutes!
- v.6 then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes _____ on _____ Your commandments.
- v.7 I will _____ You with an upright heart, when I learn Your righteous rules.
- v.8 I will keep Your _____; do not utterly forsake me!

Something to Think About: Verses 1-3 are the introduction to the entire chapter. They remind us that joy (true joy, not “just” happiness) comes from obeying God - and that our whole-hearted obedience to God is essential in our walk as children of God. We can (and must!) pursue this with ALL our heart. We must remain steadfast. That is, to keep on keeping on. Faithfulness isn’t defined as perfection, but in getting up every morning (and every time we fall or fail), confessing our sin to God, then leaning on Him to try once again to honor and please Him in all ways and at all times.

I love the words in this section that speak of excellence and continuing effort: keeping, seeking, diligence, steadfastness. These are all great “ways” to choose to live each and every day.

We are sometimes guilty of not committing fully to God. If we want God’s richest blessing, we must be!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Sunday, January 2, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Psalm 119:9-16 (BETH) (“word” found in v.9, 11, 16)

- v.9 There is a way to keep our way pure, what is it? _____
- v.10 What is the right level of commitment of obedience to God? _____
- v.11 There is a weapon available to us to help us to not sin. What is it? _____
- v.12 Who can teach us God’s statutes? _____
- v. 13 What can we use to talk about God’s excellence? _____
- v.14 God’s testimonies are compared to what? _____
- v.15 Our eyes and _____ help us think about God’s precepts and ways.
- v.16 What must we not forget? _____

Something to Think About: The idea of life-hacks and “secrets” to success are pretty rampant on YouTube and other areas where “influencers” are popular. People seem to want to know how to do things, how to do them well, and if possible, how to do them quicker and with less effort on our parts. Well, God WANTS us to love His Word, to rely upon it, and to use it to know how to live in a way that brings Him honor and glory and helps us to be becoming more like Christ. Does he provide a “hack” to help us? You bet He does! The way to know God’s Word better is to read it MORE, to think about it constantly, and to delight in doing what it says.

It is really easy to sin. It is really hard to NOT sin. But, it can be done (God said so!). God gave us His words in written form to help us (plus the strength of the Person of the Holy Spirit inside us!). I guess the next question is simple: are we doing it? Are we loving, treasuring, meditating on, and using His Word?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Monday, January 3, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Psalm 119:17-24 (GIMEL) (“word” found in v. 17)

-v.17 What does the psalmist want to do?

-v. 18 Write out this wonderful prayer:

-v.19 What does the psalmist NOT want hidden? _____

-v.20 What does he long for? _____

-v.21 What does God do to the insolent and accursed? _____

-v. 24 God’s testimonies are a _____ and are his _____.

Something to Think About: Psalm 119:18 is one of my all-time favorites. It is a wonderful prayer to pray every single time we open God’s Word, every time we sit in a Bible study, and every time we listen to our pastor preach to us. It is a plea to God Himself, the AUTHOR of the Bible, to help us see what we need to see, to recognize the “beauty” and delight that is found in living according to what God wants, to understand the truths found within its pages and to apply them to the circumstances of our lives.

I love, too, the enthusiasm and focus of the author. Among other adjectives, he exclaims that God’s commands are his “delight.” May we also choose to look at all the do’s and don’ts of Scripture as something wondrous, delightful, and worth poring over every single day with eagerness and joy!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, January 4, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Psalm 119:25-32 (DALETH) ("word" is found in v.25, 28)

-v.25 When we are feeling discouraged or under pressure, what can revive us?

-v.28 When we are weary and overwhelmed, what can strengthen us?

-v.29 The biblical remedy to defeat false ways is _____?

-v.32 When we do obey God, what happens to our heart?

Something to Think About: When sad, overwhelmed, oppressed, or otherwise upset, we will try things like eating junk food, going out to buy something new, plopping down in front of the computer, or calling a friend to gripe. The ONLY thing that will truly set our heart free is God's Word. Turn to it FIRST.

Another super-favorite verse of mine from Psalm 119 is verse 30, "*I have chosen the way of faithfulness,*" or (in a paraphrase) "I have made the determination to remain faithful to God day in, day out, no matter what." I pray that is the heart's cry of every one of us today! Prayerfully evaluate whether you can claim Psalm 119:30 as your own. If not, be sure to spend some time in prayer asking God for help to WANT to be faithful, then to carry it out (He WILL help you!). If you can say that you have chosen the way of faithfulness, thank the Father for this precious truth, then ask His help to excel still more.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, January 5, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Psalm 119:33-40 (HE) ("word" found in v.38)

-v.33 Teach me, O Lord, the _____ of Your statutes; and I will keep it to the _____

-v.34 What will the psalmist do with understanding? _____

- v.35 _____ me in the path of Your commandments, for I _____ in it.
- v.36 What is the wrong thing to “incline” our heart to? _____
- v.37 Turn my eyes away from looking at _____ things; and give me life in Your ways.
- v.39 God’s rules are _____.

Something to Think About: Here the psalmist points out the danger and futility of pursuing money and financial gain as an end-goal. In fact, every pursuit that is separate from treasuring and obeying God is “worthless.”

I think, too, that the psalmist is pointing out that in order to learn more about God and be becoming like Him, we need to root out the bad (all that is UNgodly). And, of course, the way to know what is godly and what is ungodly is to keep studying Scripture to find out what pleases God and what displeases Him. The cool thing in all this is that the more we desire to know and obey God wholeheartedly, the more He reveals Himself to us and shows us how to refine our thinking to be more in line with His thinking and to conform more to Him and less to the world.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Thursday, January 6, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Psalm 119:41-48 (WAW) (“word” v.41, 42, 43)

-v.41 What kind of love comes from God? _____

-v.42 What does trusting in God’s Word allow us to do concerning people who taunt us? _____

-v.44 Is there a time limit on obeying God in our lives? _____

-v.45 How is the path described for those who seek to obey God’s precepts? _____

-v.46 Should shame ever be in the picture when we talk about God? _____

-v.48 “...and I will _____ on Your statutes.”

Something to Think About: Have you ever asked God for help to love His Word? I think that many of us are too often guilty of forgetting to talk to God about some pretty basic things. We definitely talk to Him when we are in a pickle, when a loved one is dealing with a crisis, or when something has rocked our little world. But, do we give as much attention to the everyday? To the mundane? Things like knowing what is the right thing to eat for lunch? The right outfit to wear to church? The best way to use our time that day? Do we ask God for help to LOVE His Word? To enjoy Bible reading and listening to sermons? To delight in thanking Him for ALL things, not just the ones we like?

There’s a pretty good life hack on this topic in this section of Psalm 119. Did you see it? To love God’s Word, we need to meditate on it. AND because God is so awesome, WHEN we meditate on God’s Word, we come to love it. In other words? Just do it. Just CHOOSE to read Scripture, meditate on it (turn it over in your mind, thinking about it from all angles), appreciate it, thank God for it, determine to live it out in your life. When you do, you will also find yourself loving it—and eager to read more. Give it a try!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Friday, January 7, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Psalm 119:49-56 (ZAYIN) ("word" v.49, 50)

-v.49 What has given the author hope? _____

-v.50 God's promise of life provides _____ in his affliction.

-v.54 What is the theme of the psalmist's song? _____

-v.55 When does he remember God's name and find help? _____

Something to Think About: I would be surprised to hear that any of us have NOT had a time in the night when we benefited from remembering God's goodness, when we were comforted by counting our blessings and naming them one by one, and when we were calmed by thinking about our trustworthy, compassionate, all-powerful and all-loving Father. The daytime is a great time to think long and hard about our incredible God, but spending time in the dark of the night—just you and Him—can be utterly precious and beneficial.

It may seem a little odd to consider, but we can LEARN to "remember" to think about God, praise Him, and trust in Him in prayer when we wake up in the night. In fact, any habit worth having is worth putting time and effort into. So, during the daytime, ask God to help you remember to meditate on Him and His Word should you wake in the night; to spend a few moments in prayer, entrusting "everything" to Him. It may be a sleepy prayer on your part, but in God's eyes, it will be a precious prayer!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Saturday, January 8, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Psalm 119:57-64 (HETH) (“word” v.57, 58)

-v.57 The Lord is our _____.

-v.59 When I think on my ways, I turn my _____ to Your _____.

-v.60 I _____ and do not _____ to _____ Your commandments.

-v.63 Who are the author’s companions? _____

-v.64 What is full of God’s steadfast love? _____

Something to Think About: When we are able to fully grasp just how wicked our hearts really are (Jeremiah 17:9), and subsequently our “ways,” we should want to run—not walk—to God’s Word to find out how to obey Him and do right. Only then can He use us and bless us fully.

Another thing that challenged me from this section was the reminder to choose friends who love and obey God wholeheartedly. Stated the other way around, while we may have many acquaintances who are unsaved—or even saved, but not living faithfully for God—the people who we hang out with, listen to, and who impact our thinking and behavior ought to be obedient Christians. We can be edified (built up in the things of the Lord) by godly believers, but we will be distracted and misdirected by those who have other allegiances or goals. Like the psalmist, our LOVE ought to be obedience to God’s Word at all times and in all ways.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Sunday, January 9, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Psalm 119:65-72 (TETH) (“word” v.65, 67)

-v.65 The psalmist calls himself God’s _____.

-v.66 What two things can God teach us? _____

-v.67 What did affliction teach the psalmist? _____

-v.68 God is _____ and what He does is _____.

-v.71 How can afflictions be considered good? _____

-v.72 What is better than gold and silver? _____

Something to Think About: Verse 68 says, “*You are good and what You do is good.*” This simple truth is life changing when we believe it and live our lives based on it. For example, when something happens that rocks the very foundation of our world, we may want to rant and rave, to “blame” God and hold a grudge against Him, to feel like a victim who has been treated unfairly and harshly. However, if we believe God when He tells us that He is good and all He does is good, then our very definition of what “good” is HAS TO BE what God has allowed and entrusted to us—even the hard things. Taken further, when we believe God (that He is good and all He does is good), not only will our world NOT be destroyed by a crisis, we can have peace in the midst of storms, joy in the face of sorrow, and confidence in the future, uncertain as it might appear at

that time. Does that mean we don't weep buckets when a loved one dies? Of course not! Sorrow IS a part of this life, but it's not God Who deserves the blame for that. It is us! It is mankind's sin that brought sin, destruction, and horrors to the perfect world God created for us; that marred the perfect relationship God created for us to have with Himself. The ugliness in our world teaches us many critical truths. One of the biggies is to remind us that this world is NOT our home. Our real home, our permanent home, is completely free from sin, sorrow, suffering, and anything not "good." Our real home is where we will reside with our good, faithful, merciful, gracious, and loving Father.

For today, for the time we spend in these bodies on this fallen earth, never forget that God is good and all He does is good. Make this your #1 daily praise.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Monday, January 10, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Reread Psalm 119:65-72

-Verses 67 and 71 give a great reason for the "why" of hard times. What is it? _____

-Read Proverbs 3:11-12. What does God's discipline show us? _____

-Hebrews 12:5-13 is another great passage that deals with the joy of discipline. Read it.

-What does God say in verse 10 as to why God disciplines us? _____

-If we learn our lesson, what does discipline produce? (v.11) _____

Something to Think About: It is very true that God uses the Bible and preaching and teaching from the Bible to point out sin in our lives, but have you ever thought that God also uses regular everyday people too? Maybe the next time someone challenges us about something, we should think about it is as also being from God. In fact, a good practice to have when someone tells us something that we've done that they didn't like, is to not jump right in with justification or excuses, but to ask for time to prayerfully consider what they have brought to our attention. It's true that very often someone has seen something and completely misunderstood the entire thing. Other times, though, there may be a thread of truth in what they have said. The best way to handle accusations is to spend time in God's Word and in prayer looking for ANYTHING that might not align closely to His standard so that we can make that right with Him and with whomever we may have wronged or caused to stumble.

All affliction—from within or without—should cause us to turn even more closely to God's Word for truth and for instruction in godly living.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, January 11, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Psalm 119:73-80 (YODH) ("word" v.74, 76)

-v.73 God made us. He formed us. What else can He give us and why? _____

-Write out Philippians 1:6

Something to Think About: The same God Who created us also helps us understand and obey His Word (v.73). This is a pretty huge and amazing truth! We must never believe satan's lie that we are all alone in our struggles here on earth. Jesus created us, died to save us from eternal damnation, and rose to give us new life—and He helps us every single step of the way in becoming more like Himself.

I love, too, that God WILL NOT give up on us until He has done what He intends to do in our hearts and lives! He has promised to "bring us to completion." What an exciting prospect! The God Who created us, died to save us from eternal damnation, and rose to give us new life in Christ ALSO helps us to mature in our walk with Him, helping us to resemble satan and the world around us less and less and to resemble Jesus Christ more and more! This, of course, doesn't happen in a vacuum. God's Word provides many treasures of knowledge about our magnificent God—and how we can please Him, learn to see life from His point of view, and otherwise come to resemble the citizens of heaven which we ARE.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, January 12, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Re-read Psalm 119:73-80. Many verses here talk about developing and maintaining an excellent testimony. Summarize what these verses say:

-v.74 _____

-v.78 _____

-v.79 _____

-v.80 _____

Something to Think About: A blessing (and challenge!) found in this section is that what we say and do (our “testimony”) can help others know how to also live faithfully and wholeheartedly for God. Conversely, when we are choosing to live for self instead of God, our testimony can cause others to stumble or turn away from God. What we do ALWAYS matters. It ALWAYS affects others in some way or another. How much better to wake up every day leaning on God for help to understand and obey His Word, realizing that this will not only bring glory to God, but might edify another believer or cause an unbeliever to want to know more about Christ!

I especially like the last phrase of verse 78 (“*as for me, I will meditate on Your precepts.*”). Regardless of the behavior of others, WE can determine that we will meditate on Scripture and do right according to what God defines as right.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Thursday, January 13, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Psalm 119:81-88 (KAPH) (“word” v.81,82)

-v.81 Even though the psalmist is feeling overwhelmed, in what does he hope (trust)?

-v.83 He is still distraught and oppressed, but refuses to forget what? _____

-v.88 How is God’s love defined? _____

-v.88 What final thing does the author promise God? _____

Something to Think About: Basically, the psalmist is in a bad place and is calling on God for help. At the same time, however, he refuses to turn aside from trust and obedience. He realizes that God is the only Source of truth and true help. Oh, that we would be as committed when our days are rough and challenging!

I read that this section can be summarized by the plea, “Help me, God!” This reference source then noted just how often we hear this phrase used casually, flippantly, or even by way of a curse! THE only hope any of us have to live righteously and in a God-honoring way is for God to help us. May we never ask God’s help in a humorous, thoughtless, or flippant way! May we, however, ALWAYS seek His help every minute of every day for every single thing!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Friday, January 14, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Psalm 119:89-96 (LAMEDH) (“word” v.89)

-v.89 _____, O Lord, Your word is _____ in the heavens.

-v.90 Your _____ endures to _____ generations; You have _____ the earth, and it stands fast.

-v.91 By Your _____ they stand this day, for all things are Your _____.

-v.96 I have seen a _____ to all perfection, but Your _____ is exceedingly broad.

Something to Think About: It is easy to get caught up in our day-to-day struggles and forget the eternal picture. Lift up your head! The here and now is the smallest drop in the bucket of the eternal glories God has planned for us!

Spend some time thanking and praising God that:

-His Word is firmly fixed in the heavens.

-His faithfulness endures to all generations.

-He has established the earth and it stands fast.

-He is the Master of all things.

-His Word is a delight.

-His Word gives life.

-His Word saves us.

-He helps us stand up to our enemies.

-He is perfect; His Word is perfect.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Saturday, January 15, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Psalm 119:97-104 (MEM) ("word" v.101, 103)

-v.97 How can we develop a deep love for God's Word? _____

-v.99 How can we gain insight? _____

-v.100 How can we have more understanding? _____

-v.103 What is the result of spending "much time" in Scripture? _____

Something to Think About: Do you ever struggle with feelings of inferiority? That you are maybe not as smart as most of the people around you? I do—and I suspect many people feel that way. But, fellow child of God, there is a way we can KNOW critical truths and BE STRONG in our convictions and behaviors! It is by simply opening God's Word, reading it, trusting it, and obeying it. When we CHOOSE to love learning so we can come to honor God more and more year by year, God does marvelous things in us and through us. There is no cap to what wonderful things He wants to show us! We're the ones who either commit to loving God's Word—or not.

The beginning of wisdom, the growth of wisdom and the reward of wisdom are all found in Scripture! Is your Sourcebook of wisdom dusty or not often used? Today is a good day to change that forever.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Sunday, January 16, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Psalm 119:105-112 (NUN) ("word" v.105, 107)

-v.105 Your word is a _____ to my _____ and a _____ to my _____

-v.106 What is the psalmist promising to do? _____

-v.108 Who does he ask for instruction? _____

-v.111 Your testimonies are my _____ forever, for they are the _____ of my heart.

-v.112 I _____ my heart to perform Your statutes _____, to the end.

Something to Think About: We often give up on things that are too hard, claiming that we "can't" do it. However, if we're honest, there are LOTS of things that we enjoy and are determined to do or obtain and we persevere at them until we achieve them. It is a decision that we have "set our heart" on. Above and beyond

any other determination we make, reading, loving, and obeying God's Word ought to be an "I WILL!"

Don't miss, though, the blessed truth of verse 105 in this thought! We WILL need God's direction, guidance, and "light" along the journey of a life lived faithfully for God. His Word, the Bible, is the lamp we need to show us where to place our feet and the light to show us the right path. God's Word is THE Guidebook that is indispensable to us all!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Monday, January 17, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Psalm 119:113-120 (SAMEKH) ("word" v.114, 116)

-v.113 I hate:

I love:

-v.114 You are my _____ and my _____. I _____ in Your _____.

-v.115 The psalmist wanted evildoers to go away so he could _____ the commandments of God.

-v.116 Uphold me according to Your _____.

-v.118 God _____ all who go astray from His statutes.

Something to Think About: *"Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways."* James 1:2-8

James 1:2-8 addresses being double-minded, also mentioned in verse 113 of today's section. Here's the long and short of it: when we ask God for wisdom and He gives it to us, our job is to then do it. A double-minded person feels he has the right to think about it and choose for himself whether to do what he wants or obey God. This attitude does not please God and will not be blessed by Him. It is never appropriate, wise, or obedient to question what God has said to do, to only partially obey what He has said to do, or to alter what He says in a way that makes it more appealing to us.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, January 18, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Psalm 119:121-128 (AYIN) ("word" v.123)

-v.123 What does the psalmist long for? _____

-v.125 What does he ask for—and why? _____

-v.127 I love _____.

-v.128 I hate _____.

Something to Think About: There is a very definite right and wrong. Don't let anyone tell you differently. How do I know? Because God says so. God—the Creator—made up the rules. Our job is to not only obey them, but to love them and see great value in them.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, January 19, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Psalm 119:129-136 (PE) ("word" v.130,133)

-Write out verse 130:

-This verse seems especially important to our study because it is another reference to both light and God's Word in one verse (as in Psalm 119:105).

-What gives light? _____

-What else does it give? _____

Something to Think About: When things seem dark and un-understandable, go to the living, breathing, light-filled Word of God for understanding and illumination.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Thursday, January 20, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Re-read Psalm 119:129-136

-v.129 Why should we obey God's statutes? _____

-v.132 What does God always do for those who love His name? _____

-v.133 Can we pray for help to not sin? _____

-v.136 What should cause us sorrow? _____

Something to Think About: God wants us to have a heart of compassion for those who don't know Him and who aren't living for Him. Is there someone He is laying on your heart to pray for?

I recently read a novel where the main character was forever impacted by someone who had the conviction that no one comes into our lives without a reason—and that if and when we notice someone (even for just a minute), we have been given a chance to influence them for Christ. It might be just a smile and a nod, it might be taking the time to see how they are (and really listening to the answer), it might be to ask if there's something specific we can pray for on their behalf, it might be sharing a Bible verse or truth that blessed and helped us—and it might be being brave and telling someone that they need the Lord, why, and how to belong to Him.

We're all only given one go around in this life. We shouldn't want to waste even one second of living for the Lord. Recognizing that living for the Lord almost always involves other people, we ought to be in constant prayer that we honor God in our attitudes and actions and that we encourage, edify, and point others to Christ in all our interactions.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Friday, January 21, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Psalm 119:137-144 (TSADHE) (“word” v.139, 140)

-v.137 God’s rules are _____.

-v.139 What upsets the psalmist? _____

-v.140 What does he love? _____

-v.142 God’s righteousness is _____. His law is _____.

-v.144 What is he praying for? _____

Something to Think About: The psalmist seems to be pointing out some contrasts here. For example, he realizes that he is “small,” perhaps meaning insignificant or even not very smart. BUT, he also points out that he doesn’t need to be amazing or wise, he simply needs to trust God and prove his love by obeying God’s Word. We may be a mess, but our God is PERFECT.

There’s also a contrast between those who love God’s Word and love obeying it—and those who make fun of committed Christians. We sure get that in today’s world! Sometimes even from other believers! In the end, we will all stand before our Savior face to face, and how WE loved Him, obeyed Him, and remained faithful to Him will be what matters—not if we did it alongside many others or completely alone.

God’s Word is right, trustworthy, thoroughly tested, true, and—hopefully—our greatest delight.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Saturday, January 22, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Psalm 119:145-152 (QOPH) (“word” v.147)

-v.145 With my _____ heart I cry. . .

-v.146 I call to you. . . that I may _____ Your testimonies.

-v.147 I rise before _____ and cry for help; I _____ in Your words.

-v.148 What time of day is the psalmist praying and meditating on God’s Word? _____

Something to Think About: Some time ago I was challenged with the idea that maybe insomnia or periods of wakefulness were not merely a trial to be endured, but an opportunity from God to talk with Him. Maybe He is bringing someone to your mind that He wants you to pray for. Maybe there is something in your life that He wants you to confess and get rid of. Maybe He just wants to hear you praise Him for the countless ways He has shown mercy in your life. Nighttime can be a special time to draw closer to God.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Sunday, January 23, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Psalm 119:153-160 (RESH) ("word" v.154, 158, 160)

-v.156 _____ is Your _____, O LORD!

-v.158 What about the faithless disgusts the author? _____

-v.160 The sum of Your word is _____, and _____ of Your righteous rules endures _____.

Something to Think About: One of my all-time favorite passages is Lamentations 3:22-24. Here it is: *"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."*

May we join the psalmist in our great love for God's Word, great sorrow for those who are not obeying God, and in a tremendous trust in God for deliverance, help, and direction. His mercies are new every morning!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Monday, January 24, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Psalm 119:161-168 (SHIN) ("word" v.161, 162)

-v.161 . . . BUT, my heart stands in _____ of Your words.

-v.162 What does the psalmist compare God's Word to? _____

-v.163 What does he hate? _____

-v.164 How often does he praise God? _____

-v.166 What does the psalmist do while waiting for God's salvation? _____

-v.168 All our _____ are before God.

Something to Think About: There is much said in Scripture about the use of our time while we are waiting for eternity to begin. It is enough for several books! Suffice it to say: we all need to get busy and work for the Lord! Don't waste even one precious opportunity to serve God in any and all areas.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, January 25, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Re-read Psalm 119:161-168

-Write out verse 165: _____

-Another verse I love dearly is John 14:27, "*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.*"

God gives peace. If you are feeling anything else, perhaps you aren't looking in the right place. There is a command in this verse. What is it? _____

Something to Think About: We need never be troubled or afraid. Wow. Thank God today.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, January 26, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Psalm 119:169-176 (TAW) ("word" v.169, 179, 172)

- v.169 Where does worthwhile understanding come from? _____
- The Bible has a lot to say about understanding. Summarize the following verses:
- Job 37:5 _____
- Psalm 147:5 _____
- Proverbs 3:5 _____
- Proverbs 4:7 _____
- Proverbs 9:10 _____
- Luke 2:47 _____
- I John 5:20 _____

Something to Think About: There are tons more verses in the Bible having to do with understanding: how we get it, how to value it, how to look to Jesus to serve God with it, and much more. Consider doing a word study soon to dig up these treasures for yourself!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Thursday, January 27, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Re-read Psalm 119:169-176

-v.171 My lips will pour forth _____, for You teach me Your statutes.

-v.172 My tongue will _____ of Your word, for all Your commandments are right.

-Write out Psalm 147:1 _____

(There are lots of great verses that teach about praise—another great word study idea!)

Something to Think About: Most people love to sing—or they at least love music. The really important key, though, is what your songs are praising. A love interest? Food? Your dog? There's certainly a place for silly songs, but all true songs of praise ought to be sung to God and about God. All serious praise belongs to God and God alone.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Friday, January 28, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Look back at the work you did on "word" in Palm 119.

-What have you learned that you didn't know before?

-How have you been challenged in your current walk with God?

-What are you going to do about it?

-Are there any questions you have that need to be pursued?

-What words, concepts, truths do you feel the need to do more research on?

Something to Think About: Like the psalmist who lovingly wrote this very long psalm, let's develop and maintain a deep love for God and His Word! ALL our effort in God's Word is priceless and extraordinarily valuable in this life time and for all of eternity.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

In this next section, we will be studying "word" in the New Testament. There are dozens of references using the word, "word." They teach us about God's words, which tells us more about Who He is and what pleases Him. They also teach about our words in relation to our walk with God. It is my prayer that by the end of this study we will have an even greater love for, and awe of, God's Word. It is everything to us!

Saturday, January 29, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Matthew 7:24-28

-v.24 Who does Jesus call wise? _____

-v.26 Who does Jesus call foolish? _____

-v.28-29 Why were the crowds amazed? _____

Something to Think About: Here is a marvelous story where similar circumstances brought about very different outcomes. The difference is found in the choice of foundations. We have only two choices. Either we “build” our lives on the sure foundation of Jesus and His Word or on the unstable foundation of our own ideas about things. Obeying God may not eliminate the storms in our life, but it will affect the outcome.

Before moving on, I wanted to make sure that you saw that the difference between the wise man and the foolish one is that one did something with the Word of God that he listened to. Listening to God is the first (and essential) step, but putting what we hear into practice is what results in wisdom according to Jesus’ teaching in this well known passage.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Sunday, January 30, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Luke 11:28 and fill in the blanks:

- “But He said, _____ rather are those who _____ the Word of God and _____ it!”

- Read Revelation 3:7-13

- v.8 What has this church “kept?” _____

- v.8 Neither have they denied what? _____

- v.10 How will Jesus reward their faithfulness? _____

- v.12 What will Jesus write on them? _____

Something to Think About: Sometimes we are guilty of thinking that obeying God is a chore or a hard-to-do obligation meant to keep us down. The opposite is true. God wants to bless us in ways more wonderful than we can possibly even imagine. But blessing comes through obedience. How is your attitude about obeying God’s Word?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Monday, January 31, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read I John 1:10

-If we claim that we haven't sinned, what do we make Jesus out to be? _____

-In addition, what has no place in our lives (contrary to what we may claim)? _____

-Read I John 2:5

-How can we know God's love is truly made complete in someone?

Something to Think About: The Book of I John is a great Book to study! It tells us how things really are and debunks what we like to tell ourselves is true. For example, if we say we don't sin, we are actually saying Jesus is a liar because He says that we do sin. Yikes. If the Word of God is really and truly in our hearts, it WILL affect our behavior and it will make us see our own sin all too clearly. Thank God, though, the solution is as simple as I John 1:9. Read it!

(Please note that these verses aren't addressing the issue of an unsaved person versus a saved one. They are addressing whether or not a child of God is actually doing what he or she knows God wants them to do. Any-one can SAY they love God, but Scripture teaches that our actions and attitudes will prove it or disprove it. We can BE a child of God, but not live like one.)

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, February 1, 2022

-God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read John 1:1-14

-v.1 What relation does the Word have to God? _____

- v.3 What part did the Word have in creation? _____
- v.4 What is in the Word? _____
- v.12 What do all who believe in the Word become? _____
- v.14 What did the Word become? _____

Something to Think About: “The Word” is Jesus Christ, God’s Son. This gives a whole new meaning to the Book you have next to you right now, doesn’t it? Jesus is God revealed to us in human form. The Bible is God in written form. What value do YOU place on Scripture?

(Please take a moment to read verse 12 again. An eternity-changing question is this: have YOU believed in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as YOUR Savior from the sin you were born with? If not, you are not yet a child of God. BUT YOU CAN BE! Every single man, woman, and child is born with sin in their heart that prevents them from going to heaven when they die. In fact, because of it, they will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire! But, the incredibly good news is that, although we could never ever pay the penalty of our sin to God’s satisfaction, He sent His perfect, holy Son to pay the price on our behalf. That’s why Jesus came to earth as a Baby in Bethlehem—and that’s why He died on the cross some 33 years later. His death was in our place! He died to take the penalty for sin that you and I could not. And because Jesus never stopped being God (He was 100% God and 100% Man—and still is!), He didn’t stay dead. After three days, He rose from the death—which is what we celebrate at Easter. His victory over death becomes the victory of every person who places their trust in Him as their Savior from sin. Because He rose from the dead never to die again, when Christians die (those who have trusted in Him as their Savior), their physical shell might be left behind, but the REAL them has already gone into the presence of God—and will never leave Him again. This is a pretty important thing to know and to do! If you’re not certain of your salvation, read these Bible verses and be sure to talk to your pastor or another mature Christian. This is too important to let go even one day. If you are certain you belong to God, make sure you are telling other people this very, very good news (and make sure you are thanking God every single day for what He did for YOU)!

- Romans 3:23
- Romans 6:23
- John 3:16
- Ephesians 2:8-9
- Acts 16:31)

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, February 2, 2022

-God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today’s Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read John 17:1-6

- v.1 Who is praying and to Whom? _____
- v.2 What authority has Jesus been given? _____

- v.4 How did Jesus bring God glory? _____
- v.6 What have the believers obeyed? _____

Something to Think About: “Word” is found four times in John 17. This beautiful prayer of Jesus is well worth studying! In verse 6, Jesus mentions that the believers have obeyed God’s Word. It sounds to me like Jesus is very pleased about it. Did you ever stop to think that Jesus is pleased with YOUR efforts to learn about Him? He is!

Jesus is all believers ultimate example of God-honoring living. In fact, if we want to learn to better please God, we just need to study what Jesus did and why, then imitate Him. In these 6 verses, for example, we find that Jesus prayed to the Father, Jesus wanted to glorify the Father in what He did, Jesus told people how to get saved and have eternal life, Jesus did the work that God sent Him to do, and He “manifested” or made known Who God the Father is and what is important to Him in His life and actions. These are all things we can do, too, as God’s children! What a privilege! What an honor!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Thursday, February 3, 2022

-God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today’s Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read John 17:7-16

-v.7 What Jesus has been given is from Whom? _____

-v.8 What did Jesus give believers that was from the Father? _____

-v.11 Jesus prayed that all believers would be _____, even as He and the Father are one.

-v.12 With what will God protect believers? _____

-v.13 Whose joy is available to believers? _____

-v.14 What has God given us? _____

-v.16 Do we “belong” to the world? _____

Something to Think About: Jesus’ prayer is chock-full of amazing truths and blessings. Thank God for “everything” He has given us: that we are protected by the power of His name, for the full joy He gives us, for His Word, and for the fact that the place where we “belong” is heaven – with Him!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Friday, February 4, 2022

-God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read John 17:17-26

-v.17 What is truth? _____

-v.20 What can our testimony (our words) help others do? _____

-v.21-22 Who is our example of true unity? _____

-v.26 Knowing God fully leads to knowing His _____ for us.

Something to Think About: Verse 17 tells us that God's Word is truth and that it can help us sanctify (set apart, make holy) our minds and hearts. In order to know how to think, how to talk, how to act, and how to live, we NEED to study and apply the Bible, God's truth. There is no other way.

Are you recentering your thinking by spending time in God's Word on a daily basis? Are you making every effort to be in church to hear God's Word being taught at every opportunity? Are you changing what you think, say, and do based on What the Bible says God wants? These are all things that will draw you closer to the Father, make you better resemble and please the Son, bless and encourage other believers, and be a witness to the lost world around you. It is also what will provide peace, joy, unity, and a recognition of God's abiding and unconditional love.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Saturday, February 5, 2022

-God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read Acts 6:1-7

-v.2 What did the Apostles say they couldn't neglect? _____

-v.3 What was their solution? _____

-v.4 What besides God's Word would they give attention to ? _____

-v.7 What was the result? _____

Something to Think About: Do you pray for your pastor? Do you, in addition, try to find out how to help your pastor? Has the church family gotten into the habit of relying on him to do things that might be done by others? I have gotten to know a lot of pastor's families in my 35 plus years as a pastor's wife, and I can attest to you that our men of God are spending many hours a week mowing, shoveling, fixing toilets, cleaning up after fellowships, changing burnt out lightbulbs—and folding thousands and thousands of bulletins on Saturday night or Sunday morning.

Now, I ALSO happen to know that these men are humble, faithful servants of God and are NOT complaining about these ministries. They are eager to serve God whenever and however there is a need. But, I have to wonder just how much more time they would have in God's Word and in praying for your church family if someone else insisted on taking over some of these chores?

What can YOU do today, this week, or on a regular basis so your pastor can spend more time in prayer and the ministry of the Word?

PS Please don't discount that incredibly important "thing" you can do for your pastor by praying for him every single day! Prayer is NEVER an "well, at least I can pray" kind of thing! Prayer is our most effective weapon and privilege in our desire to please and honor God to and help and bless others!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Sunday, February 6, 2022

-God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read Acts 17:10-15

-v.10 Where are Paul and Silas in this account? _____

-v.11 The people of Berea received the Word of God with all _____, examining the Scriptures _____ to see if these things were so.

-v.13 Do all people gladly receive God's Word? _____

-What did they do to show their displeasure? _____

Something to Think About: One of the most important things we can do—and must do—is examine Scripture to see if what we believe to be true is true. We need to be certain we are obeying God and not simply tradition (the way we've "always done it"). We cannot place wisdom from any other source on the same level as wisdom from God. He is the ONLY source of genuine truth.

I think that believers might need to be extra vigilant when listening to radio preachers, internet gurus, or when reading Christian authors who are extremely popular with the masses? Why do I say that? Why can't someone be 100% accurate biblically AND be popular with everyone? Well, God can do anything, that much is true! However, God's Word also warns that as the time grows closer and closer to the Rapture, there will be more and more deceivers and those who SAY they are from God, but what they are teaching does NOT line up with Scripture. If you think about it, what's the likelihood that a message that is completely accurate from Scripture CAN please everyone — across all denominations and beliefs? It seems biblical to acknowledge the

- v.24 Our “new self” is created after the likeness of _____.
- v.25 Put off _____ and speak _____.
- v.26 Be angry and do not _____.
- v.27 Give no _____ to the devil.
- v.28 What is the biblical remedy for stealing? _____
- v.29 What is the biblical remedy for ugly speech? _____
- v.30 Do not grieve the _____
- v.32 Be _____, _____, and _____ to one another.

Something to Think About: This passage is often known as the “Put off/Put on Principle.” Right in the middle of it is our word, here translated as “talk” (v.29).

In order to be imitators of God (Eph. 5:1), among other things (v.24-32), our words must echo those of Jesus and be wholesome and helpful in encouraging others grow to be more Christ-like. Our words should cause others to want to try even harder to obey God and please Him in their own lives; to no longer give in to sarcasm, profanity, off-color jokes, and meanness.

Do your words grieve the Holy Spirit or are they words that reflect our Father in heaven in their kindness, grace, mercy, and love? Prayerfully evaluate areas that need to change and those that could be even better.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, February 9, 2022

-God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today’s Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read Ephesians 6:10-18

- v.10 Where does strength come from? _____
- v.11 Is it possible for a believer to stand against the schemes of the devil? _____
- v.12 Is our battle always against people and things that we can physically see? _____
- v.13 The armor of God enables us to do what against evil? _____
- v.14 What is our belt made of? _____
- v.17 What is our “sword?” _____
- v.18 What should our lips be doing? _____

Something to Think About: I’m sure it has been pointed out to you before that the only weapon of offense in our fight against evil is the Word of God. Without it we are defenseless. How much do you value your “sword?” If you were away from your Bible, could you still quote Scripture to yourself and others? Do you keep Scripture on your walls, fridge, and on post-it notes? Did you know you can get phone apps with free Bibles so that you can look up Scripture anytime you want? (check out olivetree.com). Did you know that you can do a Google search for all sorts of topics? Things like “Bible verses that talk about God’s love,” “Bible verses that talk about praising God,” “Bible verses having to do with giving thanks,” and so on.

The more we know and use God’s Word, the greater our success will be in the battles of life.

THE TRUTH will be less and less popular the more our world grows away from accepting God's Word as valid.

In the end, you and I need to follow the example of the Bereans and search the Bible for what GOD said—and base our convictions, goals, and action on His Word and His Word alone.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Monday, February 7, 2022

-God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read Romans 8:26-27

-v.26 Who helps in our weakness? _____

-v.26 What do we sometimes not know? _____

-v.26 What does the Holy Spirit do for us? _____

-v.27 Who planned for it to be this way? _____

Something to Think About: We Americans love to talk about our "independence" and how we can take care of ourselves, but the plain truth is that God made us, keeps us, determines our life-span, provides the only way for eternal life, gives us strength to obey Him, AND His Spirit intercedes on our behalf so our prayers can be understood. Have you humbly thanked Him lately?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, February 8, 2022

-God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read Ephesians 4:22-32

BONUS: After Paul mentions these glorious weapons available to believers to fight against sin and satan's minions, he asks for prayer for himself so he would use just the right words when speaking with others and to be bold in his witness so that he could be a great minister of God's Word to the lost (v.19-20). These are wonderful prayer requests for our own witnessing opportunities—and great prayers for other believers, especially our pastors and missionaries!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Thursday, February 10, 2022

-God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read Colossians 3:12-17

-v.12 Christians are God's _____ ones, holy and _____.

-v.13 We must forgive others in the same way _____ forgave us.

-v.14 _____ binds everything together in perfect harmony.

-v.15 Who is the Source of peace? _____

-v.16 What must dwell in us? _____

-v.16 In what ways? _____

-v.17 As a result, our words and deeds can be done with what attitude? _____

Something to Think About: Only as Jesus' words "dwell in us richly" can we have the ability to teach and admonish others with wisdom. Only then can we sing and praise God with genuine gratitude. Only then can we act and speak in a manner that pleases God.

Allowing the Word of God to dwell in us richly causes us to know how to be compassionate, kind, humble, meek, patient, forgiving, loving, at peace/peaceful, unified with other faithful believers (and with God!), able to teach and admonish in a way that honors God and helps people, and ready, willing, and able to sing to God with thankfulness in our hearts. Why in the world WOULDN'T we be immersing ourselves in God's Word!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Friday, February 11, 2022

-God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read Titus 2:3-5

-v.5 What is the end goal for behaving in a God-honoring way as women?

(Bonus points if you list all the attributes of the Titus 2 Woman!)

-Read I Peter 3:1-2

-v.2 What may cause husbands to be "won over?"

(Bonus points for identifying what sort of attitude is precious in God's sight (v.4)!)

Something to Think About: The above two references are directed specifically to women. One is a negative and one is a positive. If our behavior and attitude makes a mockery of what we say we believe, God's Word itself will be maligned—a very serious charge! On the other hand, without speaking a word, our God-honoring behavior might be used by God to turn someone (here the example is specifically an unsaved husband) to Him. Wow! How is your testimony?

Please note that both passages provide the biblical remedy. Titus 2 tells us that reverent (God-honoring) behavior—not slandering others with our speech, not being addicted to "things," teaching younger believers what is good, loving our husbands and children (as the Bible defines love, more an action, than an emotion), being a good steward of our homes, being kind, and submitting to our husbands as the head of our homes—is a good testimony to others of what the Word of God is all about. Our actions, in this case, may speak louder than our words!

I Peter 3 mentions that proper (biblical) submission also "speaks" volumes to others WHEN accompanied by respectful and pure conduct—an "adorning" of the heart with a gentle and quiet spirit. These are lofty and worthy goals for all women to pursue.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Saturday, February 12, 2022

-God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray

before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read II Timothy 2:14-16

-v.14 The people are warned to not quarrel about what? _____

-Why? _____

-v.15 "Do your _____ to present yourself to God as one approved, a _____ who has no need to be _____ rightly handling the _____ of truth."

-v.16 What are we to avoid? _____

-Why? _____

Something to Think About: First, if you want to know what "these things" Paul is referring to in verse 14, take a minute to read the first 13 verses of chapter 2. =)

Did you think only pastors, deacons, Sunday school teachers, and church leaders could "correctly handle the Word of truth?" We are ALL called to do our best to work toward that end. Keep giving God your best effort in your Bible study and He will use it for your own benefit as well as to help others and to glorify Himself.

Put another way, there are NO WORDS or advice that anyone can give another person that have the might, wisdom, and TRUTH the way Scripture does. Human solutions and ideas come from faulty hearts and brains, but God is perfect and perfectly wise and good. As our Creator, He is the only One Who truly knows up from down, right from wrong, and good from bad. When we quote the Bible to others, we are using God's Word to instruct, edify, and direct—and THIS is truly helpful and God-honoring.

P.S. If you're looking for a wonderful target for today in your walk with the Lord, go away and use the beginning of verse 15, "Do your best. . .!"

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Sunday, February 13, 2022

-God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read James 1:19-25

-v.19 We should be slow to do what two things?

-However, we should be quick to _____.

-v.20 What can't man's anger produce? _____

-v.21 What can "save" us from the evil in us and around us? _____

-v.22 What must come after hearing the Word? _____

-v.23-24 What item is used as an illustration concerning the folly of listening, but not doing? _____

-v.25 How do we become blessed? _____

Something to Think About: Say, have you ever taken the time on Sunday afternoon to review what you learned that morning and then prayerfully list ways in which you could do what God laid on your heart from

His Word? Well, first, I suppose you’re going to need some way to remember what you heard! Have you ever heard of a handy tool called “taking notes”? I have been doing it for (literally) about 50 years—and I can attest that it has made all the difference in the world to my spiritual growth and understanding of Scripture. Not, of course, due to any merit of my own, but simply because God ALWAYS honors the effort we put into learning and obeying His Word. Always.

So, a challenge for you: if you don’t already take notes, why not start during the next service? If you do, could you take five minutes to review what you wrote down during the afternoon on a Sunday? You’ll be blessed if you do! God promised.

BONUS: I have a little ditty I wrote quite some time ago giving tips for note taking. If you email me, I will send it to you. =)

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Monday, February 14, 2022

-God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today’s Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read Matthew 12:34-37

-v.34 What comes from the overflow of the heart? _____

-v.36 What will we give account for? _____

-When? _____

-v.37 What acquits us or condemns us? _____

Something to Think About: There are many Bible verses that teach the truth of our words being the gauge of what is in our heart. There is a saying, “You can fool some people some of the time, but you can’t fool all the people all the time.” We can NEVER fool God, however. He sees our heart. Sometimes people can see it, too, in our words.

I don’t know the struggle you might have with words, but they’ve sure been a problem to me down through the years. God has had to bring me through some pretty painful situations to begin to soften my heart and help me remember that my words are really important. More than that, though, what’s in my heart is really important. You and I are all given the opportunity every single day to allow the world to enter our hearts through what we read, what we watch on the TV, internet, or on DVD players, through the music we listen to, through the people we have extended conversations with, and so on. OR, we can choose to let the Word enter our hearts, find a home there, and show to us the God honoring way to think, speak, and act. We can read and memorize Scripture, we can read biblically accurate devotionals and Bible study guides, we can listen to music that honors God in both its words and rhythm, we can interact with mature believers who can help us all be more godly and God focused, and of course, we can spend many precious moments in our day (and night!) talking with our Father in prayer.

What MAY have been in our hearts in the past that affected our words can stay in the past—and we can move forward with a heart chock-full of God’s Word so that we can bless God with our lips and bless people with

our actions and attitudes.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, February 15, 2022

-God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read Mark 8:34-38

-v.34 What must followers of Jesus deny? _____

-v.35 How do we "save" our life? _____

-v.38 What will cause Jesus to be ashamed of us? _____

-When will this happen? _____

Something to Think About: Picture yourself at a special event where you are to be honored. A reporter has just come up to you and asked who is with you and why they are special to you. It is your Dad, but since he embarrasses you in public, even though you love him, you sort of push him behind you and force the conversation away from him.

You probably wouldn't do that for real, BUT how often do we push Jesus into the background so we don't have to tell others about Him? I'm not sure exactly what it means to have Jesus ashamed of us, but I don't think it is a good thing! I do not want to be ashamed of Jesus, nor have Him ashamed of me. How about you?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, February 16, 2022

-God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read John 4:4-42

-v.28-29 What did the woman do right after Jesus finished talking with her?

-v.39 What was the result? _____

-v.41-42 Many more believed when they heard what? _____

Something to Think About: This passage is the opposite of yesterday's. The woman at the well had an awful reputation in town, but she did not hesitate for a second to tell anyone and everyone about Jesus once she met Him. As a result, many were saved. The idea of witnessing scares most of us, but really our job is simple. We just need to share with others the amazing things God has done for us. His job is the "saving" part. All He asks from us is willingness and to not be ashamed of Him or His Word.

P.S. It's easy to think of the Bible accounts such as the Woman at the Well as Bible "stories," but have you ever considered that you will get to meet this woman in glory one day? You will have an opportunity to hear her firsthand account of how Jesus changed not only her life, but the lives of many of her neighbors! Another thing to consider, though, is that Bible characters may well want to talk to YOU because of your brave and faithful witness of Christ in and among the people God placed in YOUR life!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Thursday, February 17, 2022

-God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Write out John 5:24. _____

Something to Think About: Have YOU done that? Have you listened to God's Word, believed what it said, and placed your faith in Jesus Christ as the Savior from your sin? If so, PRAISE GOD, you are a child of God with eternal life! You have bypassed the judgment for sin and have been given new life in Christ!

Now might be a good time to pause to thank God for His life-giving Word!

Do you know someone who has not trusted in Christ? Perhaps you can share John 5:24 with them!

PS Did you know that you have eternal life RIGHT NOW? We tend to think of eternal life beginning upon our physical death or when the Rapture occurs, but the FACT is that those who have trusted in Christ as their Savior from sin possess eternal life immediately. There are other things, in fact, that are ours right now in a positional sense even though we currently live in a sinful world and we still have a sin nature. We are, in God's eyes, already righteous and holy—BECAUSE God sees us through the righteousness and holiness of Jesus Christ. There's a ton more! Ask your pastor about it!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Friday, February 18, 2022

-God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read John 3:34

-Whose words does Jesus speak? _____

-Read John 6:63

-What are Jesus' words? _____

-Read John 6:68

-Who has the words of eternal life? _____

-Who else could we go to for eternal life? _____

-Read John 14:10

-Who is in Jesus? _____

-By Whose authority did Jesus speak? _____

Something to Think About: There are many references to Jesus and God being one. Jesus wanted us to know that God is fully revealed in Him and all Jesus did reflected the Father perfectly. In fact, He said that if someone wanted to know what God is like, they simply needed to study Him!

Do you want to truly know God? Study Him in the life and words of Jesus Christ.

P.S. There's more to this picture, though. You and I can ALSO represent God with excellence when WE speak His Words, live out His character, and allow His Word to be seen in us and through us!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Saturday, February 19, 2022

-God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read John 15:1-17

-v.7 What is the "secret" to getting what you wish for?

Something to Think About: We're sometimes guilty of thinking that how to get our prayers answered is a big secret, but Jesus tells us more than once the answer. Simply put: learn to ask for what God wants us to have. How do we do that? Remain daily in His Word, meditate on it, and then make His Word the reason why you want what you want.

BONUS: Prayerfully evaluate some of your recent prayer requests. Were they something that you know God would want for you? Why or why not (use Bible verses to support your answer)? If necessary, how might you rephrase a recent request to better reflect Scripture?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Sunday, February 20, 2022

-God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read I Peter 1:22-25

-v.22 In what way are we to love our brothers and sisters in Christ? _____

-v.23 How is the Word of God described? _____

-v.24-25 In contrast to all things made of flesh, what remains forever? _____

Something to Think About: In a world where everything is temporary and we don't know what to expect from day to day, isn't it thrilling to realize God's Word will not fall or fail—ever! Now that is something to praise Him for!

If you think about all the things that people might invest in, how many of us (even among believers) are investing in the Word of God? Studying it intensely? Meditating on what we have read? Memorizing portions of it? Applying specific verses or principles to our actions and decisions? Sharing it's truths with others in our conversations? BELIEVING what it says? Trusting that what God promised will happen?

Investments in earthly things won't stand the test of time (things like wealth, athleticism, prestige, and fame), but the Bible will be the theme of the ages, so ALL time spent in God's Word will richly bless us now—and bless us into forever!

PS Investing in people is a good thing—as long as we are doing it by and through the Bible! We cannot bring "things" with us to glory, but we can bring people who have trusted in Christ as a result of our sharing God's

Word with them! We can enjoy eternity in and among other believers who we have fellowshiped with, encouraged, edified, challenged, and otherwise helped to grow spiritually.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Monday, February 21, 2022

-God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read Revelation 19:9

-How are God's words described? _____

-Read Revelation 21:5

-How are God's words described? _____

-Read Revelation 22:6

-How are God's words described? _____

Something to Think About: Trustworthy and true! How many things, people, place, philosophies, and so on do YOU know which can be described as trustworthy and true one hundred percent of the time—past, present, and future other than Jesus Christ? NONE, that's how many!

Why, then, would we ever—for even one second—put our confidence on anyone or anything besides Him? It doesn't make sense! It's the definition of insanity. Or, perhaps more accurately, of "wickedness."

Oh, how we need to remind ourselves every single morning what an awesome God we serve. What an amazing Savior. What a divine treasure we have in the Written Word of God. Are you reading it? Meditating on it? Memorizing it? Obeying it? Living as though you believe it? Praising God for it?

There's no better time than the present.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, February 22, 2022

-God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read I John 3:16-18

-v.16 How do we know what love is? _____

-v.17 How can we show that the love of God is in us? _____

-v.18 What should love not be limited to? _____

-v.18 How should love be shown? _____

Something to Think About: You've heard the phrase, "Put your money where your mouth is." In other words, prove it! Does YOUR love show? Is there some area where you have said you need to do something and have not followed through? Schedule it today. Don't waste another moment procrastinating. Show love in the same way God continues to show love to you every single day!

On the other side of things, who do you know who has shown love to you once—or many times? Have you thanked God for them? Have you thanked THEM? Having a heart of gratitude pleases and honors God—and most definitely blesses the recipient. Who should you contact first?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, February 23, 2022

-God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read II Corinthians 2:17

-Paul points out to the readers that unlike "others," he and his companions have not been _____ of God's Word.

-Rather, out of _____, as commissioned _____, they spoke _____ Christ.

-Read II Corinthians 4:1-6

-v.2 What must not be done to God's Word? _____

-Read Revelation 22:18-19

-What else must never be done to God's Word? _____

Something to Think About: God wants us to share His Word with others, but accurately in the way He instructs. How do we know what we are saying is accurate? Study the Bible. Quote it. Refer to it over and over. Let it speak for itself.

Don't miss, either, the TREMENDOUS resource God gave you in the pastor He appointed to your church. Did you know that the "gift" that Paul is speaking about in Ephesians 4 (v.11-12) IS the pastor that God hand-picked for your church? This is a pretty astonishing (and delightful) truth! Just as God created specific men to become partners in marriage to a specific woman (such a delightful "mystery" how He does that!), He ALSO

created, led, instructed, matured, and prepared very specific men for very specific churches. This, by default, would ALSO mean that God led each and every member of a church to a specific church at a specific time with OTHER specific people! Isn't our Father just SO INCREDIBLE and PRAISE WORTHY!

So, there are a ton of applications to this mind-blowing truth. To fit today's Bible lesson, talk to your Pastor about the Bible! Ask Him questions. Take notes when he is preaching. Don't miss ANY services or Bible studies. If you have past sermons and conference recorded online, listen to them. Time listening to God's Word being taught is ALWAYS valuable and worthwhile.

Also, take a few minutes to thank God for His Word, for the pastor He gave to you, for your church family, for opportunities to learn and grow, and for the privilege of serving Him by blessing and helping your pastor and your church family. These are truly among THE most precious gifts that God gives!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Thursday, February 24, 2022

-God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read Hebrews 4:12

- "For the Word of God is _____ and active. Sharper than any two-edged sword, _____ to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and of marrow; and _____ the thoughts and intentions of the _____."

Something to Think About: I read in the study notes of my ESV Bible that God's Word "acts as God Himself, so that one's innermost thoughts and intentions are exposed." This reminded me (yet again) that the Bible is not simply a collection of words.

For one biggie, the Bible is words FROM GOD. In fact, there is literally nothing in the Bible that GOD didn't put there—and put there for good reason. We must be careful to not put more emphasis on some areas more than others, and as we've learned recently, we must never add to or take away from what God said.

Another is to never forget that God's Word is unlike any other book ever written. It is living and life-changing. It reveals who we are and who we are not. We must do more than listen to it, we must let it shape our lives.

Generally speaking, I doubt too many humans are super excited to have someone "talk" to them to point out their failures and flaws. We seem to be born with a certain level of arrogance and pride, so having our actions and attitudes criticized isn't "pleasant," shall we say. HOWEVER, we must never, ever allow feelings of defensiveness or stubborn pride come to our hearts when it is GOD'S WORD that is doing the "piecing" and exposing our true thoughts and intentions. God always wants our spiritual good, so what He is showing to us through the reading of His Word is always important and always worth prayerfully submitting to the Father.

Of course, all this assumed we ARE reading God's Word with an open heart and mind! Are YOU?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Friday, February 25, 2022

-God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Review what you've learned about "word" (dabar) in the New Testament by re-reading John 1.

-Note 3 things about Jesus Christ, the Word, that impresses and blesses you (if you want to refer to what you already wrote, your work in John 1 began on the 1st of this month):

-Take a quick glance at the other lessons in February, then list 3 things that God's Word is used for, is necessary for, or is otherwise an essential tool for all Christians (here's an example: Ephesians 6:17 says that the Word of God is the Christian's sword.):

-Even though we have not yet explored the other main words found in Psalm 119:105 (lamp, feet, light, path), how does what you have studied about "word" help you understand the blessed truth of God's Word being a lamp to our feet and a light to our path?

-If someone were to randomly come up to you and ask you what the word "word" in Psalm 119:105 even means, what could you tell them based on your study in the last 6 weeks or so?

Something to Think About: There are MANY more references to God's Word in the Bible. Proverbs is loaded with instruction on how to get wisdom! Research it for yourself. The neat thing about God's Word is that the more you study it and apply it, the more you love it, and the more you WANT to study it and obey it. Do YOU love God's Word? Start today.

-You and the Lord:

Spending some time thanking God that ALL His words are perfect, completely trustworthy, always faithful, and continually a help to us seems a good use of our time right this minute.

Now that we've done some study of "dabar," the Hebrew word that means "word," let's take a few days to study the Greek word, "grapho," which is translated as "it is written." This supplemental study will be very helpful to us in our desire to understand "word" in Psalm 119:105.

Saturday, February 26, 2022

-God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read Matthew 4:1-11

-v.1 What 3 persons are mentioned here? _____

-v.2 What was Jesus' physical condition? _____

-v.3 How is Satan described? _____

-v.3, 5, 8 In how many areas did Satan tempt Jesus? _____

-v. 11 Who attended Jesus after Satan left? _____

Something to Think About: This event occurred at the very beginning of Jesus' public ministry. As you read through these temptations, did you notice that Jesus never asserted His deity to save Himself from the situation? He had complete victory over Satan and remained sin-free by using the same two tools that we still have today: the power of God's written Word and the strength of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Bible tells us that once we have believed in Jesus Christ as our Savior from sin, we are no longer imprisoned by sin. We never HAVE to sin. How do we remain sin-free and live victoriously? By studying Scripture, obeying Scripture, and relying on God's own power through His Spirit to give us the strength to say "no" to sin, to find delight in doing the Father's will, and in the perseverance to cling to good and resist evil.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Sunday, February 27, 2022

-God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Re-read Matthew 4:1-11

-v.3 Satan wanted Jesus to turn _____ into _____.

-v.4 Jesus answered, "It is written, _____"

Something to Think About: In this first temptation, Satan wanted Jesus to turn stone into bread. It was not wrong for Jesus to be hungry and eat, BUT, while on earth, Jesus was to rely 100% on God to provide for His needs and to direct His steps. We sometimes feel we need to "take matters into our own hands" or we won't get what we (think we) need. The truth is that God has promised to provide ALL that we need. If we don't have something, God knows that we either don't need it or that we don't need it right now. He asks us to wait for His timing. Running in front of God is removing Him from the throne of our heart, while putting ourselves there instead. Jesus was hungry, but He knew it was more important to wait for God. As it was, God sent an-

gels to minister to Him! Sometimes we choose a stone when God wanted us to have filet mignon!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Monday, February 28, 2022

-God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Re-read Matthew 4:1-11

-v.5 Where did Satan take Jesus? _____

-v.6 What did he suggest Jesus do? _____

-Why? _____

-v.7 Jesus answered him, it is written _____

Something to Think About: Satan said, "If you are the Son of God..." In Greek, this statement means, "if...and I know You are." Satan never doubted Jesus was God (he might be completely wicked, but he is not an idiot!). I'm sure he must laugh when some of us sometimes act as if we don't believe Who Jesus is. The Bible says that even demons recognized Jesus as God's Son. Sadly, it seems that only the creatures for whom He died (human beings) choose to doubt Him.

Notice, too, satan's use of Scripture to try to prove his point. The problem with that is this, Scripture NEVER contradicts itself and, therefore, cannot be used to negate another passage. Jesus pointed out to satan, that though it was true that God would have sent angels to protect His Son, it is never right to try to force God's hand. Jumping would have been dishonoring to God, which is an over-riding truth to the verse satan quoted.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, March 1, 2022

-Be sure to take a few minutes for prayer before reading Scripture. Who better than the Author to ask for help to understand it and apply it to your life?

-Re-read Matthew 4:1-11

"Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." 4 But he answered, "It is written, "'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" 5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple 6 and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, "'He will command his angels concerning you,'" And "'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'" 7 Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" 8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9 And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." 10 Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'" 11 Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him."

-v.8 What did satan show Jesus? _____

-v.9 Satan's gift was dependent on Jesus doing what? _____

-v.10 Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written _____

Something to Think About: Satan didn't lie about his offer to give Jesus all the kingdoms of the world. He does have temporary power in the world, but Jesus is the rightful Ruler and King. It is a matter of God's timing. Jesus had come into the world at that time to die for the sin of mankind, not to begin His rule. That will come later. Satan wanted Him to skip God's plan and timing and jump ahead to the end. Aren't you glad Jesus didn't listen! If He did, you and I would be bound for Hell.

Focusing on self instead of God distorts our view of right and wrong. Remember this when tempted to jump ahead of God's timing. Maybe you are much more patient than me, but I am definitely prone to jumping in with both feet when an idea occurs to me or when I feel something needs to happen, I want it to happen NOW.

The FIRST thought that ought to come into the hearts and minds of all who belong to God is the question, "What does GOD want me to do?" We may or may not immediately know all the details of the answer to our specific problem, but God's Word DOES provide lists of do's and don'ts. Many are in literal lists, while many others are found in principle form throughout Scripture. I guess one good rule of thumb to fall back on is one I heard as a child from my Sunday School teacher, "When in doubt, don't."

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

-Be sure to take a few minutes for prayer before reading Scripture. Who better than the Author to ask for help to understand it and apply it to your life?

-Read Mark 7:1-13

“Now when the Pharisees gathered to him, with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, 2 they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. 3 (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands properly, holding to the tradition of the elders, 4 and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches.) 5 And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?” 6 And he said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, “‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; 7 in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ 8 You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.” 9 And he said to them, “You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition! 10 For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’ 11 But you say, ‘If a man tells his father or his mother, “Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban”’ (that is, given to God)— 12 then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, 13 thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do.”

-v.1-2 What did the Pharisees see that upset them? _____

-v.6-7 Jesus replied... as it is written _____

-v.8 Jesus said, “You _____ the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of _____.

-v.9 What did Jesus say they were rejecting in order to observe their tradition? _____

Something to Think About: I wonder if, perhaps, we get so fed up with the Pharisees because they so often had the attitudes that we, Christians in the Church Age, struggle with? Have you, for example, ever found yourself criticizing someone who was doing something out of love for God—but which didn’t exactly fit YOUR idea of what that act is “supposed” to look like? Well, the Pharisees were masters of this! They had developed the horrible habit of reading God’s Word, then adding their own spin on it until it read the way they thought best. Then they took that whole warped idea and made it a million times worse by demanding people obey what THEY said, encouraging them to no longer remember what GOD had said in the first place (they went on to be even more sinful by insisting the people follow the rules they made—without following them themselves, but that’s a lesson for another day.)

In today’s account, the Pharisees were upset that Jesus’ disciples weren’t following man-made rules and traditions. Jesus pointed out that they were not disobeying GOD. He then brought the fight to their court by pointing out to them that the Law of God commanded them to honor their parents, but that their added-on rules and qualifications resulted in their dishonoring their parents, and, thus, disobeying God. Their choice to follow their tradition was a choice to disobey God.

God wants us to obey Him—as He commanded. We do not have the option of qualifying our obedience based on our personal preferences. Have you tweaked the Word of God for your own gain? Have you judged others based on your ideals and not on God’s standards? Prayerfully consider how you might better honor God in these areas.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Thursday, March 3, 2022

-Be sure to take a few minutes for prayer before reading Scripture. Who better than the Author to ask for help to understand it and apply it to your life?

-Read Matthew 5:21-26

"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' 22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire. 23 So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. 25 Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. 26 Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny."

-v.21 You have heard it said...

-v.22 But I say to you that everyone who is _____ with his brother will be liable to _____; whoever _____ his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says _____ will be liable to the hell of fire.

-v.23-24 Does God want our "offering" if we are harboring a grudge against a Christian brother or sister?

-v.24 What must we do first?

-v.25 Does God want us to procrastinate in areas of reconciliation? _____

Something to Think About: The following 5-day study from Matthew 5 does not have "it is written" in it (the phrase we've been looking at since February 26th), but yesterday's study from Mark 7 reminded me of this passage. It has had a profound influence on my life, and I wanted to share it with you.

In each section (in Matthew 5) Jesus reminds the Jews what God commanded them in the Law and then teaches how their traditions have gotten them off track. You see, like in Mark 7, the people had added to God's Word, changed it, and made it mean something very different from what God intended. Jesus wanted them—and us—to see that obedience is more than something we do or don't do. It is an attitude of the heart.

In the verses we read today, the Law stated, "Do not murder" (Exodus 20:13). Jesus more fully explained this by teaching that when we allow anger to control us, it is just as much a sin in God's eyes. Uncontrolled anger violates God's command to love. In fact, failing to love a brother or sister is, in God's eyes, murder (see I John 3:15).

Controlling our actions begins in our heart. Be on the lookout for this in the next four days' work.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Friday, March 4, 2022

-Be sure to take a few minutes for prayer before reading Scripture. Who better than the Author to ask for help to understand it and apply it to your life?

-Read Matthew 5:27-30

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell."

-v.27 You have heard it was said. . .

-v.28 But I say to you that everyone who _____ at a woman with _____ has already committed adultery with her in his _____.

-v.29 It is _____ to lose a part of our body than to sin.

Something to Think About: The Religious leaders were feeling "righteous" because they had managed to not have sexual relations with anyone besides their spouse. Jesus wanted them to know, however, that inappropriate looks and thoughts are just as much a sin in God's eyes.

How much more danger are we in today with modern (lack of) clothing! Love-making within the bounds of marriage is a precious gift from God and is to be enjoyed immensely, but anything else is sin and displeases Him.

Once again we see that it begins in our heart. Wrong looking leads to wrong desires. Wrong desires left unchecked lead to wrong actions. To be fair, sometimes we weren't "looking," but something suggestive was flashed in front of our eyes against our will. What then? First, of course, turn away! Second, refuse to KEEP thinking about it. We may struggle to do this on our own, but God has given us His indwelling Holy Spirit for just such a reason. He can help us focus instead on what is pure, lovely, of excellence, and is praiseworthy (Phil. 4:7). We simply need to ask.

A few other cautions in this area include being careful how we choose to dress and comport ourselves. Our clothing choices must not give others a cause to look lustfully upon us—regardless of what is considered "fashion!" Another is to choose to not "feed" our hearts and minds with ungodly views. This would necessitate extreme caution in the movies we watch, the books we read, the internet sites we visit, and the "experts" we listen to.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Saturday, March 5, 2022

-Be sure to take a few minutes for prayer before reading Scripture. Who better than the Author to ask for help to understand it and apply it to your life?

-Read Matthew 5:31-32

“It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ 32 But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

-v.31 It was also said, _____

-v.32 But I say to you _____

Something to Think About: God’s plan for marriage NEVER included divorce. How could it? It is a picture of Christ’s love for His bride the church. Would Jesus ever leave us? NO! Nor should we think for one second that divorcing our mate is an option. It isn’t. The exception listed in this passage was referring to the engagement period, not once vows were given in a marriage ceremony.

What is your attitude about marriage? The Book of Proverbs tells us that a wise woman will build her home up. Only a fool allows her home to fall into ruin. Whether or not you are married, pray and support other marriages. Satan would love nothing more than to see them destroyed. He understands their significance in spiritual areas. Do you?

(Other Scripture on marriage and divorce: Genesis 2:18-24; Malachi 2:16; Matthew 19:1-9; Romans 7:2-3; I Corinthians 7:39; Ephesians 5:22-33.)

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Sunday, March 6, 2022

-Be sure to take a few minutes for prayer before reading Scripture. Who better than the Author to ask for help to understand it and apply it to your life?

-Read Matthew 5:33-37

“Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the

Lord what you have sworn.’ 34 But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35 or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil.”

-v.33 Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not _____, but shall perform to the Lord _____ you have sworn.’

-v.34-35 But I say to you, Do not take an oath _____, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.

-v.37 Let what you say be simply ‘_____’ or ‘_____’; anything more than this comes from evil.

Something to Think About: Say, what sort of integrity are you known for? Do you feel like you need to say “honest!” or “I promise!” a lot? If so, why? Is this simply a habit—or is it because you do not always keep your word? Do you not always speak the whole truth?

Truth pleases God. Partial truth and outright lies do not. Careless promises do not.

Our word should be known to be trustworthy. Our word is our testimony. More than that, all Christians are ambassadors of Christ and representatives of heaven. When our attitudes, behavior, and words are untruthful, misleading, or ugly in any way, this reflects poorly on Jesus Christ.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Monday, March 7, 2022

-Be sure to take a few minutes for prayer before reading Scripture. Who better than the Author to ask for help to understand it and apply it to your life?

-Read Matthew 5:38-42

“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ 39 But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. 41 And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. 42 Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.”

-v.38 You have heard that it was said _____

-v.39 But I say to you, do not _____

-Summarize verse 42 _____

Something to Think About: Boy, is this one opposite of what the world tells us! The idea of getting even is never from God. He gives us nothing but mercy and He wants us, in return, to give mercy to others. He said

to do GOOD to those who wrong you. To give, not expecting return. To be generous. To be kind.

Can we do this on our own, though? No. We can do NO good on our own, but God can and does help us to please Him in all areas of life.

A few reminders:

- We like to think of these words as a nice, pleasant suggestions, but they are commands. They are not optional. Are you merciful as God is merciful?
- The picture of slapping a cheek is someone who is insulting someone else, not a physical attack. God is not saying that we cannot defend ourselves. He is saying that revenge is His job, not ours.
- Helping those who are truly needy is not asking us to give unreservedly to those who refuse to work, nor is it giving foolishly or unwisely. God wants us to be generous and helpful, but there are occasions when NOT doing as asked is displaying love.
- There's a lot of Christian love in these verses - simply "going the extra mile" to share with others some of the mercy and grace that God shows to us on a constant basis.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, March 8, 2022

-Be sure to take a few minutes for prayer before reading Scripture. Who better than the Author to ask for help to understand it and apply it to your life?

-Read Matthew 5:43-48

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48 You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

- v.43 You have heard that it was said, You shall _____ your neighbor and hate your _____
- v.44 But I say to you _____ and _____ for those who persecute you.
- v.45 Who do we reflect when we act this way? _____
- v.48 Be perfect, as you _____ is perfect.

Something to Think About: So, first of all, you should note that the Bible never says that we are supposed to hate our enemies. Jesus was not only correcting the Religious leaders' added-on traditions that they imposed on the people, He was pointing out that they made some of them up! We need to always be careful that the Bible convictions we hold to are actually from the Bible and not merely something someone once said that sounded good to us.

Back to the commands found in today’s Scripture—that of loving our neighbors AND enemies (and praying for them!!!), don’t worry, you don’t have to do this one on your own either. God can deliver us from our natural selfishness. He can help us have a right view of others (and ourselves) so we know the right way to think, speak, and act. In fact, we are given a goal in this passage. It is to strive to be perfect as Jesus demonstrated perfection to us. We need to seek to excel.

Just a reminder: faithfulness isn’t being sin-free, it is never giving up in the effort to be more Christ-like in every area of life.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, March 9, 2022

-Be sure to take a few minutes for prayer before reading Scripture. Who better than the Author to ask for help to understand it and apply it to your life?

-Read Luke 10:25-37

“And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” 26 He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?” 27 And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” 28 And he said to him, “You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.” 29 But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” 30 Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. 32 So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. 34 He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’ 36 Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?” 37 He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him, “You go, and do likewise.”

-Write out verse 27 _____

-v.29 What did the lawyer ask? _____

-v.37 What was the answer? _____

Something to Think About: This famous parable is a nice follow-up to yesterday’s study. Jesus gives us an easy-to-understand example of biblical love. It is giving mercy to all those in need—not just those we know

and love. It will probably involve sacrifice. It may never be acknowledged. It involves acting to meet another person's need. Are you a good neighbor?

Prayerfully consider the last few days. When did you go out of your way to help another person (in any way)? When did you choose to ignore a need because it wasn't convenient or you felt it wasn't "your" problem? How do Jesus' words in today's lesson apply to these examples? How will it affect your attitude and actions TODAY?

We may not be able to change failures of yesterday (nor can we live on victories in the past), but we can most definitely choose to love God and others wholeheartedly today!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Thursday, March 10, 2022

-Be sure to take a few minutes for prayer before reading Scripture. Who better than the Author to ask for help to understand it and apply it to your life?

-Read Matthew 21:12-17

"And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. 13 He said to them, 'It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you make it a den of robbers.'" 14 And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. 15 But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant, 16 and they said to him, "Do you hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes; have you never read, "'Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise'?" 17 And leaving them, he went out of the city to Bethany and lodged there."

-v.12 Where was Jesus in this account? _____

-What was He doing? _____

-v.13 It is written "My _____ shall be called a house of _____, but you make it a _____ of _____."

Something to Think About: This was 1st century commercialism at its best. Merchants and money-changers were taking advantage of travelers by charging inflated prices and being dishonest in currency exchange. The wickedness of it was further compounded by the fact that it was occurring in the Temple Courtyard and distracting Temple-goers from worshiping God. It was very unfair and frustrating to those who were trying to worship—and it angered God!

There is a right way and a wrong way to do everything in this life. "Right" is always going to be what God tells us is right from His Word. From today's passage, we know that God wants us to worship Him in the way He dictates and to be above board in all our dealings. He clearly doesn't want His House to be associated with money-making, commercialism, or dishonesty. He doesn't want us to distract those who have come to His House to worship Him with the mundane (and definitely not through anything that may have even the appear-

ance of making money off of them).

One modern-day application that has occurred to me a few times over the years is to consider whether asking people to buy our Avon products or sponsor our child's cookie drive is the right thing to happen at church. Perhaps there are better times for that kind of thing. Perhaps this doesn't bother you in the least. My question might then be, even if you are okay with it, but just one other person is offended by it, wouldn't it be better to just not do it at church? I might even question the timing of handing out Pampered Chef party invitations at church. Something to consider. . .

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Friday, March 11, 2022

-Be sure to take a few minutes for prayer before reading Scripture. Who better than the Author to ask for help to understand it and apply it to your life?

-Read Matthew 26:20-30

"When it was evening, he reclined at table with the twelve. 21 And as they were eating, he said, "Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me." 22 And they were very sorrowful and began to say to him one after another, "Is it I, Lord?" 23 He answered, "He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me will betray me. 24 The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born." 25 Judas, who would betray him, answered, "Is it I, Rabbi?" He said to him, "You have said so." 26 Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." 27 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, 28 for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. 29 I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." 30 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives."

-v.20 Who is present in this account? _____

-v.24 Jesus said that the Son of Man goes _____ of Him.

-Who does Jesus feel bad for? (But woe to them...) _____

-v.25 When is the next time Jesus would share the communion meal with anyone? _____

Something to Think About: Jesus is referring to Isaiah 53 in verse 24. It is an incredibly powerful prophecy telling of the Messiah's purposes and goals. Read it slowly and thoughtfully, then thank God that Jesus was willing to "go" to Calvary.

*Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?
For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty
that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a
man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised,*

and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Saturday, March 12, 2022

-Be sure to take a few minutes for prayer before reading Scripture. Who better than the Author to ask for help to understand it and apply it to your life?

-Read Matthew 26:31-35

"Then Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away because of me this night. For it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' 32 But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee." 33 Peter answered him, "Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away." 34 Jesus said to him, "Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." 35 Peter said to him, "Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!" And all the disciples said the same."

-v.31 What is written? _____

-v.32 Jesus then said, "But after I am _____, I will go before you to Galilee."

-v.35 How many disciples committed themselves to not denying Jesus? _____

Something to Think About: This event occurred immediately after the Last Supper. The events of Jesus' betrayal, crucifixion, and resurrection are all fulfillments of different prophecies ("it is written").

Praise God, Jesus did what He came to do! He didn't let anything: people, events, pain, emotion—anything, get in the way of fulfilling the Father's will. May this be our prayer, too, to do what God wants us to do, never counting the cost, never making excuses, simply doing what we know God wants us to do.

BTW, have you ever given thought to “what if” Jesus didn’t follow God’s plan? You and I—and every human ever born—would be spending eternity in the Lake of Fire, forever separated from the presence of God. We have MUCH to be thankful for. Every single second!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Sunday, March 13, 2022

-Be sure to take a few minutes for prayer before reading Scripture. Who better than the Author to ask for help to understand it and apply it to your life?

-Read Luke 24:36-49

“As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, “Peace to you!” 37 But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. 38 And he said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” 40 And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. 41 And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate before them. 44 Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46 and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, 47 and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

-v.36 Who appeared among the disciples? _____

-v.36 What did He say? _____

-v.44 He said to them, “These are my _____ that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything _____ in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”

-v.45 Why did Jesus open their minds? _____

-v.46 What else was “written”? _____

Something to Think About: This event that caused joy and amazement in the hearts of the disciples occurred after Jesus rose from the dead. There are tons of things to note here, but let’s settle for just a few:

- 1) Every part of Scripture points to Christ and His work on the cross. Does everything we do point to Him?
- 2) God opens our minds so we can understand Scripture. Are you asking His help to understand and apply Scripture?

I am confident that you can ask any Christian who spends daily meaningful time in God's Word, and they'll share with you the delight, the amazement, and confidence in God that comes from this necessary and beneficial discipline. Perhaps now would be a good time to make such a list yourself! If someone asked YOU what blessings you got from God's Word, what would you tell them?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Monday, March 14, 2022

-Be sure to take a few minutes for prayer before reading Scripture. Who better than the Author to ask for help to understand it and apply it to your life?

-Read John 20:24-31

"Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe." 6 Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." 28 Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." 30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

-v.24-25 Who wanted physical proof of Jesus being alive? _____

-v.26-27 Did Jesus show him? _____

-v.28 What was Thomas' response? _____

-v.31 What was John's purpose in writing his gospel account of Jesus' life? _____

Something to Think About: Belief in Jesus is at the core of Christianity. It begins with belief in Him as our Savior from sin, but faith can never be set aside. Our actions, our words, and our thoughts demonstrate whether or not we believe what God promised to us.

What are some of His promises?

-He'll never leave us or forsake us.

-He will intercede on our behalf in our prayer life.

-He cannot and will not ever NOT love us.

-He gives us absolutely everything we need to live a godly life for Him.

- He provides peace despite any and all turbulent happenings.
- Our efforts for Him in the here and now will be hugely rewarded in eternity.

The list goes on and on. List some of YOUR favorite promises!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, March 15, 2022

-Be sure to take a few minutes for prayer before reading Scripture. Who better than the Author to ask for help to understand it and apply it to your life?

-Read Romans 1:8-17

"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. 9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you 10 always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you. 11 For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you— 12 that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. 13 I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles. 14 I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. 15 So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

-v.8 Why is Paul thankful for the Christians in Rome? _____

-v.9-10 What has Paul been doing for them? _____

-v.16 What is the "power of God for salvation?" _____

-v.17 What is "written?" _____

Something to Think About: What a great follow-up to yesterday's study! "The righteous will live by faith."

Being righteous is the state of "being in the right" in relation to God. "Righteous" begins with a declaration of God—as a result of the work of Christ, the individual who believes in Jesus as Savior is declared legally "upright" or "in good standing with the Judge." Righteousness then is supposed to go on to be a character, a lifestyle, a set of choices, priorities, and goals that are in keeping with God's holiness. In other words, living pleasing to Him—according to His standards and wishes. It is our duty and honor and great privilege to live in such a way as to please God with our right living. Praise His name, He helps us to do this by means of Scripture, the indwelling Holy Spirit, the preaching and teaching of our pastor, through conversations with mature

believers, through biblical media, and biblically accurate music.

What a good use of our time to pause and list some of the ways God has taught us about what it means to live in a right way according to His standard in our life, but perhaps even in just the last week or so. If applicable, thank any people who have influenced you in a God-honoring way. Be sure, too, to thank GOD. There is no such thing as thanking God too much!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, March 16, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Romans 8:28-39

"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. 29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. 31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? 33 Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? 36 As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

-Write out verse 28 _____

-v.29 What does God want us to be conformed to? _____

-v.31 If God is for us, can anyone defeat us? _____

-v.35 What can separate us from the love of Christ? _____

-v.37 Do we have to merely hang on by our fingernails to remain faithful to God? _____

Something to Think About: What an incredible passage this is! I hope you read and re-read it until you are able to shout, "Hallelujah!"

-God has called each of us PERSONALLY for His purpose. HE CHOSE YOU to belong to Him!

-God desires for us to be becoming like His Son, Jesus Christ, in true righteousness and holiness. He allows

challenges into our lives to mold us into that “good.”

-Those who have trusted in Christ as Savior ARE justified and glorified (because of what Jesus did on our behalf)!

-God is “for us” and nothing and no one can stand against Him! We are 100% secure in Him.

-God will do all He promised –perfectly and in the perfect time.

-Jesus Christ Himself is even right this moment interceding on our behalf. He is helping us to become conformed to His image every single second of every single day.

-It is impossible to get beyond God’s loving reach or to have something or someone breech His love and protection.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Thursday, March 17, 2022

-Be sure to take a few minutes for prayer before reading Scripture. Who better than the Author to ask for help to understand it and apply it to your life?

-Read Romans 12:9-21

“Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. 10 Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. 11 Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. 12 Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. 13 Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. 17 Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. 19 Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” 20 To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

-v.9 ... Abhor what is _____; _____ to what is good.

-v.10 ... _____ one another in showing honor.

-v.11 Do not be slothful in _____...serve the _____.

-v.12 ... be constant in _____.

-v.13 Contribute to the needs of the _____ and seek to show _____.

-v.16 Live in _____ with one another.

-v.18 ...live _____ with all.

-v.19 It is written: _____ is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord.

-Write out verse 21 _____

Something to Think About: What a wonderful passage to help us know in a very practical way how to live a

life of faith in God. Our behavior must reflect Scripture; Scripture must be the measuring tool by which we judge what is a good and bad attitude or action.

There is so much here! Read it again and again. By God's grace and power, do it.

BONUS: You could have a pretty awesome several days of Bible study and implementation by prayerfully and purposefully applying the principles of Romans 12 one at a time to your days. For example, pray on day one to understand and live out genuine love, to choose to abhor all that is evil and hold fast to what is good all day long. I would recommend writing the verse down to carry with you and refer to often. Don't forget, too, to pray often to ask God to help you please Him in these areas. On day two, Pray for the right attitudes and actions in the area of brotherly love (v.10), and so on. Give it a try! (Be ready for some AWESOME praises the next time your pastor asks for testimonies!)

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Friday, March 18, 2022

-Be sure to take a few minutes for prayer before reading Scripture. Who better than the Author to ask for help to understand it and apply it to your life?

-Read Romans 14:8-13

"For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. 9 For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. 10 Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; 11 for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." 12 So then each of us will give an account of himself to God. 13 Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother."

-v.8 When alive and after death, we belong to _____

-v.10 Who will stand before God's judgment seat? _____

-v.11 What is written? "every knee _____

-v.12 What will we give account of? _____

-v.13 What two things should we not do to our brothers and sisters in Christ? _____

Something to Think About: This passage has truths in common with what we studied in Matthew 7: God is the final Authority, not our opinions and ideas about what we think God said. Of course, we MUST stand firm for Scripture and never compromise in what it commands, but neither can we judge others on things that Scripture doesn't forbid. There is an important line between Bible convictions and preferences. Convictions are our determination to obey God's Word exactly as He said to (i.e. "Do not lie"); preferences are things that we

think ought to be a certain way (i.e. letting your children run in the auditorium). It is necessary to stand behind the areas where you know God wants you to stand, but we have no right to force others to conform to our wishes. That being said, there IS something to be said about refraining from some action that might offend another believer. It may not be sinful for you to do it, but if it causes someone else to be upset, showing Christian love would be to not do it. Paul talks about this in I Corinthians 8.

In the end, we will ALL stand before the Lord individually to give an account for what WE did—and why. Taking care that our behavior isn’t a reason for a younger believer to falter in their walk with the Lord matters to Him.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Saturday, March 19, 2022

-Be sure to take a few minutes for prayer before reading Scripture. Who better than the Author to ask for help to understand it and apply it to your life?

-Read Romans 15:1-6

“We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2 Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. 3 For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me.” 4 For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. 5 May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, 6 that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

- v.1 What should the “strong” bear with? _____
- v.2 What is the goal in dealing with other believers? _____
- v.4 Scripture written in the former days was for our _____, to give us _____.
- v.5 Harmony among believers comes as we all follow Whom? _____
- v.6 What then can we do with one voice? _____

Something to Think About: We might never agree with every tiny little quirk of our Christian brethren, but we can choose to love them. To appreciate them. To thank God for them. We can uphold them in prayer and encourage them in their efforts to live lives that please God. We can stand next to them to glorify and praise God in a spirit of unity. This pleases God.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Sunday, March 20, 2022

-Be sure to take a few minutes for prayer before reading Scripture. Who better than the Author to ask for help to understand it and apply it to your life?

-Read I Corinthians 2:9-10

"But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"—10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God."

-Write out "what is written" in verse 9

Something to Think About: Looking for some encouragement to keep on keeping on? Here it is! "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him." Wow.

Doesn't this remind you a bit of what a parent might promise their child? "We've got a HUGE surprise for you!" - knowing that their child's eyes will open wide and their face will light up in great expectation.

Fellow child of God, in your dark days and darker nights, remember this: it will be worth it all. God has incredible, mind-boggling, incomprehensibly wonderful things planned for you—and for all who love Him. Stay the course! The days may seem unending and dark, but today's hardships are just a blip in the screen of a glorious light-filled eternity in the presence of our God!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Monday, March 21, 2022

-Be sure to take a few minutes for prayer before reading Scripture. Who better than the Author to ask for help to understand it and apply it to your life?

-Read II Corinthians 9:6-15

“The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. 9 As it is written, “He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.” 10 He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. 11 You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. 12 For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God. 13 By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others, 14 while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you. 15 Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!”

- v.6 What point must we remember? _____
- v.7 What kind of giver pleases God? _____
- v.7 What kind displeases Him? _____
- v.8 “And God is _____ to make all grace abound to you...”
- v.10 Will God leave us without? _____
- v.11 What does generosity result in? _____
- v.12 Who ultimately will get thanks in our service? _____
- v.13 What else will men do? _____
- v.15 “Thanks be to _____ for His inexpressible gift!”

Something to Think About:

Have you ever considered that when a farmer sows his seeds that he is actually throwing something valuable into the dirt? Doesn't that sound foolish? Well, until you realize that it takes planting seeds in the ground in order to harvest a crop at the end of the season. He has to “give” in order to get.

Further, besides simply the necessity of sowing his seed in order to have a harvest, HOW MUCH he sows will direct how much he reaps. Simple math. What's so cool, though, is that there are NO physical lessons that don't also contain great spiritual truths! In this case, Paul is pointing out to his listeners that there is no such thing as outgiving God, so Christians should not only invest heavily in the lives of other believers, they should do so with joy knowing that God rewards obedience to Him—and that ultimately He will receive great glory (this is specifically addressing generosity with our money, but these same truths can be applied to other possessions, our time, and all areas of sacrificial help to brothers and sisters in Christ).

Because of God's abounding grace to us, we can, in turn, abound in generosity to others. God is the first and best Giver— He gave His Son. All true Christian giving is a response of gratitude for this gift that is beyond description. Also, don't miss out on the issue of attitude. God loves (“approves of”) cheerful givers. This, in turn, honors Him. What a lovely cycle!

BONUS: additional Scripture on sowing and reaping: Psalm 126:5-6; Proverbs 11:24-25; Proverbs 19:17; Proverbs 22:8-9; Matthew 6:26; Luke 6:38; John 4:36-37; Galatians 6:7-10)

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, March 22, 2022

-Be sure to take a few minutes for prayer before reading Scripture. Who better than the Author to ask for help to understand it and apply it to your life?

-Read I Peter 1:13-21

"Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, 15 but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." 17 And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, 18 knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. 20 He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you 21 who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God."

- v.13 Prepare your mind for _____
-v.13 being _____
-v.13 set your hope _____ on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.
-v.14 do not be _____ to the passions of our former ignorance,
-v.15 but as _____ Who called you is _____, so also be holy in _____ your conduct.
-v.16 What is written? _____
-v.19 What was the price for our redemption? _____

Something to Think About: In order to be becoming imitators of God, in order to honor God and bring Him glory, in order to live a life that is useful in our service to God, we need to be holy as He is holy.

Being holy is two things: being set apart FROM sin and being set apart TO God (becoming conformed to God's standard both inside and outside as demonstrated by our lives and character.)

This passage provided a super helpful motive and goal in our seeking to be holy in all our conduct. Did you see it? Verse 13 directs us to "prepare" our minds for action. This is the picture of gathering up our long work-robes and being ready to WORK. Why? Because our confidence and sure hope is focused on the at-any-moment return of Jesus Christ to take all believers back to heaven with Him.

The challenges we face on this earth are VERY TEMPORARY. Furthermore, the pull of sin no longer has any real power over us because of the precious blood of the Lamb. His victory over sin and death made it so we are not imprisoned by sin either. We never HAVE TO sin. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can refuse to sin and choose to be holy. We CAN be holy as He is holy.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

The next few days of our work will focus on additional passages from the Old Testament that use "word" in them

Wednesday, March 23, 2022

-Be sure to take a few minutes for prayer before reading Scripture. Who better than the Author to ask for help to understand it and apply it to your life?

-Read Deuteronomy 6:1-9

"Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the rules—that the Lord your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, 2 that you may fear the Lord your God, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long. 3 Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey. 4 "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

-v.1 Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the rules—that the Lord your God commanded me to teach you, that you may _____ in the land to which you are going over, to possess it,

-v.2 that you may fear the Lord your God, you and your son and your son's son, by _____ his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long.

-v.3 Hear therefore, O Israel, and _____ to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

-v.4 "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is _____.

-v.5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your _____ and with all your _____ and with all your _____.

-v.6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your _____.

-v.7 You shall teach them _____ to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

Something to Think About: Though this amazing passage was written to the Hebrew people, it still ought to be underlined in your Bible and referenced often. Basically, it reminds us that everything we do, everything that surrounds us, everything that happens in our life, can and must be used to teach about God—His likes and dislikes, His awesome power, His demand for holy living. Whether or not we have children, we all have people in our lives who need to know about our amazing God.

Are you proving your love for Him in how you live and through what you say?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Thursday, March 24, 2022

-Be sure to take a few minutes for prayer before reading Scripture. Who better than the Author to ask for help to understand it and apply it to your life?

-Read Exodus 20:1-17

"And God spoke all these words, saying, 2 "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. 3 "You shall have no other gods before me. 4 "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. 5 You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, 6 but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. 7 "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. 8 "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. 11 For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. 12 "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. 13 "You shall not murder. 14 "You shall not commit adultery. 15 "You shall not steal. 16 "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. 17 "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's."

Summarize the commands of God in the following verses:

- v.3 _____
- v.4 _____
- v.7 _____
- v.8 _____
- v.12 _____
- v.13 _____
- v.14 _____
- v.15 _____
- v.16 _____
- v.17 _____

Something to Think About: These Ten Commandments were given to the Israelites, as the condensation of all of God's law for the Jewish people.

In a very simple way, the first five remind us that God is the only God and we must worship Him and obey Him in the manner HE dictates. The second five have to do with our relationships to other people. Jesus said a lot about this while on earth (remember the lesson of the good Samaritan?). Basically, treat others better than you do yourself. Consider others as the more important person in your actions.

Jesus said the entire Old Testament (including these Ten Commandments) could be summed up in loving God with everything we are and have, and loving our neighbor as ourselves. That simple, that important.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Friday, March 25, 2022

-Be sure to take a few minutes for prayer before reading Scripture. Who better than the Author to ask for help to understand it and apply it to your life?

-Read the following references from the Book of Psalms and summarize what they say about God's Word:

Psalm 12:6 "The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times."

Psalm 18:30 "This God—his way is perfect; the word of the Lord proves true; he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him."

Psalm 33:4 "For the word of the Lord is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness."

Something to Think About: God's words are pure, true, and upright.

The word "pure" denotes the absence of impurity, filthiness, defilement, or imperfection. Our world is ENTIRELY impure! How thankful we should be that we have God's Word to refer to often so that we can recalibrate our easily-led astray thoughts to God's perfect and pure (flawless) ones!

The word "true" contains the concept "to refine, try, smelt, test" - as one might do with a metal to remove impurities. Psalm 18:30 reminds us that God's way is perfect and His Word has been proven trustworthy—making Him the perfect Refuge and Shield for His children.

The word "upright" means straight, correct, level, righteous. In other words, God's Word is THE STANDARD for what God defines as right. In a world overwhelmed with confusion and wildly different opinions,

God’s Word is RIGHT. This is such an enormous truth, in fact, that Psalm 33 is all about praising God (did you notice how verse 4 begins “For,” challenging us to look up what was said before it?). Read, enjoy, then spend some time thanking God for His pure, true, and upright Word.

“Shout for joy in the Lord, O you righteous! Praise befits the upright. Give thanks to the Lord with the lyre; make melody to him with the harp of ten strings! Sing to him a new song; play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts. For the word of the Lord is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness. He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord. By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host. He gathers the waters of the sea as a heap; he puts the deeps in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him! For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm. The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; he frustrates the plans of the peoples. The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations. Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage! The Lord looks down from heaven; he sees all the children of man; from where he sits enthroned he looks out on all the inhabitants of the earth, he who fashions the hearts of them all and observes all their deeds. The king is not saved by his great army; a warrior is not delivered by his great strength. The war horse is a false hope for salvation, and by its great might it cannot rescue. Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him, on those who hope in his steadfast love, that he may deliver their soul from death and keep them alive in famine. Our soul waits for the Lord; he is our help and our shield. For our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name. Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we hope in you.”

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Saturday, March 26, 2022

-Be sure to take a few minutes for prayer before reading Scripture. Who better than the Author to ask for help to understand it and apply it to your life?

-Read the following references from the Book of Psalms and summarize what they say about words that displease God. (Please note that they are each identifying the “wicked” and “evildoers.”)

-Psalm 36:3

“The words of his mouth are trouble and deceit; he has ceased to act wisely and do good.”

-Psalm 50:17

“For you hate discipline, and you cast my words behind you.”

-Psalm 52:4

“You love all words that devour, O deceitful tongue.”

-Psalm 94:4

“They pour out their arrogant words; all the evildoers boast.”

Something to Think About: Those who are wicked and doers of evil are characterized by words that cause trouble, are deceitful, disregard God’s Word, look to “devour” others, and are arrogant. We might like to think that this couldn’t describe children of God, but prayerfully evaluate what words you might have used recently when someone has pushed all your buttons one time too many (whether you vocalized these words or just thought them). I think that if we’re being honest, we find we can pretty easily switch from a “Well, bless you, friend, you have been a blessing to me!” to “Thanks for nothing, ‘friend,’ see if I help you the next time you are having a crisis!” These things ought not to be!

In fact, the Book of James also has a lot to say about what displeases God in our words. One main point is the serious moral contradiction of using the same organ to both praise and curse. This shouldn’t be! Pray and ask God to help you please Him with your words consistently and with a heart attitude that honors Him and is concerned with helping the other person (most especially, in their spiritual growth).

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Sunday, March 27, 2022

-Be sure to take a few minutes for prayer before reading Scripture. Who better than the Author to ask for help to understand it and apply it to your life?

-Read the following references from the Book of Psalms and summarize how we can please God with our words (and thoughts).

-Psalm 19:14

“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.”

-Psalm 56:10

“In God, whose word I praise, in the Lord, whose word I praise.”

-Psalm 106:12

“Then they believed his words; they sang his praise.”

-Psalm 130:5

“I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope.”

Something to Think About: Studying God’s Word teaches us what is truly praiseworthy, worthwhile, and what provides genuine hope and direction. The more we fill our heads and hearts with God’s words, the more we will be able to recognize what is praiseworthy and what isn’t (what God says v. what the world says), what is a worthwhile use of our time, energy, and investment - and where we can find THE answers to life’s questions that elude so many (because they cannot be found apart from Him).

AND the more we study God’s Word in order to recognize what is praiseworthy, worthwhile, and full of hope, we will ourselves be able to think and speak after the pattern God has given us in Scripture, resulting in Him being pleased with us, bringing Him praise and glory, and becoming a testimony to those who hear us, both believers and unbelievers. God’s Word points to the Anchor for our souls—something we can share with the many hurting folks who come into our lives on a regular basis.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Monday, March 28, 2022

-Be sure to take a few minutes for prayer before reading Scripture. Who better than the Author to ask for help to understand it and apply it to your life?

-Read the following references from the Book of Proverbs and summarize what they say about words.

-Proverbs 10:19

“When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent.”

-Proverbs 16:27

“A worthless man plots evil, and his speech is like a scorching fire.”

-Proverbs 18:8

“The words of a whisperer are like delicious morsels; they go down into the inner parts of the body.”

-Proverbs 23:9

“Do not speak in the hearing of a fool, for he will despise the good sense of your words.”

Something to Think About: One lesson that we might be able to get from these verses is that we would be wise to learn when NOT to speak (and, of course, when to not LISTEN).

It's kind of a rare female that doesn't enjoy a good long chat with a friend (and men aren't immune to this either!). We enjoy sharing what's happening in our lives, often exaggerating some of the facts to make them more interesting, funny, or impressive. It's a short hop from embellishment to lying. I doubt there are too many of us who can't think of an occasion where we said too much or in which we wished we had never opened our mouths. Thank God, however, He always forgives us when we ask Him to—and—He gives us each new day as an opportunity to use our mouths to praise Him and build others up in the things of the Lord.

May God guide our words to be edifying, God-honoring—and few.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, March 29, 2022

-Be sure to take a few minutes for prayer before reading Scripture. Who better than the Author to ask for help to understand it and apply it to your life?

-Read the following references from the Book of Proverbs and summarize what they say about words.

-Proverbs 12:25

"Anxiety in a man's heart weighs him down, but a good word makes him glad."

-Proverbs 15:1

"A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."

-Proverbs 15:23

"To make an apt answer is a joy to a man, and a word in season, how good it is!"

-Proverbs 16:24

"Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body."

Something to Think About: Kind, gentle, timely, pleasant, healing—these are the descriptors of words that

honor God and help others. How can your words be described?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, March 30, 2022

-Be sure to take a few minutes for prayer before reading Scripture. Who better than the Author to ask for help to understand it and apply it to your life?

-Read Isaiah 40:6-8

“A voice says, “Cry!” And I said, “What shall I cry?” All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. 7 The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the Lord blows on it; surely the people are grass. 8 The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.”

-v.6 All flesh is _____, and its beauty is like the _____ of the field.

-v.7 grass _____; flowers _____

-v.8 “... BUT, the _____ or our _____ will stand _____

Something to Think About: People tend to believe those who are considered experts. However, as years pass, different “experts” replace the first ones—with a very different message. Who are we to believe?

God says His Word never fails or falls. It has—and will—stand forever. Trust in the reliable Word of God. It has lasting solutions for all our problems and needs. After all, its Author is the One Who made us and sustains us!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Thursday, March 31, 2022

-Be sure to take a few minutes for prayer before reading Scripture. Who better than the Author to ask for help to understand it and apply it to your life?

-Read Jeremiah 15:16

“Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart, for I am called by your name, O Lord, God of hosts.”

-What did Jeremiah do with God’s words? _____

-How did they affect him? _____

-Why? _____

Something to Think About: What a fun and interesting verse! Jeremiah read God’s Word, “ingested” it, and then made it a part of who he was.

We too often read Scripture without paying the least attention to what we read and then close our Bibles with a thump and say, “There. I’ve had my devotions.” We may even be surprised when our lives don’t change and we are useless to God, having never made His Word part of who we are. My prayer is that each of us will really read, then chew, then ingest—becoming more and more like the Beloved Christ Whose name we bear.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Friday, April 1, 2022

-Pause before beginning to commit your time in God’s Word for Him to use it however, whenever, and wherever He sees fit. Ask for help to understand what you are reading and then to know how to apply it to your day and life. Be sure to confess any known sin so that God will be free to show you wondrous things from His Word.

-Read the following verses from Psalm 119 that contain the same word found in verse 105, “dabar,” translated “word.” Underline something from each verse that gives you a more full understanding of what this word means and how it might help you better understand verse 105.

Psalm 119

9 How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word.

16 I will delight in your statutes I will not forget your word.

18 Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.

25 My soul clings to the dust; give me life according to your word!

28 My soul melts away for sorrow; strengthen me according to your word!

42 then shall I have an answer for him who taunts me, for I trust in your word.

43 And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth, for my hope is in your rules.

49 Remember your word to your servant, in which you have made me hope.
 57 The Lord is my portion; I promise to keep your words.
 65 You have dealt well with your servant, O Lord, according to your word.
 74 Those who fear you shall see me and rejoice, because I have hoped in your word.
 81 My soul longs for your salvation; I hope in your word.
 89 Forever, O Lord, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens.
 101 I hold back my feet from every evil way, in order to keep your word.
 107 I am severely afflicted; give me life, O Lord, according to your word!
 114 You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope in your word.
 130 The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.
 139 My zeal consumes me, because my foes forget your words.
 147 I rise before dawn and cry for help; I hope in your words.
 160 The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever.
 161 Princes persecute me without cause, but my heart stands in awe of your words.
 169 Let my cry come before you, O Lord; give me understanding according to your word!

(Quadruple Bonus Points if you take the time to look back on some of the other verses you have looked up since January 1st. Each one has something to do with God's amazing "word.")

-What have you learned that you didn't know before?

-How have you been challenged in your current walk with God?

-What are you going to do about it?

-Are there any questions you have that need to be pursued?

-What words, concepts, truths do you feel the need to do more research on?

Something to Think About: We have made only a small dent in what there is to know about our need to love and appreciate God's Word better. Will you keep studying and never quit until the day you are standing before God and can thank Him for this amazing gift in person? Being able to do so is a TREMENDOUS privilege and blessing!

Time to move on to a word study of "lamp" as a continuation of our study of the major words used in Psalm 119:105.

Lamps in Bible times were nothing like our modern lamps. They aren't what most people picture as an "old" lamp, nor were they candles. Lamps in the middle east in Bible times were small pots made of clay that held olive oil and had an opening for a wick made of linen or flax. The wick was lit, and, voilà, light. (link to an image of an oil lamp: <https://earlychurchhistory.org/commerce/the-jesus-boat/oil-lamp/>)

Lamps came in different sizes and shapes including larger ones for a home and tiny ones that could be used much the same way we would use a flashlight.

In this study, I want you to note all the different ways lamps were used in Scripture. Sometimes it is in the literal sense of a lamp, but it is also often used symbolically of other things. We will see “lamp” referring to King David and his descendants, as representing a person’s life, and as representing God Himself.

The care and use of lamps teaches us spiritual lessons such as wisdom, understanding, diligence, and usefulness. I hope you are excited—there are a lot of fascinating things to learn. As you work, keep in the back of your mind the truth of Psalm 119:105: God’s Word is the “lamp” for our feet.

Saturday, April 2, 2022

-Pause before beginning to commit your time in God’s Word for Him to use it however, whenever, and wherever He sees fit. Ask for help to understand what you are reading and then to know how to apply it to your day and life. Be sure to confess any known sin so that God will be free to show you wondrous things from His Word.

-Let’s begin our study of “lamp” by looking at references to a literal lamp. This lamp had a very specialized purpose. It was one of the pieces of furniture God commanded to be placed in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle and Temple.

-Read Exodus 25:31-40

“You shall make a lampstand of pure gold. The lampstand shall be made of hammered work: its base, its stem, its cups, its calyxes, and its flowers shall be of one piece with it. And there shall be six branches going out of its sides, three branches of the lampstand out of one side of it and three branches of the lampstand out of the other side of it; three cups made like almond blossoms, each with calyx and flower, on one branch, and three cups made like almond blossoms, each with calyx and flower, on the other branch—so for the six branches going out of the lampstand. And on the lampstand itself there shall be four cups made like almond blossoms, with their calyxes and flowers, and a calyx of one piece with it under each pair of the six branches going out from the lampstand. Their calyxes and their branches shall be of one piece with it, the whole of it a single piece of hammered work of pure gold. You shall make seven lamps for it. And the lamps shall be set up so as to give light on the space in front of it. Its tongs and their trays shall be of pure gold. It shall be made, with all these utensils, out of a talent of pure gold. And see that you make them after the pattern for them, which is being shown you on the mountain.”

-True or False. God allowed the people to design the lampstand any way they wanted.

-True or False. The lampstand consisted of seven lamps, each burning oil.

-Read Exodus 40:24-25

“He put the lampstand in the tent of meeting, opposite the table on the south side of the tabernacle, and set up the lamps before the Lord, as the Lord had commanded Moses.”

-True or False. Moses did everything as the Lord commanded him.

Something to Think About: Right off the bat, we find that the lampstand was made (wait for it!) TO GIVE LIGHT! It was to be lit night and day. There are all sorts of important things that we can learn from the contents of the Tabernacle, but a pretty straightforward one is that lamps are made to give light—and that light is to bring glory to God. An application to those of us living in the twenty-first century is the reminder that WE are lights that represent Christ to the world around us. Our lights should always bring glory to God.

Another application here, though, is to note that Moses was careful to do everything as God commanded him to do - and God praised Him for this. We, too, need to be extra-careful in our obedience to God. It is never our “right” to decide whether or not to obey God. Nor is it our place to decide how much of what He says to do we will obey. If God tells us to do something, do it. Do it right. Do it completely.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Sunday, April 3, 2022

-Pause before beginning to commit your time in God's Word for Him to use it however, whenever, and wherever He sees fit. Ask for help to understand what you are reading and then to know how to apply it to your day and life. Be sure to confess any known sin so that God will be free to show you wondrous things from His Word.

-The following passage mentions a lamp, but it isn't the focus of the story. However, there are some important things to learn.

-Read I Samuel 3:1-10

"Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord in the presence of Eli. And the word of the Lord was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision. 2 At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place. 3 The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. 4 Then the Lord called Samuel, and he said, 'Here I am!' 5 and ran to Eli and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' But he said, 'I did not call; lie down again.' So he went and lay down. 6 And the Lord called again, 'Samuel!' and Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' But he said, 'I did not call, my son; lie down again.' 7 Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. 8 And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. 9 Therefore Eli said to Samuel, 'Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant hears.''" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. 10 And the Lord came and stood, calling as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant hears."

-v.1 Which two people are mentioned? _____

-v.1 What was rare at this time? _____

-v.4 Who called to Samuel? _____

-v.4-5 Was the voice audible? How do we know _____

-v.10 "Then Samuel said, 'Speak, for your _____.'" _____

Something to Think About: If you attended Sunday school as a child, this passage will be familiar to you. There are many things to note here: God uses children in His service, God bypassed His own High Priest at this time because of sin in Eli's family, Samuel acknowledged himself as a servant of God and willingly listened to what God said, and Samuel faithfully (and accurately) repeated exactly what God told him.

I want you to notice a bittersweet truth. Verse one said that the word of the Lord was rare in those days. How sad! One reason this may be true was because the people had stopped listening to God. That is, they no longer obeyed what He said, so He stopped saying it. The sweet part of this is that God did begin speaking again because Samuel was willing to listen and obey. You and I might have failed God, and as a result, feel far from Him, but the second we turn to Him in confession and repentance (admitting our sin and our readiness to do things God's way) He will forgive and forget, and our relationship will be restored.

Are you listening right now to what God is telling YOU through His Word?

(FYI: It is believed Samuel was probably about 12 in this account. The lamp mentioned is the lampstand in the Holy Place. That it is mentioned as having not yet gone out indicates it was close to dawn when God spoke to Samuel.)

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Monday, April 4, 2022

-Pause before beginning to commit your time in God's Word for Him to use it however, whenever, and wherever He sees fit. Ask for help to understand what you are reading and then to know how to apply it to your day and life. Be sure to confess any known sin so that God will be free to show you wondrous things from His Word.

-Read II Samuel 21:15-17

"There was war again between the Philistines and Israel, and David went down together with his servants, and they fought against the Philistines. And David grew weary. 16 And Ishbi-benob, one of the descendants of the giants, whose spear weighed three hundred shekels of bronze, and who was armed with a new sword, thought to kill David. 17 But Abishai the son of Zeruiah came to his aid and attacked the Philistine and killed him. Then David's men swore to him, "You shall no longer go out with us to battle, lest you quench the lamp of Israel."

-v.15 What two countries were at war? _____

-Who was Israel's King? _____

-v.16-17 What almost happened to David? _____

-v.17 One of David's men vowed that David would never again go with them into battle so that what could not happen? _____

Something to Think About: "The lamp of Israel" here is referring to David as Israel's king, but it is also a reference to God's promise to send His Messiah through David's line. David's men didn't want David's life jeopardized. They wanted to both protect their nation at that time as well as their hope for the Messiah to come one day to save Israel's future.

Of course, they were right to protect their king, but on the other hand, God always does what He promises and wouldn't have allowed David to die before the time was right. Does that free us to be foolhardy because we know God won't take us home until He says it is time? Certainly not. Acting foolishly never pleases God. Time is too short for anything other than learning about God from Scripture and then living in such a way as to please Him by becoming more and more like Jesus Christ in every area.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, April 5, 2022

-Pause before beginning to commit your time in God's Word for Him to use it however, whenever, and wherever He sees fit. Ask for help to understand what you are reading and then to know how to apply it to your day and life. Be sure to confess any known sin so that God will be free to show you wondrous things from His Word.

-Read II Samuel 22:21-29

"The Lord dealt with me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands he rewarded me. 22 For I have kept the ways of the Lord and have not wickedly departed from my God. 3 For all his rules were before me, and from his statutes I did not turn aside. 24 I was blameless before him, and I kept myself from guilt. 25 And the Lord has rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to my cleanness in his sight. 26 "With the merciful you show yourself merciful; with the blameless man you show yourself blameless; 27 with the purified you deal purely, and with the crooked you make yourself seem tortuous. 28 You save a humble people, but your eyes are on the haughty to bring them down. 29 For you are my lamp, O Lord, and my God lightens my darkness."

-v.21 How had the Lord dealt with David? _____

-v.22 Why? _____

-v.26 Who sees God's mercy? _____

-v.29 God is David's _____

-God _____ darkness.

Something to Think About: This wonderful song of praise by David comes after God delivered him from death in the battle we read about yesterday. The entire chapter is David glorifying God and talking about His incredible attributes and actions. You should read the whole thing!

Verse 29, though, seems especially appropriate to our study of Psalm 119:105. Clearly, David knew the truth that God is the Lamp that changes darkness into light.

FYI: Psalm 18 repeats this chapter almost exactly (we will be looking at this on April 7th).

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, April 6, 2022

-Pause before beginning to commit your time in God's Word for Him to use it however, whenever, and wherever He sees fit. Ask for help to understand what you are reading and then to know how to apply it to your day and life. Be sure to confess any known sin so that God will be free to show you wondrous things from His Word.

-Read Job 29:1-5

"And Job again took up his discourse, and said: 2 "Oh, that I were as in the months of old, as in the days when God watched over me, 3 when his lamp shone upon my head, and by his light I walked through darkness, 4 as I was in my prime, when the friendship of God was upon my tent, 5 when the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were all around me."

- v.2 What is Job longing for? _____
-v.3 What shone on his head? _____
-By what did he walk through darkness? _____
-v.4 What had blessed his home? _____

Something to Think About: Job is remembering former joy. Clearly he, like King David, understood God's light and how it makes walking in darkness possible. Sometimes we get discouraged. Everyone does at one point or another. The important thing is what we do about it. Pity parties don't work. Being unkind to other people doesn't work. Accusing God doesn't work. All these things simply add sin to our discouragement. The answer is always the same—look to the Light of God made manifest in Scripture to lead you out of darkness.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Thursday, April 7, 2022

-Pause before beginning to commit your time in God's Word for Him to use it however, whenever, and wherever

ever He sees fit. Ask for help to understand what you are reading and then to know how to apply it to your day and life. Be sure to confess any known sin so that God will be free to show you wondrous things from His Word.

-Read Psalm 18 (This Psalm is the same as II Samuel 22 with a few variations.)

“To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, the servant of the Lord, who addressed the words of this song to the Lord on the day when the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. He said: 18 I love you, O Lord, my strength. 2 The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. 3 I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies. 4 The cords of death encompassed me; the torrents of destruction assailed me; 5 the cords of Sheol entangled me; the snares of death confronted me. 6 In my distress I called upon the Lord; to my God I cried for help. From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears. 7 Then the earth reeled and rocked; the foundations also of the mountains trembled and quaked, because he was angry. 8 Smoke went up from his nostrils, and devouring fire from his mouth; glowing coals flamed forth from him. 9 He bowed the heavens and came down; thick darkness was under his feet. 10 He rode on a cherub and flew; he came swiftly on the wings of the wind. 11 He made darkness his covering, his canopy around him, thick clouds dark with water. 12 Out of the brightness before him hailstones and coals of fire broke through his clouds. 13 The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Most High uttered his voice, hailstones and coals of fire. 14 And he sent out his arrows and scattered them; he flashed forth lightnings and routed them. 15 Then the channels of the sea were seen, and the foundations of the world were laid bare at your rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of your nostrils. 16 He sent from on high, he took me; he drew me out of many waters. 17 He rescued me from my strong enemy and from those who hated me, for they were too mighty for me. 18 They confronted me in the day of my calamity, but the Lord was my support. 19 He brought me out into a broad place; he rescued me, because he delighted in me. 20 The Lord dealt with me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands he rewarded me. 21 For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God. 22 For all his rules were before me, and his statutes I did not put away from me. 23 I was blameless before him, and I kept myself from my guilt. 24 So the Lord has rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight. 25 With the merciful you show yourself merciful; with the blameless man you show yourself blameless; 26 with the purified you show yourself pure; and with the crooked you make yourself seem tortuous. 27 For you save a humble people, but the haughty eyes you bring down. 28 For it is you who light my lamp; the Lord my God lightens my darkness. 29 For by you I can run against a troop, and by my God I can leap over a wall. 30 This God—his way is perfect; the word of the Lord proves true; he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him. 31 For who is God, but the Lord? And who is a rock, except our God?— 32 the God who equipped me with strength and made my way blameless. 33 He made my feet like the feet of a deer and set me secure on the heights. 34 He trains my hands for war, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze. 35 You have given me the shield of your salvation, and your right hand supported me, and your gentleness made me great. 36 You gave a wide place for my steps under me, and my feet did not slip. 37 I pursued my enemies and overtook them, and did not turn back till they were consumed. 38 I thrust them through, so that they were not able to rise; they fell under my feet. 39 For you equipped me with strength for the battle; you made those who rise against me sink under me. 40 You made my enemies turn their backs to me, and those who hated me I destroyed. 41 They cried for help, but there was none to save; they cried to the Lord, but he did not answer them. 42 I beat them fine as dust before the wind; I cast them out like the mire of the streets. 43 You delivered me from strife with the people; you made me the head of the nations; people whom I had not known served me. 44 As soon as they heard of me they obeyed me; foreigners came cringing to me. 45 Foreigners lost heart and came trembling out of their fortresses. 46 The Lord lives, and blessed be my rock, and exalted be the God of my salvation— 47 the God who gave me vengeance and subdued peoples under me, 48 who rescued me from my enemies; yes, you exalted me above those who rose against me; you delivered me from the man of violence. 49 For this I will praise you, O Lord, among the nations, and sing to your name. 50 Great salvation he brings to his king, and shows steadfast love to his anointed, to David and his offspring forever.”

-Verse one isn't found in II Samuel 22. What does it say?

-v.28 Who keeps David's "lamp" burning (Who keeps him alive)? _____
-David is thankful that God turns his darkness into _____
-v.30 God's way is _____ ... The Word of the Lord proves _____ ... He is a
_____ for all who take refuge in Him.

Something to Think About: Perhaps if we learned to view God as David did we, too, could praise Him this exuberantly and trust Him this implicitly—no matter what the circumstances around us. Perhaps we could then be called a “woman after God’s own heart.”

Take some time to go back over this psalm and underline some of the truths about God that are especially precious to you. Thank God for them!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Friday, April 8, 2022

-Pause before beginning to commit your time in God’s Word for Him to use it however, whenever, and wherever He sees fit. Ask for help to understand what you are reading and then to know how to apply it to your day and life. Be sure to confess any known sin so that God will be free to show you wondrous things from His Word.

-Read Psalm 119:105-112

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. 106 I have sworn an oath and confirmed it, to keep your righteous rules. 107 I am severely afflicted; give me life, O Lord, according to your word! 108 Accept my freewill offerings of praise, O Lord, and teach me your rules. 109 I hold my life in my hand continually, but I do not forget your law. 110 The wicked have laid a snare for me, but I do not stray from your precepts. 111 Your testimonies are my heritage forever, for they are the joy of my heart. 112 I incline my heart to perform your statutes forever, to the end.””

-v.105 “Your _____ is a _____ to my _____ and a _____ to my _____.”

-v.108 What kind of praise should come out of our mouths? _____

-v.111 What is our heritage? _____

-v.112 How long should we determine to keep God’s decrees? _____

Something to Think About: Verse 105 is the leading verse in this section of Psalm 119 and it reminds us that God’s Word is what guides us safely around the “roots” and “uneven ground” of the path of life—things that would trip us up and cause us to “fall” in our Christian walk. When it lights our path, we can clearly see to avoid anything that might tempt us to stray from God. Of course, the opposite is true too. If we are not in God’s Word on a regular basis, we will stumble and fall because we cannot “see” the dangers around us because of the dark.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Saturday, April 9, 2022

-Pause before beginning to commit your time in God's Word for Him to use it however, whenever, and wherever He sees fit. Ask for help to understand what you are reading and then to know how to apply it to your day and life. Be sure to confess any known sin so that God will be free to show you wondrous things from His Word.

-Read Proverbs 6:20-23

"My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching. 21 Bind them on your heart always; tie them around your neck. 22 When you walk, they will lead you; when you lie down, they will watch over you; and when you awake, they will talk with you. 23 For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life."

-v.20 What must be kept? _____

-What must not be forsaken? _____

-v.22 What will this wisdom do as we walk? _____

-Sleep? _____

-Awake? _____

-v.23 These commands are a _____, this teaching is a _____, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of _____.

Something to Think About: If you have (or had) godly parents, thank God and listen to their God-given wisdom. If God has blessed you with other mature, godly people in your life, listen. Learn. Grow. Keep studying Scripture yourself and obey it so that you can be this kind of mentor yourself to others!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Sunday, April 10, 2022

-Pause before beginning to commit your time in God's Word for Him to use it however, whenever, and wherever He sees fit. Ask for help to understand what you are reading and then to know how to apply it to your day and life. Be sure to confess any known sin so that God will be free to show you wondrous things from His Word.

-Read Proverbs 13:9

"The light of the righteous rejoices, but the lamp of the wicked will be put out."

-What rejoices? _____
-What will be put out? _____

-Read Proverbs 21:4

"Haughty eyes and a proud heart, the lamp of the wicked, are sin."

-What two things are called sin? _____

-Read Proverbs 24:20

"For the evil man has no future; the lamp of the wicked will be put out."

-Who has no future hope? _____
-What will be "put out"? _____

Something to Think About: Proverbs often uses contrasts to teach a point. In these verses, "lamp" is used to speak about a person being alive or dead and the warning here is that God sometimes judges sin by taking a person's life.

By contrast, God will bless those who live according to God's Word ("righteously"). There is a necessary disclaimer, however, to note. The promises of good health and physical blessings for those who are obedient to God is specifically for Old Testament Jews. Those of us living in the Church Age do not have these same promises. I'm sure all of us know of someone who is extremely faithful to God who is also very financially strapped, dealing with an ongoing severe illness, or has a lot of hard things in their lives. Perhaps YOU can be described in this way!

Old Testament Jews were promised both physical blessing and prosperity when they obeyed God fully, but they were also promised some pretty sobering punishments if they disobeyed God. For us, though, the blessings (and consequences) of living the way God's Word tells us to is definitely very much worthwhile as an incentive, but it probably has little to do with our bank account or how long lived we might be. Our blessings are better, actually! They are, in fact, two-fold. Yes, living the way God commands us to provides blessings such as peace in our hearts (despite turmoil, financial struggles, or poor health). Living the way God commands brings joy (even on the gloomiest, most overwhelming days). Living the way God commands reminds us to always have confidence in God and a certainty about what's down the road.

And what is down the road? This is the second part of the blessings God gives to faithful Christians. Every single act of love to God (which is seen in our obedience to Him) will be rewarded greatly once our eternity begins. We know that at least some of this reward is bigger and better opportunities to serve God—which will bring Him even more glory and cause Him to be even more proud of us—and what could be better than that? I am 100% confident that however else God rewards His faithful children throughout eternity, it will be phenomenal—and well worth ANY amount of "sacrifice" we make in the here and now in order to set aside self and choose to live for God and to be a blessing to others.

Say, does YOUR "light" rejoice?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Monday, April 11, 2022

-Pause before beginning to commit your time in God's Word for Him to use it however, whenever, and wherever He sees fit. Ask for help to understand what you are reading and then to know how to apply it to your day and life. Be sure to confess any known sin so that God will be free to show you wondrous things from His Word.

-Read Proverbs 31:10-31

"An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels. 11 The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. 12 She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life. 13 She seeks wool and flax, and works with willing hands. 14 She is like the ships of the merchant; she brings her food from afar. 15 She rises while it is yet night and provides food for her household and portions for her maidens. 16 She considers a field and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard. 17 She dresses herself with strength and makes her arms strong. 18 She perceives that her merchandise is profitable. Her lamp does not go out at night. 19 She puts her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle. 20 She opens her hand to the poor and reaches out her hands to the needy. 21 She is not afraid of snow for her household, for all her household are clothed in scarlet. 22 She makes bed coverings for herself; her clothing is fine linen and purple. 23 Her husband is known in the gates when he sits among the elders of the land. 24 She makes linen garments and sells them; she delivers sashes to the merchant. 25 Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come. 26 She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. 27 She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. 28 Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: 29 "Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all." 30 Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. 31 Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates."

- v.10 Who is more precious than jewels? _____
- v.11 How much confidence does her husband have in her? _____
- v.17 With what does she dress herself? _____
- v.18 What is said about her lamp? _____
- v.26 What in on her tongue? _____
- v.28 How does her family feel about her? _____
- v.30 Who is to be praised? _____

Something to Think About: This portrait of the excellent wife is a wonderful teaching tool to help us understand what we should be aiming for in the area of living a life that "excels still more." God knows we cannot be perfect in this life, but we can—and must—faithfully try a bit harder each day. Why? Because in so doing, we bring honor to God Who gave His all for us.

Are you aiming for excellence?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, April 12, 2022

-Pause before beginning to commit your time in God's Word for Him to use it however, whenever, and wherever He sees fit. Ask for help to understand what you are reading and then to know how to apply it to your day and life. Be sure to confess any known sin so that God will be free to show you wondrous things from His Word.

-Read Matthew 5:13-16

"You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. 14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

-v.13 What use is salt with no flavor? _____

-v.14 What are Christians to the world? _____

-v.15 What is the purpose of a lamp in a house? _____

-v.16 Why should we live an excellent testimony 24/7? _____

Something to Think About: Christians are warned about being useless in this passage. When and how are we useless to God? When we "hide our light" by being quiet when the Holy Spirit prompts our hearts to speak out, when we go along with the crowd instead of standing alone for Christ, when we allow sin to remain in our life knowing it will dim our effectiveness for the Lord, and when we ignore the needs we are aware of in fellow believers.

Usefulness is a big deal to God. He saved us and then equipped us to live for Him so that we could do the good works that He created for us to do. In doing so, we are not only blessed and rewarded (now and in eternity), but we are in some way "shining" as we are among other people. Our light may cause someone who isn't saved to want to know how they can have a relationship with our loving Father and our light may cause other believers to want to live with more excellence. It might, though, simply be an encouragement and a joy to them—and what a wonderful thing that is!

Time is short, beloved students of the Word! Let's not waste even one precious second not shining our little hearts out for the Lord!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, April 13, 2022

-Pause before beginning to commit your time in God's Word for Him to use it however, whenever, and wherever He sees fit. Ask for help to understand what you are reading and then to know how to apply it to your day and life. Be sure to confess any known sin so that God will be free to show you wondrous things from His Word.

-Read Mark 4:21-25

"And he said to them, 'Is a lamp brought in to be put under a basket, or under a bed, and not on a stand? 22 For nothing is hidden except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret except to come to light. 23 If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.' 24 And he said to them, 'Pay attention to what you hear: with the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you. 25 For to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.'"

- v.21 Where is a lamp never displayed? _____
- v.23 What is the only right response to hearing God's Word? _____
- v.24 What must be considered carefully? _____
- v.24 How will what we do be measured? _____
- v.25 If we are stingy with what God has given us, what will happen? _____

Something to Think About: This is a parallel passage to yesterday's reading in Matthew 5.

God has given us new life in Christ, an eternal home in His presence, and blesses us beyond measure every moment of every day. How are we responding to this? Are we shining? Are we sharing? Are we living in such a way that we are useful to our Master?

Nothing we do for Christ is missed by Him. He sees EVERYTHING. Even the tiniest act of submission to His will is seen, rewarded, and used to bring God glory. Any and all "secret" service done in the name of the Lord will one day be made known and be brought out in the light.

There's a note of living large in this passage too. Did you see it? Whatever measuring tool we use in our generosity and sacrifice for God and for other believers will be the quantity and quality God uses to reward us! Obviously, using HUGE, GENEROUS, LAVISH buckets of blessings is the right and wise course to take! And because God is God, it is simply impossible to "out-give" Him. We give a half cup and He gives a quart; we give a water bottle and He gives a gallon.

Are you listening? Do you have "ears to hear"? God expects our all-in obedience in this lifetime, but the return on our investment is "heavenly!"

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Thursday, April 14, 2022

-Pause before beginning to commit your time in God's Word for Him to use it however, whenever, and wherever He sees fit. Ask for help to understand what you are reading and then to know how to apply it to your day and life. Be sure to confess any known sin so that God will be free to show you wondrous things from His Word.

-Read Luke 8:9-21

"And when his disciples asked him what this parable meant, 10 he said, 'To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that 'seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.' 11 Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. 12 The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. 13 And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away. 14 And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. 15 As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience. 16 'No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light. 17 For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light. 18 Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away.' 19 Then his mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not reach him because of the crowd. 20 And he was told, 'Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see you.' 21 But he answered them, 'My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.'"

- v.10 Who can know the secrets of the kingdom of God? _____
- v.11 What is the seed in this parable? _____
- v.15 What is the right response? _____
- v.18 Take care how you _____.
- v.21 Who did Jesus say was His family? _____

Something to Think About: This is a third parallel passage with the same basic truth: God expects us to be useful to Him in every way and at all times. I guess it must be important to Him!

Because this is a parallel passage, but not identical, I thought it would be useful to include more of the context to see what additional lessons God wanted us to learn. Immediately preceding Jesus' instruction to not hide our "light," He has given the very famous parable of the seed and the soil. In a short summary, the only right way to respond to God's Word is whole-hearted obedience; to "receive" everything God has to say and to declare, "Yes, Lord!," and immediately incorporate it into how we think, what we say, and how we live. Though there may be "fruit" that is grown and enjoyed quickly, there also seems to be a reminder that maturity and spiritual growth happen over the course of time. It involves waking up every single day, committing the day's happenings to the Father in trust and obedience, and using the power of the Holy Spirit to choose to do right (and flee evil). Days become weeks, weeks become months, and before we know it, years have passed—years of living faithfully for God; years of our lights shining brightly in a God-honoring way.

Jesus summed up what He was teaching in this whole section in verse 21. He said that in His eyes, all those who hear His Word and obey it are the ones He considers His closest family members! Did you get that? When we are living the way the Bible says, God Himself calls us His most-treasured family members!

SO MUCH to pray about, think about, and get busy doing for the Lord!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Friday, April 15, 2022

-Pause before beginning to commit your time in God's Word for Him to use it however, whenever, and wherever He sees fit. Ask for help to understand what you are reading and then to know how to apply it to your day and life. Be sure to confess any known sin so that God will be free to show you wondrous things from His Word.

-Read Luke 11:34-36

"Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light, but when it is bad, your body is full of darkness. Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness. If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be wholly bright, as when a lamp with its rays gives you light."

-What is the lamp of our body? _____

-What demonstrates if our body is full of light or darkness? _____

-Who has the responsibility to keep our eyes full of light? _____

Something to Think About: In order to remain useful to God, our eyes—our vision—needs to be "good." How? By seeing as God sees.

This happens when we study His Word and obey it. It happens when we trust in His goodness, regardless of how we feel or what circumstances might look like. It sometimes happens when another believer gently points out to us something that isn't quite right in our life, perhaps something we said that isn't biblical, or some action that didn't honor God.

Can't see God at work? Never really seeing any areas that need to be cleaned up a bit? Perhaps your vision has become clouded by some sin in your life. Ask God. He WANTS to bless us, help us, encourage us, and direct us to be more like Christ Jesus. He LOVES IT when we ask Him for help to see ANYTHING in our hearts and lives that needs to be eliminated, tweaked, or otherwise adjusted so as to pursue excellence in our lives as His beloved child.

PS There's definitely an element of warning here concerning what we let our eyes see! Part of God honoring living is responding the right way to God's Word (through reading the Bible, through listening to sermons and Bible studies, through the counsel and example of faithful Christians, and through conviction we might feel while praying). The other part of God honoring living, though, is what we are guarding AGAINST. It is a determination to steer clear of any and all UNGODLY people, events, and influence. Obviously, this will include what we see with our eyes in media of all types. We may not be able to avoid seeing every ugly thing that's out there, but if we're honest, we could probably avoid a whole lot more than we do on an average day

simply by choosing to not read something, watch something, or listen to something that is likely to be dishonoring to the Lord.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Saturday, April 16, 2022

-Pause before beginning to commit your time in God's Word for Him to use it however, whenever, and wherever He sees fit. Ask for help to understand what you are reading and then to know how to apply it to your day and life. Be sure to confess any known sin so that God will be free to show you wondrous things from His Word.

-Read Matthew 6:19-24

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. 22 "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, 23 but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! 24 "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."

-Write out verse 21.

-Write out verse 24.

Something to Think About: The verse that connects these two important truths of heavenly treasures v. earthly ones is verse 22. We've heard this before: Our eyes have an impact on our entire body!

Today's passage provides another important truth as to why our "lamp" might be bad. It may be that we have been storing our "treasure" here on earth—perhaps giving money and possessions too much importance. Jesus reminds us in Matthew 6 that the things of this earth are not things that last. They will, in fact, be destroyed and/or stolen. Here today, gone tomorrow! HOWEVER, all that we do that honors God, pleases Him, and is obedient to His Word is "treasure" in Heaven. It will last forever.

In case there's any doubt about what Jesus is talking about, verse 24 reminds us that money and possessions can easily become our "master." Equally important, though, is the important truth that in His eyes, no one can serve Him and ANYTHING ELSE at the same time. We might claim to love God first and foremost, but if our attitude and actions show that something or someone else is more important, then we are NOT serving Him. He will not share His throne with any idol that we create in our hearts and minds.

There is a song, "All That I Need," written by Ron Hamilton (Majesty Music) that I love. It gives a great per-

spective on this topic (Here is the link to hear it on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p6acGpLAyS0>).

*When I look around at all this world offers,
I begin to crave the things that I see.
I must keep my eyes on Jesus my Savior.
He has promised heavenly treasure to me.
All that I need is my faith in Jesus.
All that I need is my home above.
All that I need is my Father's mercy.
All that I need is my Savior's love.*

*All the pretty toys shine brightly around me,
All the pretty houses glisten and gleam,
Riches seem to offer peace and contentment,
But it's just a lie, it's only a dream.
All that I need is my faith in Jesus.
All that I need is my home above.
All that I need is my Father's mercy.
All that I need is my Savior's love.*

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Sunday, April 17, 2022

-Pause before beginning to commit your time in God's Word for Him to use it however, whenever, and wherever He sees fit. Ask for help to understand what you are reading and then to know how to apply it to your day and life. Be sure to confess any known sin so that God will be free to show you wondrous things from His Word.

-Read Luke 15:8-10

"Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it? 9 And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.' 10 Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

-v.8 What had been lost? _____

-v.8 What does she do to find it? _____

-v.9 Is she joyful at its recovery? _____

-v.10 What is the application (what causes rejoicing in heaven)? _____

Something to Think About: Isn't this an interesting little parable? The coins mentioned were probably this woman's dowry and each one would be worth a day's wage—a sentimental and valuable item! Did you notice her reaction to finding this one simple coin? She was THRILLED. So much so, that she called together her friends and neighbors so that they could rejoice with her.

So, what does this have to do with us? What did Jesus want us to “get”?

It is a HUGE DEAL to God when one of His children wanders away from an obedient life (this passage is written to Christians, about Christians. It is not a salvation passage). As we've noted before, God WANTS to be able to bless us, to have a super special relationship with us, and to be able to use us in a mighty way, but He simply cannot and will not use us if we allow sin to remain in our heart. He will only use a “clean vessel.”

What is our role in this if we are not the one who needs to get right with God? Pray for each other! Encourage each other in godliness! Humbly, with grace, mercy, and kindness, point out sin in the life of another believer. Not to be holier-than-thou, but so their relationship with God can be restored and they can return to a place of peace, joy, and usefulness to God. And when someone DOES turn from sin and begin to serve God wholeheartedly? REJOICE! Praise the Lord! Throw a party! Any time any one of us makes something right with God and/or God's people, this is cause for great rejoicing (even the angels are rejoicing, so wonderful it is!).

Do you pray for those who are not walking “in the light”? Do you lovingly confront them with the purpose of their restoration? There is great joy in doing so.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Monday, April 18, 2022

-Pause before beginning to commit your time in God's Word for Him to use it however, whenever, and wherever He sees fit. Ask for help to understand what you are reading and then to know how to apply it to your day and life. Be sure to confess any known sin so that God will be free to show you wondrous things from His Word.

-Read Matthew 25:1-13

“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. 3 For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, 4 but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. 5 As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. 6 But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ 7 Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ 9 But the wise answered, saying, ‘Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’ 10 And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. 11 Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ 12 But he answered, ‘Truly, I

say to you, I do not know you.’ 13 Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”

-v.1 Why did the ten gals have lamps? (These were probably long poles with oil-drenched rags on the top)

-v.2 How many were wise? _____

-v.4 How were they wise? _____

-v.10 What happened when the bridegroom finally arrived? _____

-v.13 What is the application (why do we need to be ready and keep a careful watch for Jesus)? _____

Something to Think About: Besides the fact that this passage reminds us that we as women spend a lot of time waiting for that special man to find us, the real purpose of this story is to remind us that our time on earth is short. We need to be ready at all times to meet our Savior.

What is being “ready”? Having all known sin confessed, reading and obeying Scripture, belonging to a Bible believing and teaching local church and serving in it, and sharing with others the good news of Christ.

Is there oil in your lamp?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, April 19, 2022

-Pause before beginning to commit your time in God’s Word for Him to use it however, whenever, and wherever He sees fit. Ask for help to understand what you are reading and then to know how to apply it to your day and life. Be sure to confess any known sin so that God will be free to show you wondrous things from His Word.

-Read Luke 12:35-40

“Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning, 36 and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks. 37 Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them. 38 If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them awake, blessed are those servants! 39 But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have left his house to be broken into. 40 You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

-v.35 Stay _____ for _____ and keep your lamps _____.

-v.36 be like men who are _____ for their _____ to come home from the wedding feast.

-v.37 Blessed are those servants whom the master finds _____ when he comes.

-v.40 You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not _____.”

Something to Think About: Some people take these verses to portray a trap Jesus is setting for us—not letting us know when He is going to come for us so as to catch us in sin. It is better to see this as teaching about the opportunity we are given to live victoriously so that when He does come, we can greet Him with unserved joy and without regret.

Is your life demonstrating the good servant or the bad one? Based on today’s activities and thoughts, will Jesus be pleased with your readiness for His return?

Don’t miss the reminder that faithfulness over the long term matters. Many of us are good about pushing ourselves for short-term goals—whereas the goals that might take months or years to achieve are much harder! The Christian life is like that too. Imitating God and becoming more like the Son is a day by day endeavor, one that will take every day of our entire life. Don’t give up! Don’t give in! Keep on living faithfully for God and when you see Him face to face, what a beautiful meeting it will be!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, April 20, 2022

-Pause before beginning to commit your time in God’s Word for Him to use it however, whenever, and wherever He sees fit. Ask for help to understand what you are reading and then to know how to apply it to your day and life. Be sure to confess any known sin so that God will be free to show you wondrous things from His Word.

-Read John 5:30-35

“I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me. 31 If I alone bear witness about myself, my testimony is not true. 32 There is another who bears witness about me, and I know that the testimony that he bears about me is true. 33 You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. 34 Not that the testimony that I receive is from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved. 35 He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light.”

-v.31 What kind of witness isn’t valid? _____

-v.33 Who testified to the truth? _____

-v.35 John was a _____ and _____ lamp.

Something to Think About: There aren’t many people Jesus spoke extremely highly of, but John the Baptizer was one. Why? Well, in this case, it is because John had a great testimony of pointing people to Jesus. John was a “burning and shining lamp” in that he openly and without excuse told anyone and everyone exactly who Jesus was - and that they all needed to eliminate all sin from their lives if they wanted to live the way God had commanded them to. John was extremely frank and honest, telling people exactly what they needed to know, namely that Jesus Christ was in their midst and they needed to trust in Him as their personal Savior.

His testimony was “bright” and crystal clear.

How about you? Is Jesus pleased with YOUR testimony? Does He speak highly of you? Why or why not? If you aren’t living a life that points clearly to Christ, what needs to change? If you are kind of in the middle of the road, mostly pointing to Christ, but shy about some areas, how can you shine a bit brighter? If you are living for God to the best of your ability, how might you excel still more? (Hint: Ask God these questions! Ask your pastor! Ask a faithful mature Christian!)

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Thursday, April 21, 2022

-Pause before beginning to commit your time in God’s Word for Him to use it however, whenever, and wherever He sees fit. Ask for help to understand what you are reading and then to know how to apply it to your day and life. Be sure to confess any known sin so that God will be free to show you wondrous things from His Word.

-Read II Peter 1:16-21

“For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,” 18 we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. 19 And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, 20 knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. 21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

-v.16 Peter and the other disciples were _____ of Jesus’ majesty.

-v.18 What did they hear themselves? _____

-v.19 What else was likened to a “lamp shining in a dark place”? _____

-v.21 Who really wrote Scripture? _____

Something to Think About: Peter is remembering the super incredible and astonishing day when he, James, and John saw a corner of the glory of God’s Son, Jesus Christ, being revealed to them in a light so bright that it was hard to describe. More than this amazing sight, though, was the glory and privilege of personally hearing God the Father’s voice praising His Son. This left a permanent impression on these men and was something they never, ever forgot (read about it in Matthew 17).

BUT, says Peter several years later, you and I have something perhaps even more valuable than his first-hand account of Jesus’ transfiguration. For God has given us the incredible gift of His Written Word as well as illu-

mination (ability to understand it) from the Holy Spirit. They are both special gifts of “light” shining in the darkness of the world until Jesus returns for us. This is a gift so precious that it’s hard to fully describe (or even understand!). Are you thanking God on a regular basis for the gift of His Written Word? Are you thanking Him for the out-of-this-world gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit? Life without these gifts would be dark indeed!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Friday, April 22, 2022

-Pause before beginning to commit your time in God’s Word for Him to use it however, whenever, and wherever He sees fit. Ask for help to understand what you are reading and then to know how to apply it to your day and life. Be sure to confess any known sin so that God will be free to show you wondrous things from His Word.

-Read Revelation 1:9-20

“I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet 11 saying, “Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.” 12 Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. 14 The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, 15 his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. 16 In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength. 17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, “Fear not, I am the first and the last, 18 and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades. 19 Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this. 20 As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.”

-v.9 Who has Jesus revealed His message to? _____

-v.11 Who would be receiving John’s record of the revelation? _____

-v.12 What did John see first? _____

-v.13 Who was standing among the lampstands? _____

-v.17 What is the first thing Jesus said to John? _____

-v.20 What do the seven lampstands represent? _____

Something to Think About: The Book of Revelation always terrified me as a child, but as I grow older, and more importantly, grow in the Lord, I find it an amazing treasure of things I need to know. I’ve especially come to be amazed at the incredible majesty, might, and holiness of our God (Whom we sometimes decide not

to listen to! How could that be!!!)

The seven lampstands represent seven churches. There is undoubtedly deep meaning in that, but a simple meaning is there too. As Christians living in the Church Age (also known as the Age of Grace), our lives are to be a light to the world both individually and as part of a local church. Maybe the fact that the church is symbolically on a lampstand should make us evaluate whether or not we, as a church family, stand out in our community as being serious about our commitment to God?

All Christians, both individually and as a church families, are charged with living in such a way that others see Christ in us and so that God is glorified with our actions and attitudes. How are you doing with that?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Saturday, April 23, 2022

-Pause before beginning to commit your time in God's Word for Him to use it however, whenever, and wherever He sees fit. Ask for help to understand what you are reading and then to know how to apply it to your day and life. Be sure to confess any known sin so that God will be free to show you wondrous things from His Word.

-Read Revelation 4:1-11

"After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." 2 At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne. 3 And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald. 4 Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clothed in white garments, with golden crowns on their heads. 5 From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God, 6 and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal. And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: 7 the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like an eagle in flight. 8 And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!" 9 And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 11 "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."

-v.1 What was Jesus going to show John? _____

-v.5 What was before the throne? _____

- v.5 How are they described? _____
- v.8 What did the creatures never stop saying? _____
- v.11 What did the 24 elders say? _____

Something to Think About: Isn't this a thrilling passage!

Verse 5 contains our word "lamp" and here it seems to represent the Holy Spirit of God. Seven is the number of perfection and indicates fullness and completeness.

One day all those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ will (with great joy and gratitude) bow before Him and say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come! Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."

What a day that will be!

But fellow child of God, we don't need to wait until then to begin to praise God. We don't even need to wait until we are in the presence of other believers to speak words of praise and honor to God; to thank Him for all He has given us through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. We can (and should!) be doing this right now! We should wake up every single morning thanking God for the gift of a new day to live for Him and bring Him praise—and we should be aware every minute of every day that all we say, do, and THINK either honors or DISHONORS God the Father and our Savior, Jesus Christ.

We might not be physically in the presence of God today, but our praise can be just as jubilant and just as appreciative!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Sunday, April 24, 2022

-Pause before beginning to commit your time in God's Word for Him to use it however, whenever, and wherever He sees fit. Ask for help to understand what you are reading and then to know how to apply it to your day and life. Be sure to confess any known sin so that God will be free to show you wondrous things from His Word.

-Read Revelation 21

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a

bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” 5 And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” 6 And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. 7 The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. 8 But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.” 9 Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, “Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.” 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. 12 It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed— 13 on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. 15 And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. 16 The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia. Its length and width and height are equal. 17 He also measured its wall, 144 cubits by human measurement, which is also an angel's measurement. 18 The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, like clear glass. 19 The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. 21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. 22 And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. 23 And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. 24 By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, 25 and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. 26 They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. 27 But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.”

-v.23 Why is there no need for lamps in eternity? _____

Something to Think About: Did you know that darkness is temporary—both literally, figuratively, and spiritually? Sin brought darkness into the world, but take heart, Jesus has overcome the world. Do not be mistaken by the idea that things will continue as they are forever. This age will pass, and the ages of the ages will begin. In eternity darkness cannot exist - because God is there.

Now might be a good time to confess discouragement about current hardships and fear over all the ugly things going on in our world. Express trust in God’s goodness and in His perfect timing and plan. Thank Him for keeping all His promises—because this is a SURE THING. One day darkness will be permanently replaced with the perfect glorious light of God Himself!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Monday, April 25, 2022

-Pause before beginning to commit your time in God's Word for Him to use it however, whenever, and wherever He sees fit. Ask for help to understand what you are reading and then to know how to apply it to your day and life. Be sure to confess any known sin so that God will be free to show you wondrous things from His Word.

-Read Revelation 22

"Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever. 6 And he said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place." 7 "And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book." 8 I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me, 9 but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God." 10 And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. 11 Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy." 12 "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." 14 Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. 15 Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. 16 "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star." 17 The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price. 18 I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book. 20 He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! 21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen."

- v.2 What tree (that has been missing since the fall of man) will be enjoyed again? _____
- v.3-4 Whose face will we always be able to see? _____
- How will our faces represent Him? _____
- v.5 What are we reminded of again? _____
- v.7,12,20 When will all this take place? _____

Something to Think About: Soon! Do you believe it? Does how you live prove what you say you believe?

God IS light. In His presence there is never darkness or sin or evil in any way, shape, or form. How are you doing at representing His light and holiness now? What kind of "lamp" are you in and among the people currently in your life?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, April 26, 2022

-Pause before beginning to commit your time in God's Word for Him to use it however, whenever, and wherever He sees fit. Ask for help to understand what you are reading and then to know how to apply it to your day and life. Be sure to confess any known sin so that God will be free to show you wondrous things from His Word.

-Look back on your work of the word "lamp" from this month.

-What have you learned that you didn't know before?

-How have you been challenged in your current walk with God?

-What are you going to do about it?

-Are there any questions you have that need to be pursued?

-What words, concepts, truths do you feel the need to do more research on?

Something to Think About: If you told someone that you were going to speak about a lamp, they would, of course, think of the item that you plug in to give light in a room. Although Bible time lamps were very different than our lamps today, their purpose was the same—to give light and chase away the dark. Jesus taught on many occasions that we are "lamps" in our witness of Him in this sin-darkened world. Every time you see a light of any kind shining, I hope you will allow it to help you reflect (pun intended!) on spiritual truths about God's amazing love for us and how we can return a small "thank you" in our behavior, words, and attitudes.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

The next portion of our Bible study is on the word, "feet" found in Psalm 119:105. The use of foot or feet in Scripture is varied and includes, of course, references to the actual physical foot of a person, animal, or object. However, the word is also used to represent our lifestyles, manners, and habits. As you study the amazing Word of God, keep in mind that our focus this year is on how it is a lamp for our feet to both help us see the path God wants us to walk as well as the dangers He wants us to avoid.

Wednesday, April 27, 2022

-Pause before beginning to commit your time in God's Word for Him to use it however, whenever, and wherever He sees fit. Ask for help to understand what you are reading and then to know how to apply it to your day and life. Be sure to confess any known sin so that God will be free to show you wondrous things from His Word.

-The most precious place any of us can be is at the feet of Jesus, physically and spiritually. Study the passages found in the next several days having to do with people at the feet of the Savior.

-Read Matthew 15:29-31

"Jesus went on from there and walked beside the Sea of Galilee. And he went up on the mountain and sat down there. 30 And great crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute, and many others, and they put them at his feet, and he healed them, 31 so that the crowd wondered, when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled healthy, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they glorified the God of Israel."

- v.29 Where was Jesus? _____
- v.30 Who came to Him? _____
- Who did they bring? _____
- Where did the crowds put their loved ones? _____
- What did Jesus do? _____
- v.31 How did the people respond to Jesus' healing powers? _____

Something to Think About: It is easy to simply read these verses quickly so we can move on to the miracle of the feeding of the 4,000, but if we pause for a moment, maybe we can "hear" and "see" the incredible sights and sounds there must have been that day... a husband seeing his wife and children for the very first time. A mother hearing her child's first words. People laughing in delight while standing, jumping, and running in sheer joy and awe... and the tear-filled thank-yous to Jesus, the Messiah and Savior and God. Our God.

Have you paused to thank Him for the miracles He has performed for you? Maybe you were never lame or blind, but He performs miracles every day nonetheless—the most amazing being when He gave us eternal life in place of the death we deserved.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Thursday, April 28, 2022

-Pause before beginning to commit your time in God's Word for Him to use it however, whenever, and wherever He sees fit. Ask for help to understand what you are reading and then to know how to apply it to your day and life. Be sure to confess any known sin so that God will be free to show you wondrous things from His Word.

-Read Mark 5:21-43

"And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about him, and he was beside the sea. 22 Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, and seeing him, he fell at his feet 23 and implored him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well and live." 24 And he went with him. And a great crowd followed him and thronged about him. 25 And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, 26 and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse. 27 She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. 28 For she said, "If I touch even his garments, I will be made well." 29 And immediately the flow of blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. 30 And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone out from him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my garments?" 31 And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, 'Who touched me?'" 32 And he looked around to see who had done it. 33 But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth. 34 And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease." 35 While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" 36 But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." 37 And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John the brother of James. 38 They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. 39 And when he had entered, he said to them, "Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping." 40 And they laughed at him. But he put them all outside and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was. 41 Taking her by the hand he said to her, "Talitha cumi," which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." 42 And immediately the girl got up and began walking (for she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement. 43 And he strictly charged them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat."

-v.22 Who fell at Jesus' feet? _____

-v.23 Why? _____

-v.25-34 What occurred on the way to Jarius' house? _____

-v.35 What message came to Jarius? _____

-v.36 What was Jesus' response? _____

-v.42 What was the little girl's response to Jesus' words and touch? _____

Something to Think About: There is so much to see and be amazed at in this passage! Reread it and find at least three things worth noting.

One thing I saw was in verse 40. Jesus provided wonderful words of hope to Jarius' family and friends—and they laughed at Him! It makes me sick to my stomach to think about, but then I remember all the times I disbelieved God or glossed over His commands to me, not really planning to obey. My prayer is that we all will

not only REALLY listen to God’s words, but believe them and change our lives based on them.

PS Don’t miss that the woman who had the bleeding issue also fell at Jesus’ feet. She, at first, might have done it out of fear after realizing Jesus knew that she had been healed after touching Him, but I love that she “told Him the whole truth” and after doing so, was reminded that she could now have peace. Pouring out our hearts in prayer in trust and thanksgiving always results in the kind of peace and joy that only comes from a right relationship with God.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Friday, April 29, 2022

-Pause before beginning to commit your time in God’s Word for Him to use it however, whenever, and wherever He sees fit. Ask for help to understand what you are reading and then to know how to apply it to your day and life. Be sure to confess any known sin so that God will be free to show you wondrous things from His Word.

-Read Mark 7:24-30

“And from there he arose and went away to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And he entered a house and did not want anyone to know, yet he could not be hidden. 25 But immediately a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit heard of him and came and fell down at his feet. 26 Now the woman was a Gentile, a Syrophoenician by birth. And she begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. 27 And he said to her, “Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.” 28 But she answered him, “Yes, Lord; yet even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.” 29 And he said to her, “For this statement you may go your way; the demon has left your daughter.” 30 And she went home and found the child lying in bed and the demon gone.”

-v.25-26 Who fell at Jesus’ feet? _____

-Why? _____

-v.28 How does this Gentile woman address Jesus? _____

-v.29 Was Jesus pleased with her faith in Him? _____

Something to Think About: As a mother, I try to picture the anguish this woman must have felt to see her daughter tortured by a demon. How awful it must have been! She undoubtedly had to go through much hardship to even find Jesus (the crowds were hunting for Him night and day) and then to work her way into His presence (the disciples often blocked the way). When she did, she fell at His feet, calling Him Lord, and then acknowledging that as a Gentile she knew she was undeserving—yet she still believed Jesus could and would heal her daughter. Oh for that kind of humbleness! Oh for that kind of faith! Oh for that kind of desperation to make time to spend at Jesus’ feet!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Saturday, April 30, 2022

-Pause before beginning to commit your time in God's Word for Him to use it however, whenever, and wherever He sees fit. Ask for help to understand what you are reading and then to know how to apply it to your day and life. Be sure to confess any known sin so that God will be free to show you wondrous things from His Word.

-Read Luke 5:1-11

"On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, 2 and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. 3 Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. 4 And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." 5 And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." 6 And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. 7 They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. 8 But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." 9 For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, 10 and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." 11 And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him."

-v.4 What did Jesus ask Peter to do? _____

-v.5 What was Peter's reply? _____

-v.6 What was the result? _____

-v.8 Why did Peter fall at Jesus' feet? _____

-v.10 What was Jesus' response? _____

Something to Think About: You are probably familiar with this story and Peter's flip answer to Jesus which led to his humbling himself before Him in sorrow and regret (throwing himself at Jesus' feet in the middle of hundreds of fish!).

Certainly, there is much to learn here, but I was especially interested in Jesus' response to Peter's cry. He said, "Don't be afraid." Jesus knows that our first response to the idea of serving Him is often fear, but the truth is that the same God Who called us, also gives us the strength to do the job. We don't need to fear, we only need to remain at Jesus' feet, trusting in HIS power.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Sunday, May 1, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Luke 7:36-50

"One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and reclined at table. 37 And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, 38 and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. 39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner." 40 And Jesus answering said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he answered, "Say it, Teacher." 41 "A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?" 43 Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt." And he said to him, "You have judged rightly." 44 Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. 45 You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. 46 You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. 47 Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little." 48 And he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." 49 Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this, who even forgives sins?" 50 And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

-v.36-38 How did this woman show her sorrow for her sin? _____

-v.39 Was Simon (this is some Pharisee, not Simon Peter the disciple) happy to see this worship? _____

-v.44-47 Summarize the differences Jesus pointed out in her actions as opposed to Simon's hospitality. _____

-v.50 What saved the woman? _____

Something to Think About: The minimum act of hospitality in that time and place was to provide a foot wash for your guests as they entered your home (more on that later). Simon didn't offer this, even though he was one of the religious leaders in that town and knew better. On the other hand, the woman, who had been living in deep sin, lavished love and adoration on Jesus. She demonstrated extreme humbleness by anointing His feet. Anointing someone in this manner would have normally been done on their head, but she was too humble and contrite to consider herself worthy of anything besides touching Jesus' feet—the position of the lowliest servant.

There is no doubt that we can often be closer to Simon than the woman in our appreciation and attention to Jesus, but I would pray that as we draw closer to Him through daily time in His Word, we would become more

and more lavish in our adoration too; that we would learn to focus less and less on self—and more and more on our Creator and Savior.

BONUS: One of Simon’s greatest mistakes in this passage was to focus on the woman—and miss his own sin. It’s easy to look around us and judge what others are doing as “good” or “bad,” but is that truly what we’re supposed to be focusing on? Our primary focus needs to be OUR walk with God and whether or not we are serving Him wholeheartedly and continually.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Monday, May 2, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Luke 8:26-39

“Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. 27 When Jesus had stepped out on land, there met him a man from the city who had demons. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he had not lived in a house but among the tombs. 28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him and said with a loud voice, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me.” 29 For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him. He was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.) 30 Jesus then asked him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Legion,” for many demons had entered him. 31 And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss. 32 Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. 33 Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned. 34 When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. 35 Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. 36 And those who had seen it told them how the demon-possessed man had been healed. 37 Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. 38 The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, 39 “Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.” And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him.”

-v.28 What did the demon-possessed man do when he saw Jesus? _____

-How did he address Jesus? _____

-v.35 When the townspeople returned to see what happened, how is the man described and where was he?

-v.39 What did Jesus ask this man to do? _____

-Did he? _____

Something to Think About: This familiar story is another great one. I love the before-and-after appearance

and behavior of this man. He went from naked and wild to dressed and sitting calmly at Jesus' feet. Do you sometimes feel out of control? Sitting at the feet of Jesus brings calmness, control, and a peace of mind. If you've experienced this, are you "telling how much God has done for you?"

More Info:

-Have you ever noticed that demons had no problem recognizing that Jesus was the Son of God? (Especially considering the part of creation God made in His image—mankind—mostly expresses doubt, disbelief, and arrogance when confronted with God!)

-It would seem from this passage and others that having some sort of body is very important. The evil demons in today's account would rather live in a pig's body than be cast into the abyss ("pit") without a body of any kind. We believe that humans are never without a body (this is how we express ourselves). We are given a body upon conception, are transferred to some sort of temporary body upon death, then given a new permanent (and glorified) body once eternity begins.

-The abyss mentioned here (v.32) is likely the same location as the "bottomless pit" mentioned in Revelation 9:1-12. It is probably also the same place as that called "hell" in II Peter 2:4, but the word occurs only there—it is the Greek word tartaros. This seems to be a prison for fallen angels or demons who are incarcerated for evil deeds which God specifically told them to not engage in—a sort of behavioral line they were not to cross. If this is so, then the fifth trumpet judgment is the release of those demons into the world of the tribulation period with all the consequences of their arrival (incredible pain for five months, people wishing they could die, etc.)

-Demons cannot possess Christians in the current age. That is because we have the indwelling Holy Spirit—and He will not share space with anyone else! We can, however, potentially be influenced by demons/evil—and we would do well to steer clear of any and all ungodly places, influences, or temptations.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, May 3, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Luke 10:38-42

"Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. 40 But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." 41 But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, 42 but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."

-v.38 Who had opened her home to Jesus and His followers? _____

-v.39 Where was Mary? _____

-v.40 What did Martha resent? _____

-v.42 Did Jesus agree with her? _____

Something to Think About: Jesus said that Mary had chosen what was better. He didn't say service was unimportant, however, or that helping each other isn't necessary. We know this because many of the Epistles address service responsibilities for believers.

Jesus said that listening to Him comes first. Studying God's Word is always the most important thing. It needs to be #1 on our priority list.

I KNOW there are a lot of "Marthas" in our churches—and I thank God for you! But, please, please, please, don't let your service get in the way of sitting in the services and hearing God's Word! The dirty dishes can wait. =)

P.S. We might be wise, when considering this short account, to observe that at least some of Martha's stress was due to paying attention to another believer—and not to what God had given HER TO DO. I cannot speak for a man's mind, but I believe women can really struggle with comparing themselves to others, using what we see to evaluate how good (or bad!) we are doing. I think a better choice is to look to Jesus. Learn from Him. Choose to please Him. Rejoice in the talents, abilities, and opportunities He has given to each of us individually to serve Him.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, May 4, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read John 11:17-44

"Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. 18 Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, 19 and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. 20 So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. 21 Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." 23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." 24 Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." 25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" 27 She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world." 28 When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." 29 And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. 30 Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. 31 When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. 32 Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." 33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. 34 And he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." 35 Jesus

wept. 36 So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” 37 But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?” 38 Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. 39 Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days.” 40 Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?” 41 So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. 42 I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.” 43 When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out.” 44 The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

- v.17 Who had died? _____
- v.32 What did Mary do when she found Jesus? _____
- v.35 What was Jesus’ response to this loss? _____
- v.43-44 Is death more powerful than God? _____

Something to Think About: What a beautiful picture of consolation at the feet of Jesus. Where do you go when you hurt? Jesus cares. Jesus loves you.

More to Consider:

- The fact that Lazarus had been dead for four days proves he was, in fact, dead. To this day, some folks practice a “wake” for up to three days after someone has died. The three days are to be positive that the person is actually dead and not merely unconscious. Lazarus, like Jesus would be in a short while, was DEAD.
- Martha, Mary, and Lazarus were clearly well liked. There were crowds of people present with Martha and Mary in order to console them in their loss. This was the cultural thing to do, but how nice when brothers and sisters in Christ come alongside those who are hurting to offer love, support, encouragement, and comfort!
- Martha was clearly a woman of action, jumping right up to speak directly to Jesus when He came. She was also a woman of strong faith. She had no doubts Who Jesus was and that He could (and would) raise the dead to life.
- Martha took the wonderful things she experienced from her time with Jesus directly to her sister, inviting her to also be consoled, comforted, and blessed in the presence of Jesus. We do well to share the blessings we have received from God’s hand with fellow Christians—and everyone else we come across!
- Verse 25 contains one of Jesus’ powerful I AMs. He is the Resurrection and the Life. He, in fact, made it possible for all who place their faith in Him as Savior to conquer death and live eternally in His presence.
- Jesus’ tears were probably less sorrow over Lazarus’ death (He knew he would be alive soon) and more His sorrow at the results of sin—He is experiencing the loss and grief of death: death is the direct consequence of sin. He certainly, though, was also very empathetic to the pain all the people around Him were experiencing.
- Jesus prayed to the Father, expressing gratitude for what had not yet happened, so great was His trust that God would do what He promised. We, too, can have this same confidence when we pray. God ALWAYS keeps His promises. God always hears our prayers.
- Lazarus was one of the few men recorded in Scripture who was brought back from death. However, he died a second time sometime later on. As a believer in Jesus Christ, he will receive an undying resurrected, glorified body that will never die.
- I’ve often wondered if Lazarus resented being brought out of Paradise and back into the troubled world. This might have been a bitter pill to swallow, especially considering that he would now have to experience the agony of seeing his Savior crucified by hateful men. BUT, I hope that Lazarus handled this bump-in-the-road from God with a great attitude—BECAUSE—it was clearly from God. And may you and I handle our own bumps in a God-honoring way, thanking God for all He gives us, knowing that all He gives is only always ever GOOD.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Thursday, May 5, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read John 12:1-11

"Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. 2 So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. 3 Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. 4 But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, 5 "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" 6 He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it. 7 Jesus said, "Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. 8 For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me." 9 When the large crowd of the Jews learned that Jesus was there, they came, not only on account of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. 10 So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, 11 because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus."

-v.1 Where had Jesus returned? _____

-What event was upon them? _____

-v.3 What did Mary do? _____

-v.7 Why? _____

Something to Think About: "You will not always have Me." Jesus' crucifixion was mere days away—hard news for the disciples, but great news for us. Because of His sacrifice, we have become children of God (once we have placed our faith in Jesus as Savior), we have the Holy Spirit living within us, and we will be with Jesus forever. We have so much to thank God for. Are you hoarding your "perfume" or are you pouring it on Jesus' feet in grateful worship?

FYI: You can also read this account in Mark 14:3-9 and Matthew 26:6-13 (the Luke 7 account is a different story).

BONUS:

-Did you notice how Martha was griping because of all the company? That's because she wasn't! She had taken what Jesus told her and begun living it out in her life!

-Don't wait until someone dies to stop and ponder just how much you love them and appreciate them. Tell them today. Do sacrificial things for them now.

-Regardless of criticism and potentially being misunderstood, Mary chose to show lavish love to her Lord. Why would we ever give Him less than our best!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Friday, May 6, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Luke 17:11-19

"On the way to Jerusalem he was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. 12 And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance 13 and lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." 14 When he saw them he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed. 15 Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; 16 and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samari-
tan. 17 Then Jesus answered, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? 18 Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" 19 And he said to him, "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."

-v.12-13 How many lepers asked for mercy? _____

-v.14 What was Jesus' instruction to them? _____

-Were they healed? _____

-v.15 How many returned to give thanks? _____

-v.19 What made this one man well? _____

Something to Think About: There's a lot to note in this short passage (Jesus' mercy, Jesus instructing the lepers to obey the Law as part of their healing, Jesus' ability to heal an incurable disease, how the lives of these ten men were restored and they could now return to their families and no longer live as outcasts, that none of the Jews—who should have known better—recognized Jesus as their Messiah, and more!), but I think a clear overriding lesson is the importance of thanking God for Who He is and what He does for us.

I think that it is very easy to ask God (and people, for that matter) for things, but it takes deliberate intention to express gratitude. Maybe especially when the fulfillment of the request is days, weeks, or even years later.

Perhaps a good way to begin to develop the habit of gratitude is to say "thank you" right away. In the case of asking God for something, whatever answer He gives is right and good as far as the what, when, and how—because He's incapable of error! So, just as Jesus thanked God BEFORE Lazarus was raised from the dead, we can thank God every time we make requests of Him. This is a great practice to establish. Then, of course, when we recognize that God has answered some prayer or done something for us, remember to say "Thank You." Like every other God honoring habit we try to develop, God will help us if we ask.

BTW, the wording in this passage indicates that the one thankful man probably received salvation in addition to physical healing. Do we sell God short in our prayer requests? The Bible instructs us in several places to ask big. Do we? Do we truly believe that God can do the impossible? Do we thank Him when He does?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Saturday, May 7, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Matthew 28:1-10

"Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. 2 And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. 4 And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. 5 But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. 6 He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. 7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you." 8 So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. 9 And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."

- v.9 Who met the women as they ran to share their amazing news with the disciples? _____
-What did they do when they saw Him? _____
-v.10 What did Jesus tell them to not be? _____
-What were they to do then? _____

Something to Think About: I love this story! After the intense agony of seeing Jesus beaten and die a horrible death, these faithful women now see for themselves that He is alive! What joy after the bitter darkness they experienced witnessing His death, then not being able to prepare His body for burial due to Passover rules. Their sorrow was maxed out over the weekend, but then came Sunday—a new day, a new week, a new world! Jesus had conquered sin and death for all time!

Jesus is not in the tomb. He was alive three days after death and He is alive today. He is, even now, seated at the side of God the Father waiting for the word that He can meet all who have trusted in Him as Savior in the clouds to bring them (us!) back to heaven with Him!

He doesn't want us to be afraid, but He does ask us to share this great news with others. Who can you share this incredible story with today?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Sunday, May 8, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-I hope you were thrilled with all the accounts of people at Jesus' feet! What do the following passages say is UNDER Jesus' feet?

-Matthew 22:44

“The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet”?”

-I Corinthians 15:25

“For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.”

-Ephesians 1:22

“And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church.”

-Hebrews 10:12-13

“But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet.”

Something to Think About: We must never take for granted that we, as children of God, have the privilege and blessing of being at Jesus' feet—and not under them in judgment and condemnation.

One of the things that often confuses Christians is what role the sin we commit after our salvation will play in eternity. The simple answer is, nothing. Those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ as the Savior from their sins were, at the moment of salvation, given a NOT GUILTY verdict before the throne of God. This isn't because of anything good we have done. It is entirely and only because of what the righteous Son of God did. His sacrifice on the cross paid for our sin and now when God looks at us, He sees the righteousness of His Son IN US. This is an absolutely enormous thing! So huge, in fact, that we ought to wake up every single morning thanking God for our salvation and for the gift His Son gave us!

So, does that mean we can do whatever we want in the here and now? If sin is no longer held against us when we get to heaven, does it matter how we live? You bet it does! Once we are saved, we become new creatures. We become children OF GOD. We are now given the ability to DO RIGHT, to bring honor to God, to be becoming more like the Son, to apply Scripture to every circumstance of life, to thank God constantly verbally and through what we do (choosing to please and honor Him—which will mean NOT giving in to selfish ambition or ungodly attitudes or actions).

In fact, there WILL be an accounting for Christians when eternity begins. It is called the Bema—or the Judgment Seat of Christ. Our sin isn't in the picture, but our faithfulness to God IS. The “good” we chose to do in our daily lives will be judged, including the motives and purposes of our heart. Those who have chosen, by the help of the Holy Spirit and God's Written Word, to obey God in even the tiniest of ways will be rewarded big-time. What all these rewards will be isn't entirely certain, but if we look at all the marvelous things God has done in time past and time present, we can certainly trust Him to do the right thing in the future.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Monday, May 9, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-As part of our continuing study of feet in Scripture (to better understand God's Word being a lamp for our feet), let's look at more foot-related passages. First, foot washing. Foot washing in Bible times demonstrated hospitality, kindness, and a servant's heart.

-Read Genesis 18:1-10

"And the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. 2 He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth 3 and said, "O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. 4 Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, 5 while I bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said." 6 And Abraham went quickly into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quick! Three seahs of fine flour! Knead it, and make cakes." 7 And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to a young man, who prepared it quickly. 8 Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them. And he stood by them under the tree while they ate. 9 They said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" And he said, "She is in the tent." 10 The Lord said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him."

-v.1 Who appeared to Abraham? _____

-v.2 What did Abraham do when he saw guests approaching? _____

-v.4-5 In what ways did he ask to be a blessing? _____

-v.6-7 Did he do these tasks at his convenience or pass them off to a servant? _____

Something to Think About: Hospitality is becoming a lost art. We could go ahead and choose this change in the culture around us to be our "get out of jail free" card, except for one important thing. God says we must be hospitable (I Peter 4:9; Romans 12:13; Hebrews 13:2—and more!).

Hospitality DOES involve sacrifice and work, but it is also a blessing—an opportunity to love our neighbor as ourself (Jesus' #2 most-important commandment to obey, Matthew 22:37).

I'm sometimes guilty of picking on my husband for being "too" kind, sacrificial, and hospitable (he lets EVERYONE go in front of him in lines at public places!), but there is no doubt that his actions are much more Christ-like than mine. So, can we be too hospitable? No! God wants us to give our all. Having said that, hospitality doesn't have to always mean fine china and crystal. Very simply put, it is sacrificing something of our time and energy to make someone else feel comfortable, pampered, loved, and special.

Who can you be hospitable to today? Who can you demonstrate God's love to in word or action?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, May 10, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Genesis 24:1-33

"Now Abraham was old, well advanced in years. And the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things. 2 And Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household, who had charge of all that he had, "Put your hand under my thigh, 3 that I may make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell, 4 but will go to my country and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son Isaac." 5 The servant said to him, "Perhaps the woman may not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I then take your son back to the land from which you came?" 6 Abraham said to him, "See to it that you do not take my son back there. 7 The Lord, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my kindred, and who spoke to me and swore to me, 'To your offspring I will give this land,' he will send his angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there. 8 But if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free from this oath of mine; only you must not take my son back there." 9 So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master and swore to him concerning this matter. 10 Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and departed, taking all sorts of choice gifts from his master; and he arose and went to Mesopotamia to the city of Nahor. 11 And he made the camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water at the time of evening, the time when women go out to draw water. 12 And he said, "O Lord, God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today and show steadfast love to my master Abraham. 13 Behold, I am standing by the spring of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. 14 Let the young woman to whom I shall say, 'Please let down your jar that I may drink,' and who shall say, 'Drink, and I will water your camels'—let her be the one whom you have appointed for your servant Isaac. By this I shall know that you have shown steadfast love to my master." 15 Before he had finished speaking, behold, Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel the son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, came out with her water jar on her shoulder. 16 The young woman was very attractive in appearance, a maiden whom no man had known. She went down to the spring and filled her jar and came up. 17 Then the servant ran to meet her and said, "Please give me a little water to drink from your jar." 18 She said, "Drink, my lord." And she quickly let down her jar upon her hand and gave him a drink. 19 When she had finished giving him a drink, she said, "I will draw water for your camels also, until they have finished drinking." 20 So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough and ran again to the well to draw water, and she drew for all his camels. 21 The man gazed at her in silence to learn whether the Lord had prospered his journey or not. 22 When the camels had finished drinking, the man took a gold ring weighing a half shekel, and two bracelets for her arms weighing ten gold shekels, 23 and said, "Please tell me whose daughter you are. Is there room in your father's house for us to spend the night?" 24 She said to him, "I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor." 25 She added, "We have plenty of both straw and fodder, and room to spend the night." 26 The man bowed his head and worshiped the Lord 27 and said, "Blessed be the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his steadfast love and his faithfulness toward my master. As for me, the Lord has led me in the way to the house of my master's kinsmen." 28 Then the young woman ran and told her mother's household about these things. 29 Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban. Laban ran out toward the man, to the spring. 30 As soon as he saw the ring and the bracelets on his sister's arms, and heard the words of Rebekah his sister, "Thus the man spoke to me," he went to the man. And behold, he was standing by the camels at the spring. 31 He said, "Come in, O blessed of the Lord. Why do you stand outside? For I have prepared the house and a place for the camels." 32 So the man came to the house and unharnessed the camels, and gave straw and fodder to the camels, and there was water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him. 33 Then food was set before him to eat. But he said, "I will not eat until I have said what I have to say." He said, "Speak on."

-v.1-4 What was Abraham's servant trusted to find? _____

-v.7 Who would help the servant? _____

-v.15 Who came to the well? _____

- v.18-19 Was she willing to go the “extra mile” by watering the camels too? _____
- v.25 Was Rebekah hospitable? _____
- v.31-33 Was Rebekah’s family hospitable? _____

Something to Think About: Rebekah apparently learned to be kind and hospitable from her family. Did you know that you can teach others God-honoring characteristics simply by doing them yourself? Actions do “speak” loudly. In this case, Rebekah must also have learned generosity. She went beyond the call of duty when she also provided water for the camels.

Can you be called kind? Hospitable? Generous? Going beyond the call of duty? God is honored in these things.

I think an excellent gauge to use when considering how much to give to someone else is found in Luke 6:31, “Do unto others as you would have them do to you.” I like lavish! How about you?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, May 11, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read I Samuel 25:1-41

Now Samuel died. And all Israel assembled and mourned for him, and they buried him in his house at Ramah. Then David rose and went down to the wilderness of Paran. 2 And there was a man in Maon whose business was in Carmel. The man was very rich; he had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. He was shearing his sheep in Carmel. 3 Now the name of the man was Nabal, and the name of his wife Abigail. The woman was discerning and beautiful, but the man was harsh and badly behaved; he was a Calebite. 4 David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep. 5 So David sent ten young men. And David said to the young men, “Go up to Carmel, and go to Nabal and greet him in my name. 6 And thus you shall greet him: ‘Peace be to you, and peace be to your house, and peace be to all that you have. 7 I hear that you have shearers. Now your shepherds have been with us, and we did them no harm, and they missed nothing all the time they were in Carmel. 8 Ask your young men, and they will tell you. Therefore let my young men find favor in your eyes, for we come on a feast day. Please give whatever you have at hand to your servants and to your son David.’” 9 When David’s young men came, they said all this to Nabal in the name of David, and then they waited. 10 And Nabal answered David’s servants, “Who is David? Who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants these days who are breaking away from their masters. 11 Shall I take my bread and my water and my meat that I have killed for my shearers and give it to men who come from I do not know where?” 12 So David’s young men turned away and came back and told him all this. 13 And David said to his men, “Every man strap on his sword!” And every man of them strapped on his sword. David also strapped on his sword. And about four hundred men went up after David, while two hundred remained with the baggage. 14 But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal’s wife, “Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to greet our master, and he railed at them. 15 Yet the men were very good to us, and we suffered no harm, and we did not miss anything when we were in the fields, as long as we went with them. 16 They were a wall to us both

by night and by day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep. 17 Now therefore know this and consider what you should do, for harm is determined against our master and against all his house, and he is such a worthless man that one cannot speak to him.” 18 Then Abigail made haste and took two hundred loaves and two skins of wine and five sheep already prepared and five seahs of parched grain and a hundred clusters of raisins and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on donkeys. 19 And she said to her young men, “Go on before me; behold, I come after you.” But she did not tell her husband Nabal. 20 And as she rode on the donkey and came down under cover of the mountain, behold, David and his men came down toward her, and she met them. 21 Now David had said, “Surely in vain have I guarded all that this fellow has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that belonged to him, and he has returned me evil for good. 22 God do so to the enemies of David and more also, if by morning I leave so much as one male of all who belong to him.” 23 When Abigail saw David, she hurried and got down from the donkey and fell before David on her face and bowed to the ground. 24 She fell at his feet and said, “On me alone, my lord, be the guilt. Please let your servant speak in your ears, and hear the words of your servant. 25 Let not my lord regard this worthless fellow, Nabal, for as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name, and folly is with him. But I your servant did not see the young men of my lord, whom you sent. 26 Now then, my lord, as the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, because the Lord has restrained you from bloodguilt and from saving with your own hand, now then let your enemies and those who seek to do evil to my lord be as Nabal. 27 And now let this present that your servant has brought to my lord be given to the young men who follow my lord. 28 Please forgive the trespass of your servant. For the Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house, because my lord is fighting the battles of the Lord, and evil shall not be found in you so long as you live. 29 If men rise up to pursue you and to seek your life, the life of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living in the care of the Lord your God. And the lives of your enemies he shall sling out as from the hollow of a sling. 30 And when the Lord has done to my lord according to all the good that he has spoken concerning you and has appointed you prince over Israel, 31 my lord shall have no cause of grief or pangs of conscience for having shed blood without cause or for my lord working salvation himself. And when the Lord has dealt well with my lord, then remember your servant.” 32 And David said to Abigail, “Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me! 33 Blessed be your discretion, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodguilt and from working salvation with my own hand! 34 For as surely as the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, who has restrained me from hurting you, unless you had hurried and come to meet me, truly by morning there had not been left to Nabal so much as one male.” 35 Then David received from her hand what she had brought him. And he said to her, “Go up in peace to your house. See, I have obeyed your voice, and I have granted your petition.” 36 And Abigail came to Nabal, and behold, he was holding a feast in his house, like the feast of a king. And Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunk. So she told him nothing at all until the morning light. 37 In the morning, when the wine had gone out of Nabal, his wife told him these things, and his heart died within him, and he became as a stone. 38 And about ten days later the Lord struck Nabal, and he died. 39 When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, “Blessed be the Lord who has avenged the insult I received at the hand of Nabal, and has kept back his servant from wrongdoing. The Lord has returned the evil of Nabal on his own head.” Then David sent and spoke to Abigail, to take her as his wife. 40 When the servants of David came to Abigail at Carmel, they said to her, “David has sent us to you to take you to him as his wife.” 41 And she rose and bowed with her face to the ground and said, “Behold, your handmaid is a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.”

-v.1-3 Which four people are mentioned?

- v.10-11 Was Nabal willing to feed David and his men? _____
- v.13,22 What did David plan to do? _____
- v.23 What did Abigail do when she came upon David? _____
- v.24 After placing herself at David's feet, who did she blame? _____
- v.37-38 How did God punish Nabal? _____
- v.41 Did Abigail remain humble in the face of becoming a queen? _____

Something to Think About: Abigail is a great example of courage, wisdom—and humility. She balanced sincere servant-like behavior with giving of godly advice when it was needed.

Say, if asked, would you be able to give godly advice? Obviously, this would require you to know what the Bible says about the topic at hand. Advice that is not biblical will NOT actually help! Since there's no way anyone could share what the Bible says about something without knowing it ahead, being able to help others spiritually is going to necessitate some regular Bible study on our part. In fact, you might be surprised how often God gives us opportunities to share with others some of the things that we have learned from His Word

in recent Bible study. It's pretty cool, actually!

Have you ever had the experience of reading something in Scripture that blessed or challenged you—only to have the same topic come up in some “random” conversation? That's God! He's giving you the chance to share your blessings and lessons with someone else—to bless them, teach them, challenge them, and/or build them up in the things of the Lord.

I think that this kind of thing happening is a good example of how God always rewards our faithfulness to Him. Give it a try!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Thursday, May 12, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read John 13:1-17

“Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. 2 During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, 3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, 4 rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. 5 Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. 6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, do you wash my feet?” 7 Jesus answered him, “What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand.” 8 Peter said to him, “You shall never wash my feet.” Jesus answered him, “If I do not wash you, you have no share with me.” 9 Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!” 10 Jesus said to him, “The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you.” 11 For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, “Not all of you are clean.” 12 When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, “Do you understand what I have done to you? 13 You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. 14 If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. 16 Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. 17 If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.”

-v.1 What did Jesus know? _____

-What did He want to show to His own? _____

-v.5 What did Jesus do? _____

-v.8 Did Peter want Jesus to wash his feet? _____

-Was it necessary? _____

-v.15 Jesus did what He did as an _____ for His followers to also do.

-v.16 “...no servant is _____ than his _____.”

-v.17 "...you will be blessed if you _____ them."

Something to Think About: Jesus showed us by example that Christians should be willing to perform the most menial services for each other. Clearly, if our Creator, Savior, and Redeemer lived the life of a servant while on earth, it is not below us either. Furthermore, Jesus states quite clearly here that God blesses those who obey Him. This is true for those who stand before a congregation on Sunday to preach His Word and it's true for those who clean the toilets on Saturday night. It's true for those who lead a Bible conference and it's true for those who hold the arm of an older saint so that they can get safely into the building.

We are most like our Savior when we are humble and willing servants, simply seeking to honor God, do His will, and are looking out for the needs of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Friday, May 13, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Removing shoes or falling to our knees is used to signify our sinfulness in comparison to God's perfect holiness.

-Read Exodus 3:1-6

"Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2 And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. 3 And Moses said, "I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." 4 When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." 5 Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." 6 And he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God."

-v.1 What was Moses doing? _____

-v.2 Who appeared to him and where? _____

-What was unusual about the bush? _____

-v.4 Who called to Moses from the bush? _____

-v.5 Why was Moses instructed to remove his sandals? _____

-v.6 Why did Moses hide his face? _____

Something to Think About: I wonder...what do we do to show respect for God's holiness? The Muslims remove their shoes before worshipping a false god. What do we do before the real and only God? Do we dress respectfully and carefully for Him? Do we take care with our hair and makeup? Is our heart right before we step into His house? Do we call to mind exactly Who we are singing to?

We might not physically remove our shoes, but I pray that our hearts are properly respectful.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Saturday, May 14, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Exodus 30:17-21

"The Lord said to Moses, 18 "You shall also make a basin of bronze, with its stand of bronze, for washing. You shall put it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and you shall put water in it, 19 with which Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet. 20 When they go into the tent of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn a food offering to the Lord, they shall wash with water, so that they may not die. 21 They shall wash their hands and their feet, so that they may not die. It shall be a statute forever to them, even to him and to his offspring throughout their generations."

-v.18 What was the bronze basin in the Tabernacle for? _____

-v.19 Who was to wash in it? _____

-v.20 When? _____

-Why? _____

-v.21 How often/long were they to keep this up? _____

Something to Think About: Aaron, his sons, and all the priests of God after them were commanded to wash themselves before entering God's house. The punishment for disobedience was death. Clearly, God took this command seriously. What does this teach us? Though we are not under Jewish law, God still hates sin. We cannot completely or properly serve Him if we are allowing sin to remain in our lives—even in the "smallest" of areas. "Wash" before coming into the presence of God by confessing any known sin and preparing your heart to worship through prayer and Scripture.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Sunday, May 15, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Joshua 5:13-6:6

“When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, “Are you for us, or for our adversaries?” 14 And he said, “No; but I am the commander of the army of the Lord. Now I have come.” And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, “What does my lord say to his servant?” 15 And the commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, “Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so. . . Now Jericho was shut up inside and outside because of the people of Israel. None went out, and none came in. 2 And the Lord said to Joshua, “See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and mighty men of valor. 3 You shall march around the city, all the men of war going around the city once. Thus shall you do for six days. 4 Seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. On the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. 5 And when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, when you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shall shout with a great shout, and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people shall go up, everyone straight before him.” 6 So Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, “Take up the ark of the covenant and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord.”

-5:13 Where was Joshua when he saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword?

-5:14 Who was He? _____

-What did Joshua do? _____

-What did he ask? _____

-5:15 Why was Joshua commanded to take off his sandals? _____

-6:6 Did Joshua obey God? _____

Something to Think About: Here Joshua had the amazing privilege of meeting Jesus before He came to earth as a human being (this is known as a theophany of the preincarnate Christ). Just by God being there, the ground near Him became holy. Joshua fell down before Him, removed his sandals, and committed to do anything and everything God commanded him. What a great model for us, too. We are fond of challenging God's commands or deciding for ourselves how much of His commands we are willing to obey. This is not our right! I'm guessing that if we saw Jesus standing before us with a drawn sword we would not fool ourselves into thinking obedience is a choice. The fact is, we WILL all one day stand before Him to give account of our obedience. How I long for Him to be pleased with my behavior!

P.S. Notice, too, that Jesus said that the victory over Jericho was a done deal. Joshua simply had to do what he was told. We, too, are promised many things in Scripture—we just need to trust and obey!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Monday, May 16, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Isaiah 6:1-8

"In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" 4 And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" 6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7 And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for." 8 And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me."

- v.1 How is God described? _____
- v.2 What angelic being is described? _____
- v.3 What were they calling to one another? _____
- v.5 What is Isaiah's response to being in God's presence? _____

Something to Think About: In verse 2, these mighty angelic beings covered their faces—and feet—out of awe of God's holiness. It is eye-opening to realize that creatures who have never sinned, who have not experienced adoption into God's family, or have no need of His amazing grace are far more worshipful than us—we who have the most to be grateful for! We go our merry way with hardly a thought for the wishes of Him Who gave His all for us. Is there something in your life that needs to change today? Have you thanked God lately for His grace? His unending mercy? His absolute and unconditional love? His absolute and beautiful holiness?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, May 17, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Ezekiel 1:1– 2:2

1. "In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the exiles by the Chebar canal, the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. 2 On the fifth day of the month (it was the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin), 3 the word of the Lord came to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the Chebar canal, and the hand of the Lord was upon him there. 4 As I looked, behold, a stormy wind came out of the north, and a great cloud, with brightness around it, and fire flashing forth continually, and in the midst of the fire, as it were gleaming metal. 5 And from the midst of it came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had a human likeness, 6 but each had four

faces, and each of them had four wings. 7 Their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the sole of a calf's foot. And they sparkled like burnished bronze. 8 Under their wings on their four sides they had human hands. And the four had their faces and their wings thus: 9 their wings touched one another. Each one of them went straight forward, without turning as they went. 10 As for the likeness of their faces, each had a human face. The four had the face of a lion on the right side, the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and the four had the face of an eagle. 11 Such were their faces. And their wings were spread out above. Each creature had two wings, each of which touched the wing of another, while two covered their bodies. 12 And each went straight forward. Wherever the spirit would go, they went, without turning as they went. 13 As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches moving to and fro among the living creatures. And the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lighting. 14 And the living creatures darted to and fro, like the appearance of a flash of lightning. 15 Now as I looked at the living creatures, I saw a wheel on the earth beside the living creatures, one for each of the four of them. 16 As for the appearance of the wheels and their construction: their appearance was like the gleaming of beryl. And the four had the same likeness, their appearance and construction being as it were a wheel within a wheel. 17 When they went, they went in any of their four directions without turning as they went. 18 And their rims were tall and awesome, and the rims of all four were full of eyes all around. 19 And when the living creatures went, the wheels went beside them; and when the living creatures rose from the earth, the wheels rose. 20 Wherever the spirit wanted to go, they went, and the wheels rose along with them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. 21 When those went, these went; and when those stood, these stood; and when those rose from the earth, the wheels rose along with them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. 22 Over the heads of the living creatures there was the likeness of an expanse, shining like awe-inspiring crystal, spread out above their heads. 23 And under the expanse their wings were stretched out straight, one toward another. And each creature had two wings covering its body. 24 And when they went, I heard the sound of their wings like the sound of many waters, like the sound of the Almighty, a sound of tumult like the sound of an army. When they stood still, they let down their wings. 25 And there came a voice from above the expanse over their heads. When they stood still, they let down their wings. 26 And above the expanse over their heads there was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like sapphire; and seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness with a human appearance. 27 And upward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were gleaming metal, like the appearance of fire enclosed all around. And downward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and there was brightness around him. 28 Like the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness all around. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard the voice of one speaking. (2.) 1 And he said to me, "Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak with you." 2 And as he spoke to me, the Spirit entered into me and set me on my feet, and I heard him speaking to me.

- 1:28 What was Ezekiel's response to seeing God? _____
 -2:2 Who lifted him back up? _____

-Read Ezekiel 3:22-24

"And the hand of the Lord was upon me there. And he said to me, "Arise, go out into the valley, and there I will speak with you." 23 So I arose and went out into the valley, and behold, the glory of the Lord stood there, like the glory that I had seen by the Chebar canal, and I fell on my face. 24 But the Spirit entered into me and set me on my feet, and he spoke with me and said to me, "Go, shut yourself within your house."

- v.23 What does Ezekiel do when he sees the glory of the Lord for a second time? _____
 -v.24 What does the Holy Spirit do a second time? _____

Something to Think About: I cannot for a second pretend I understand the mysteries of prophecy, but what I do see is Ezekiel's reverential awe in the presence of God, the tender help of the Holy Spirit of God, and a job to do. All these things are true for us. Our all-powerful God deserves our utmost respect and awe and He promises to help us every step of the way in whatever He has asked us to do. Most of us will never be an Ezekiel or Paul, but that doesn't make the jobs God gives us any less important. Faithfully obeying Him in our humble lives is every bit as important as the tasks He gave the people in the Bible.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, May 18, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-In Scripture, our feet and shoes sometimes demonstrate an obedient, trusting heart.

-Read Exodus 12:1-13

"The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, 2 "This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. 3 Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household. 4 And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. 5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, 6 and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight. 7 "Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. 8 They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. 9 Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts. 10 And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. 11 In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover. 12 For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. 13 The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt."

-v.1-2 How had the Hebrew calendar changed? _____

-v.3 What animal was to be sacrificed? _____

-v.11 Describe how they were to eat their Passover meal: _____

Something to Think About: The Hebrew people were instructed to eat this meal while at the same time being ready to leave at a moment's notice. This included having their coats and shoes on—which was highly unusual in this culture. I try to remind myself when reading Bible accounts of faithfulness and obedience to God that the people involved did not know the end of their story! We know all about God's amazing deliverance on their behalf, but they didn't. They simply obeyed God and trusted Him for the results—exactly what He expects from us, too.

I like the reminder that we should be ready for action at a moment's notice. Maybe it's only me, but have you ever noticed that tasks that may be hard and sacrificial are one thing if it's our idea—and quite another if someone else asks us to do it? If it was our idea in the first place, we're generally willing to work super hard and aren't as likely to feel poor-me. If, however, someone else asks us to do a hard job, we may feel put upon, abused, or otherwise taken for granted. How we need the Lord's help to be willing—and ready—servants of God, putting service for others and bringing glory to God on the top of our priority list!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Thursday, May 19, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Joshua 3:1-13

"Then Joshua rose early in the morning and they set out from Shittim. And they came to the Jordan, he and all the people of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over. 2 At the end of three days the officers went through the camp 3 and commanded the people, "As soon as you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God being carried by the Levitical priests, then you shall set out from your place and follow it. 4 Yet there shall be a distance between you and it, about 2,000 cubits in length. Do not come near it, in order that you may know the way you shall go, for you have not passed this way before." 5 Then Joshua said to the people, "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you." 6 And Joshua said to the priests, "Take up the ark of the covenant and pass on before the people." So they took up the ark of the covenant and went before the people. 7 The Lord said to Joshua, "Today I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. 8 And as for you, command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, 'When you come to the brink of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand still in the Jordan.'" 9 And Joshua said to the people of Israel, "Come here and listen to the words of the Lord your God." 10 And Joshua said, "Here is how you shall know that the living God is among you and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Perizzites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, and the Jebusites. 11 Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is passing over before you into the Jordan. 12 Now therefore take twelve men from the tribes of Israel, from each tribe a man. 13 And when the soles of the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off from flowing, and the waters coming down from above shall stand in one heap."

- v.1 What river did the Israelites camp at? _____
- v.3 What were the people to follow? _____
- v.5 What was a necessary step before they could see "amazing things" from God? _____
- v.13 When would the Jordan river be cut off and stand in a heap? _____

Something to Think About: I wanted you to see that it wasn't until the priests obediently stepped INTO the swollen Jordan river that it stopped and a path formed for them to cross on. Their obedience came FIRST. We do not need to know any of the why's and wherefores before we obey God. We just need to trust Him. As a bonus... I love verse 5! It promises the ability to see amazing things from God AFTER we consecrate ourselves. Not seeing amazing things in your life? Perhaps something in your life that is less than pleasing to God is holding you back.

BONUS: Verse 3 indicates a shift in what the people of Israel were to follow. Before this, they were following the cloud and pillar of fire (shekinah glory of God!), but after this, they are following the Ark of the Covenant, which, by the way, holds the Word of God.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Friday, May 20, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-There are many Psalms that refer to our feet with reference to how God wants us to live victoriously for Him.

-Read Psalm 18

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, the servant of the Lord, who addressed the words of this song to the Lord on the day when the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. He said:

"I love you, O Lord, my strength. 2 The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. 3 I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies. 4 The cords of death encompassed me; the torrents of destruction assailed me; 5 the cords of Sheol entangled me; the snares of death confronted me. 6 In my distress I called upon the Lord; to my God I cried for help. From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears. 7 Then the earth reeled and rocked; the foundations also of the mountains trembled and quaked, because he was angry. 8 Smoke went up from his nostrils, and devouring fire from his mouth; glowing coals flamed forth from him. 9 He bowed the heavens and came down; thick darkness was under his feet. 10 He rode on a cherub and flew; he came swiftly on the wings of the wind. 11 He made darkness his covering, his canopy around him, thick clouds dark with water. 12 Out of the brightness before him hailstones and coals of fire broke through his clouds. 13 The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Most High uttered his voice, hailstones and coals of fire. 14 And he sent out his arrows and scattered them; he flashed forth lightnings and routed them. 15 Then the channels of the sea were seen, and the foundations of the world were laid bare at your rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of your nostrils. 16 He sent from on high, he took me; he drew me out of many waters. 17 He rescued me from my strong enemy and from those who hated me, for they were too mighty for me. 18 They confronted me in the day of my calamity, but the Lord was my support. 19 He brought me out into a broad place; he rescued me, because he delighted in me. 20 The Lord dealt with me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands he rewarded me. 21 For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God. 22 For all his rules were before me, and his statutes I did not put away from me. 23 I was blameless before him, and I kept myself from my guilt. 24 So the Lord has rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight. 25 With the merciful you show yourself merciful; with the blameless man you show yourself blameless; 26 with the purified you show yourself pure; and with the crooked you make yourself seem tortuous. 27 For you save a humble people, but the haughty eyes you bring down. 28 For it is you who light my lamp; the Lord my God lightens my darkness. 29 For by you I can run against a troop, and by my God I can leap over a wall. 30 This God—his way is perfect; the word of the Lord proves true; he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him. 31 For who is God, but the Lord? And who is a rock, except our God?— 32 the God who equipped me with strength and made my way blameless. 33 He made my feet like the feet of a deer and set me secure on the heights. 34 He trains my hands for war, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze. 35 You have given me the shield of your salvation, and your right hand supported me, and your gentleness made me great. 36 You gave a wide place for my steps under me, and my feet did not slip. 37 I

pursued my enemies and overtook them, and did not turn back till they were consumed. 38 I thrust them through, so that they were not able to rise; they fell under my feet. 39 For you equipped me with strength for the battle; you made those who rise against me sink under me. 40 You made my enemies turn their backs to me, and those who hated me I destroyed. 41 They cried for help, but there was none to save; they cried to the Lord, but he did not answer them. 42 I beat them fine as dust before the wind; I cast them out like the mire of the streets. 43 You delivered me from strife with the people; you made me the head of the nations; people whom I had not known served me. 44 As soon as they heard of me they obeyed me; foreigners came cringing to me. 45 Foreigners lost heart and came trembling out of their fortresses. 46 The Lord lives, and blessed be my rock, and exalted be the God of my salvation— 47 the God who gave me vengeance and subdued peoples under me, 48 who rescued me from my enemies; yes, you exalted me above those who rose against me; you delivered me from the man of violence. 49 For this I will praise you, O Lord, among the nations, and sing to your name. 50 Great salvation he brings to his king, and shows steadfast love to his anointed, to David and his offspring forever.”

- Who wrote this Psalm and why? (see superscription) _____
- v.9 What does David say was under God’s feet when angry at the wicked? _____
- v.28 “For it is you who light my _____; the Lord my God lightens my _____.”
- v.33 What animal is mentioned? _____
- With what ability? _____
- v.36 Why does God broaden the path? _____
- v.37-38 Who fell beneath David’s feet? _____
- v.39 Who gave David victory? _____
- v.49 What is David’s response? _____

Something to Think About: God wants us to live victoriously for Him—and He helps in amazing ways. He wants us to be able to “stand in the heights.” Are you?

A very powerful and useful exercise is to take some time to think about and even to write down a record of how God has intervened in your (and perhaps your family’s) life. This might include dramatic rescues of a near-death sort, it certainly would include salvation testimonies, and it could also include answers to prayers both small and large. Even if we don’t have a story of God riding on the wings of a storm to fly to our rescue in battle, we know that He pays careful, intensive, completely-engrossed attention to the slightest cry of His smallest child. What is your response to that?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Saturday, May 21, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Psalm 25

“To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. 2 O my God, in you I trust; let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies exult over me. 3 Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame; they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous. 4 Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. 5 Lead me in

your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long. 6 Remember your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. 7 Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of your goodness, O Lord! 8 Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in the way. 9 He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way. 10 All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies. 11 For your name's sake, O Lord, pardon my guilt, for it is great. 12 Who is the man who fears the Lord? Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose. 13 His soul shall abide in well-being, and his offspring shall inherit the land. 14 The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant. 15 My eyes are ever toward the Lord, for he will pluck my feet out of the net. 16 Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. 17 The troubles of my heart are enlarged; bring me out of my distresses. 18 Consider my affliction and my trouble, and forgive all my sins. 19 Consider how many are my foes, and with what violent hatred they hate me. 20 Oh, guard my soul, and deliver me! Let me not be put to shame, for I take refuge in you. 21 May integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for you. 22 Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.”

- v.1 To _____, O Lord, I lift up my soul.
- v. 2 O my God, in you I _____.
- v.4 Make me to know your _____, O Lord; teach me your _____.
- v.8 _____ and _____ is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in the way.
- v. 9 He leads the _____ in what is right, and teaches the humble his way.
- v.10 All the _____ of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness.
- v.14 The _____ of the Lord is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant. –
- v.15 My eyes are ever toward the Lord, for he will pluck my _____ out of the net.
- v.20 Oh, guard my soul, and deliver me! Let me not be put to shame, for I take _____ _ _ _ _ _.

Something to Think About: Only God can “pluck our feet out of the net” (even though we usually try other things first!). Go to God. Go to God first. He is trustworthy, merciful, good, upright, loving, and faithful. He is the only One we can lift up our souls to in complete trust. In only Him can we know the right path for our feet—and for our lives.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Sunday, May 22, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Psalm 26

“Vindicate me, O Lord, for I have walked in my integrity, and I have trusted in the Lord without wavering. 2 Prove me, O Lord, and try me; test my heart and my mind. 3 For your steadfast love is before my eyes, and I walk in your faithfulness. 4 I do not sit with men of falsehood, nor do I consort with hypocrites. 5 I hate the assembly of evildoers, and I will not sit with the wicked. 6 I wash my hands in innocence and go around your altar, O Lord, 7 proclaiming thanksgiving aloud, and telling all your wondrous deeds. 8 O Lord, I love the habitation of your house and the place where your glory dwells. 9 Do not sweep my soul away with sinners, nor

my life with bloodthirsty men, 10 in whose hands are evil devices, and whose right hands are full of bribes. 11 But as for me, I shall walk in my integrity; redeem me, and be gracious to me. 12 My foot stands on level ground; in the great assembly I will bless the Lord.”

-v.1 Vindicate me, O Lord, for I have _____ in my integrity, and I have _____ in the Lord without wavering.

-v.3 For your steadfast love is before my eyes, and I _____ in your faithfulness.

-v.11 But as for me, I shall _____ in my integrity; redeem me, and be gracious to me.

-v.12 My _____ stands on level ground; in the great assembly I will bless the Lord.”

Something to Think About: I love the commitment of the psalmist in this psalm. He has chosen to walk in INTEGRITY, He has chosen to TRUST in the Lord without wavering, he has chosen to walk in God’s faithfulness, he refuses to have anything all to do with the wicked, he has chosen to proclaim thanksgiving (out loud!) to God, telling of all His wondrous deeds, and he has chosen to keep his feet on level ground.

God honors our faithfulness to Him and to His Word. He is pleased when we keep our feet on “level ground” - that is, away from temptation that might cause us to fall.

Wouldn’t it be fun to write your own psalm of commitment to your Father in heaven? Give it a try!

BONUS: Did you notice that personal holiness comes before being able to give thanks? Check out verses 6 & 7.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Monday, May 23, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Psalm 66

“Shout for joy to God, all the earth; 2 sing the glory of his name; give to him glorious praise! 3 Say to God, “How awesome are your deeds! So great is your power that your enemies come cringing to you. 4 All the earth worships you and sings praises to you; they sing praises to your name.” Selah 5 Come and see what God has done: he is awesome in his deeds toward the children of man. 6 He turned the sea into dry land; they passed through the river on foot. There did we rejoice in him, 7 who rules by his might forever, whose eyes keep watch on the nations— let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah 8 Bless our God, O peoples; let the sound of his praise be heard, 9 who has kept our soul among the living and has not let our feet slip. 10 For you, O God, have tested us; you have tried us as silver is tried. 11 You brought us into the net; you laid a crushing burden on our backs; 12 you let men ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; yet you have brought us out to a place of abundance. 13 I will come into your house with burnt offerings; I will perform my vows to you, 14 that which my lips uttered and my mouth promised when I was in trouble. 15 I will offer to you burnt offerings of fattened animals, with the smoke of the sacrifice of rams; I will make an offering of bulls and goats. Selah 16 Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done

for my soul. 17 I cried to him with my mouth, and high praise was on my tongue. 18 If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. 19 But truly God has listened; he has attended to the voice of my prayer. 20 Blessed be God, because he has not rejected my prayer or removed his steadfast love from me!”

-v.3 What is the theme of the praise that is being sung in verses 1 and 2? _____

-v.5 What does the psalmist say God is awesome in? _____

-v.6 How is “foot” used? _____

-v.9 God has not let our foot _____.

-v.18 What is the one thing that may keep God from listening to our prayers? _____

-Based on verses 19-20, was the psalmist right with God? _____

Something to Think About: When is the last time you remembered to thank God for keeping you from sin? Asking for help comes quite easily to us, but when it is given, are we as effusive as the psalmist with our praise?

I was convicted about this some time ago and have worked hard to try to remember to stop what I’m doing periodically throughout the day so I can think about what all has happened—and thank God for the things I prayed about. Here are some real-life examples:

-In the winter, I am pretty concerned lest I fall on icy walkways and parking lots (I’m not positive I can get back up again unaided!!!!), so I pray about that a lot. I try to remember to thank God when I am back in the car and/or safely back home.

-Keeping with the first example, I also pray and ask to help me be a good steward when I am shopping for the week’s groceries. I try to remember to thank Him when I am pushing my cart back to my car with the loot.

-When there has been a prayer request brought to my attention I try to (a) pray right away so I don’t forget (and especially if I told someone I would pray about it), and (b) thank God when I hear the outcome.

-I also try to pause to thank God when I realize He has helped me in some area that I had not yet acknowledged and/or to thank Him when I recognize something delightful He has done (such as a lovely spring day, a timely encouraging word from a friend, strength for that day’s tasks, etc.).

Obviously, we could (and should!) be thanking and praising God pretty constantly! As the psalmist said, our God does awesome things!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, May 24, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Psalm 94

O Lord, God of vengeance, O God of vengeance, shine forth! 2 Rise up, O judge of the earth; repay to the proud what they deserve! 3 O Lord, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked exult? 4 They

pour out their arrogant words; all the evildoers boast. 5 They crush your people, O Lord, and afflict your heritage. 6 They kill the widow and the sojourner, and murder the fatherless; 7 and they say, “The Lord does not see; the God of Jacob does not perceive.” 8 Understand, O dumbest of the people! Fools, when will you be wise? 9 He who planted the ear, does he not hear? He who formed the eye, does he not see? 10 He who disciplines the nations, does he not rebuke? He who teaches man knowledge—11 the Lord—knows the thoughts of man, that they are but a breath. 12 Blessed is the man whom you discipline, O Lord, and whom you teach out of your law, 13 to give him rest from days of trouble, until a pit is dug for the wicked. 14 For the Lord will not forsake his people; he will not abandon his heritage; 15 for justice will return to the righteous, and all the upright in heart will follow it. 16 Who rises up for me against the wicked? Who stands up for me against evildoers? 17 If the Lord had not been my help, my soul would soon have lived in the land of silence. 18 When I thought, “My foot slips,” your steadfast love, O Lord, held me up. 19 When the cares of my heart are many, your consolations cheer my soul. 20 Can wicked rulers be allied with you, those who frame injustice by statute? 21 They band together against the life of the righteous and condemn the innocent to death. 22 But the Lord has become my stronghold, and my God the rock of my refuge. 23 He will bring back on them their iniquity and wipe them out for their wickedness; the Lord our God will wipe them out.”

- v.1 Who avenges the wrongs done against the oppressed? _____
- v.11 What does God know? _____
- v.12 Who is blessed? _____
- v.18 What supports our feet? _____
- v.19 What brings joy when we are anxious? _____
- v.22 “But the Lord has become my _____ and my God, the Rock of my _____.”

Something to Think About: God is aware of every wrong done and He will deal with it—in the right time, in the right place, and in the right way. Even though the world thinks Christians are weak and ripe for bullying, the truth is that those whose lives are directed by God’s principles are the blessed ones. The truth is, we have God’s love supporting us. There is NOTHING better than that!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, May 25, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Psalm 116

“I love the Lord, because he has heard my voice and my pleas for mercy. 2 Because he inclined his ear to me, therefore I will call on him as long as I live. 3 The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me; I suffered distress and anguish. 4 Then I called on the name of the Lord: “O Lord, I pray, deliver my soul!” 5 Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; our God is merciful. 6 The Lord preserves the simple; when I was brought low, he saved me. 7 Return, O my soul, to your rest; for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you. 8 For you have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling; 9 I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living. 10 I believed, even when I spoke: “I am greatly afflicted”; 11 I said in my alarm, “All mankind are liars.” 12 What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits to me? 13 I

will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord, 14 I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people. 15 Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. 16 O Lord, I am your servant; I am your servant, the son of your maidservant. You have loosed my bonds. 17 I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanksgiving and call on the name of the Lord. 18 I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people, 19 in the courts of the house of the Lord, in your midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the Lord!"

- v.1 What two things did God hear? _____
- v.4 What completely changed the picture of doom? _____
- v.5 The Lord is _____, _____, and _____.
- v.7 Why can we be at rest? _____
- v.8 What three ways has God delivered the psalmist? _____
- v.15 What is precious to God? _____
- v.14, 18 What does the psalmist plan to pay? _____

Something to Think About: Of course we understand that we could never re-pay God for His gift of salvation, but we can say "*Thank you.*"

Besides literally saying thank you to God, we can "say" thank you by simply doing what God asks, how He asks it, and when He asks it.

How are you doing in living out your gratitude to God?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Thursday, May 26, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Psalm 121

"I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? 2 My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. 3 He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. 4 Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. 5 The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade on your right hand. 6 The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. 7 The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. 8 The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore."

- v.2 The One Who helps us has done what? _____
- v.3 What way does He help us? _____
- v.4 Does He ever stop watching over us? _____
- v.8 For how long? _____

Something to Think About: “The Lord,” “help,” and “keep” occur several times in this short Psalm. What a comfort it is to know the Maker of heaven and earth cares about us, watches over us, and never sleeps on the job. Human beings have minimal sleep requirements: without adequate restorative sleep, we suffer cognitively, and eventually, physical function degrades.

Sleep is one of the “hard-stop” limitations that remind us that we are small, weak, finite creatures. Imagine Someone who never needs either a cat-nap or a long night’s sleep. Imagine Someone who never dozes off in the afternoon and never yawns: that would be God! He is always alert and at full function. Not only that, but His alertness and attention is focused on His children. He is ever watching out for what is beneficial for us. God is always available, always powerful, and always good!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Friday, May 27, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-God gives us a free will to decide where to place our feet, that is, how to live. Sometimes we choose His way and sometimes we choose sinful paths. Summarize these verses:

-Psalm 119:59-60

“When I think on my ways, I turn my feet to your testimonies; I hasten and do not delay to keep your commandments.”

-Psalm 119:101

“I hold back my feet from every evil way, in order to keep your word.”

Something to Think About: In these verses, the psalmist has clearly thought things through and decided to obey God’s Word. Furthermore, he is making a concerted effort on a daily basis to stay away from anything that might lead him astray. On the flip side, he also refused to delay obeying what he already knew God wanted.

What a great motto: obey completely without delay!

Have you ever made a commitment like that to the Lord? If you’ve ever been to a Christian camp, you’ll know that the Friday evening bonfire is usually a time where the camp director encourages the campers to make some serious decisions for the Lord. Obviously, the first biggie is that each camper knows without any

doubt that they are a child of God and will spend eternity in the presence of God, but a very close second essential thing is that of dedicating your life to the Lord. This is a commitment to acknowledge that God is your Ruler and that you will gladly and thoroughly obey Him and live in order to please Him and bring Him praise. This is, of course, what the psalmist was doing in Psalm 119—and it is what EVERY child of God is privileged to do too!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Saturday, May 28, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Read Proverbs 3:21-35

"My son, do not lose sight of these— keep sound wisdom and discretion, 22 and they will be life for your soul and adornment for your neck. 23 Then you will walk on your way securely, and your foot will not stumble. 24 If you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet. 25 Do not be afraid of sudden terror or of the ruin of the wicked, when it comes, 26 for the Lord will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being caught. 27 Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it. 28 Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come again, tomorrow I will give it"—when you have it with you. 29 Do not plan evil against your neighbor, who dwells trustingly beside you. 30 Do not contend with a man for no reason, when he has done you no harm. 31 Do not envy a man of violence and do not choose any of his ways, 32 for the devious person is an abomination to the Lord, but the upright are in his confidence. 33 The Lord's curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the dwelling of the righteous. 34 Toward the scorners he is scornful, but to the humble he gives favor. 35 The wise will inherit honor, but fools get disgrace."

-v.21 What should we always keep in our sight? _____

-v.23 How will they help our foot (walk)? _____

-v.24 How will they affect our rest? _____

-v.26 "The Lord will be your _____ and will keep your _____ from being _____."

-v.27 What must we not withhold? _____

-v.32 Who does God take into His confidence? _____

-v.34 Who does God give grace (favor) to? _____

-v.35 Who inherits honor? _____

Something to Think About: Wisdom and discretion are the ability to assess situations or circumstances and draw sound conclusions. It has to do with having good sense and insight. This is important in our Christian walk. But where do we get this? Scripture! All genuine wisdom is from God and God alone. Don't let it out of your sight! Remember that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom—it starts with an acknowledgment that God has the right to rule over us, and His will is perfect. Furthermore, when we live in a God honoring way, the things we do pleases Him and are worthwhile and of eternal value.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Sunday, May 29, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Summarize what these verses tell us to avoid.

-Proverbs 1:10, 15-16

"My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent. . . my son, do not walk in the way with them; hold back your foot from their paths, for their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed blood."

-Proverbs 4:27

"Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your foot away from evil.

-Proverbs 6:16-19 (esp. pertaining to feet)

"There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers

Something to Think About: Here is another warning to stay far away from anything and everything that might cause us to stray from an obedient walk with God. Did you know that the list of what might cause trouble is different for each of us? Some might not find being in a mall with a credit card a temptation, but turn on the TV during prime time and they are immediately caught up in godless entertainment. Others might be able to enter a bakery and feel no compulsion to over-indulge, while others know that if they bring junk food into the house, they will overeat. Some of us are easily influenced by friends, some cannot say no to a vice of some sort, some find a hard time saying "yes" to things that they OUGHT to do. We all have our own "evil paths" to be aware of and avoid. God provides what we need to remain strong in His Word.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Monday, May 30, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Summarize what these verses say about how to please God in our walk.

-Psalm 17:5

"My steps have held fast to your paths; my feet have not slipped."

-Psalm 140:4

"Guard me, O Lord, from the hands of the wicked; preserve me from violent men, who have planned to trip up my feet."

-Proverbs 4:26-27

"Ponder the path of your feet; then all your ways will be sure. Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your foot away from evil."

-Jeremiah 13:16

"Give glory to the Lord your God before he brings darkness, before your feet stumble on the twilight mountains, and while you look for light he turns it into gloom and makes it deep darkness."

Something to Think About: These authors encourage us to call on God for help. If you haven't done a word search on the topic of prayer in Scripture recently, it might be time to refresh your memory. We all so easily forget the amazing treasures in Scripture if we don't remind ourselves on a very frequent basis. Just like a sun-tan cannot be maintained without regular time exposed to the sun, remaining Christ-like requires regular time with God in church and in personal devotions and prayer.

Here are a few references to get you started:

-I Thessalonians 5:16-18

-Philippians 4:6-7

-I John 5:14

-Colossians 4:2

-Romans 12:12

-Psalm 145:18

-Hebrews 4:16

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, May 31, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Scripture gives some warnings associated with our feet (lifestyle).

-Read Proverbs 6:20-29

“My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching. 21 Bind them on your heart always; tie them around your neck. 22 When you walk, they will lead you; when you lie down, they will watch over you; and when you awake, they will talk with you. 23 For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life, 24 to preserve you from the evil woman, from the smooth tongue of the adulteress. 25 Do not desire her beauty in your heart, and do not let her capture you with her eyelashes; 26 for the price of a prostitute is only a loaf of bread, but a married woman hunts down a precious life. 27 Can a man carry fire next to his chest and his clothes not be burned? 28 Or can one walk on hot coals and his feet not be scorched? 29 So is he who goes in to his neighbor's wife; none who touches her will go unpunished.”

-v.20-21 How important is godly counsel? _____

-v.22 How will it help you? _____

-v.23 God's commandments are a _____ and his teaching is a _____. His reproofs of discipline are the way of _____.

-v.28 What isn't likely? _____

Something to Think About: The illustration of an adulteress here is particularly applicable in our sexually permissive culture. The world has gone to great lengths to glorify sexual freedom without accurately representing the horrible consequences. This, by the way is also true of how the world represents any number of temptations to evil. The point is that when we “play with fire” we will get burned. Maybe we won't see the effects right away, but be sure, there are consequences.

Praise God for stirring testimonies of saints who have turned from some sin or other back to a right relationship with God, but how much better is the sweet testimony of one who refused to “try” sin in the first place and instead remained faithful to God throughout their lifetime!

If you have gotten off track with God, confess you sin and get right with Him today. This is URGENT—and then you will have this wonderful testimony to share about God's goodness. If you're living faithfully for God, DO NOT GIVE UP OR GIVE IN. Keep on keeping on! God is pleased with your choices and will use you in wonderful ways. This, too, is a wonderful testimony of God's goodness!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, June 1, 2022

-Prayer time! What a privilege to “carry everything to God in prayer”! Be sure to pause before beginning your Bible study to ask God for help to concentrate, understand what you are reading, and apply it to your thinking and actions. Praying for the spiritual growth of other believers you know is always a good thing too, but don’t forget to first and foremost thank God for His goodness and grace!

-Read Matthew 18:1-9

“At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” 2 And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them 3 and said, “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, 6 but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea. 7 “Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the one by whom the temptation comes! 8 And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. 9 And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire.”

- v.4 What about children does God consider great? _____
- v.5 How should we respond to people who have similar attributes? _____
- v.6 What must we never do? _____
- v.8 When would it be better to take drastic action? _____

Something to Think About: Jesus wasn’t teaching so much about children, as the attitudes children often have, such as humility and sincerity. No matter how “grown up” we are or “important” we think we are, we’re only great in God’s eyes when we remember to have a servant’s heart, when we think of ourselves as less important than others, and when we simply and wholeheartedly trust Him and obey Him at all times and in all areas.

Of course, it’s also true that how we treat children is a VERY big deal in God’s eyes! We need to love them, teach them about God, encourage them in their spiritual growth, and otherwise do all we can to help them become mature believers. That being said, God also wants us to love, respect, and help the younger, less mature Christians in our lives—no matter how physically old or young they are. He wants us to encourage them, influence them for good, and be an example to them of Christlikeness. This is very important in God’s eyes. In fact, if there is anything in our lives that may cause a younger Christian to falter, we need to ruthlessly “cut it off,” that is, get rid of it quickly and completely.

Has God laid on your heart anyone (younger or older) to pray for and encourage specifically? Pray for them—and see where God leads you!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Thursday, June 2, 2022

-Prayer time! What a privilege to “carry everything to God in prayer”! Be sure to pause before beginning your Bible study to ask God for help to concentrate, understand what you are reading, and apply it to your thinking and actions. Praying for the spiritual growth of other believers you know is always a good thing too, but don’t forget to first and foremost thank God for His goodness and grace!

-Summarize the following verses that seem especially pertinent to our understanding of Psalm 119:105.

-Psalm 56:13

“For you have delivered my soul from death, yes, my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of life.”

-Psalm 119:59

“When I think on my ways, I turn my feet to your testimonies.”

-Psalm 119:101

“I hold back my feet from every evil way, in order to keep your word.”

-Psalm 119:133

“Keep steady my steps according to your promise, and let no iniquity get dominion over me.”

-Proverbs 6:23

“For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life.”

-Luke 1:79 (prophecy about Jesus)

“To give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

Something to Think About:

These verses show a simple, yet profound truth that is found throughout Scripture: everything we are and are able to do for God and for others is ENTIRELY due to God’s grace and help. HOWEVER, it is equally true that God expects us to labor to find out more about Him and what pleases Him so that we can imitate Him and live in a manner that pleases Him. He gives us the ability to trust Him and obey Him—and He gives us the command to do it. Look at the verses again, noting the ways God gives us the help and direction we need—and the effort and choices the author speaks about in order to live the way God wants.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Friday, June 3, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Words to YOU.

-Review Time! Look back at your work on the word "feet" (beginning late April) - or - use the following verses as kind of sampler verses to be reminded of some of what we have read in Scripture:

"Then he (*God*) said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." (Exodus 3:5)

"And the commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, "Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." (Joshua 5:15)

"My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. (Psalm 121:2-3)

"For you have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling; I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living." (Psalm 116:8-9)

"For the Lord will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being caught." (Proverbs 2:26)

"My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent. . . my son, do not walk in the way with them; hold back your foot from their paths, for their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed blood." (Proverbs 1:10,15,16)

"Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your foot away from evil." (Proverbs 4:27)

"There are . . . things that the Lord hates. . . feet that make haste to run to evil." (Proverbs 6:16-19)

-What have you learned that you didn't know before?

-How have you been challenged in your current walk with God?

-What are you going to do about it?

-Are there any questions you have that need to be pursued?

-What words, concepts, truths do you feel the need to do more research on?

Something to Think About: We now know a little bit more about what God expects from us. The question is, what will we do about it? Often the idea of change is overwhelming to us, but that is because we see how far we have to go and feel like giving up before we even begin. The good news is that God gives us each new day in order to take one more step towards being Christ-like. The even better news is that the strength, ability, and wisdom to make these changes don't even have to come from us. God provides what we need, when we need it. We simply need to trust and obey. My prayer is that each of us would be more aware of our "feet," "paths," and how we "walk," while determining to stay on the level ground of obedience to God.

-As we move forward, we will now be looking at Old Testament references using the word, "light," with the goal of helping us better understand Psalm 119:105.

-Light in Scripture is often referred to in a physical sense, as in, "The sun came up and light filled the room." However, the concept of light in Scripture is extremely vast because it also symbolically stands for all that is right and good. God even calls Himself "Light." In addition, since darkness is the absence of light, light stands for life both physically and spiritually. It is also often used to indicate when someone understands spiritual truth or those who are walking in a godly manner.

-Light was the first thing God created for our earth and its presence immediately became necessary for the survival of the plants and animals that came next.

-Light was given the job of separating day from night and indicating the passage of time. The sun, moon, and stars were created to both give light and reflect it.

-We cannot exhaust the concept of light in Scripture due to its connection to God, but what we do learn will be of tremendous worth to us. My prayer is that once we get started on this intriguing topic you will want to keep on studying every chance you get.

———"Light" in the Book of Genesis ——

Saturday, June 4, 2022

-Prayer time! What a privilege to "carry everything to God in prayer"! Be sure to pause before beginning your Bible study to ask God for help to concentrate, understand what you are reading, and apply it to your thinking and actions. Praying for the spiritual growth of other believers you know is always a good thing too, but don't forget to first and foremost thank God for His goodness and grace!

-Read Genesis 1:1-5

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. 3 And God said, "Let there be **light**," and there was **light**. 4 And God saw that the **light** was good. And God separated the **light** from the darkness. 5 God called the **light** Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day."

-v.1 Who created our world?

-v.2 What was over the surface of the deep? _____

-Who was hovering over the waters? _____

-v.3 What did God command into being for the first time ever? _____

-v.4 "God saw that the light was _____."

- What did God separate? _____
- v.5 What did God name the light and darkness? _____
- How much time did God use to create light? _____

Something to Think About: Did you ever stop to think that light was the first thing God created? Once He created light, He went on to arrange the world so that light immediately became critical to the survival of almost everything else. (If you ever do an in-depth study of light, you will be amazed at the incredible relationship between light and all living things.)

As is almost always true, physical truths mirror spiritual ones. Until the Holy Spirit illuminates us (turns the “light” on in our understanding), our ability to understand spiritual truth is dark and dead. Thank God for His life-giving light in our physical world AND spiritual world!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Sunday, June 5, 2022

-Prayer time! What a privilege to “carry everything to God in prayer”! Be sure to pause before beginning your Bible study to ask God for help to concentrate, understand what you are reading, and apply it to your thinking and actions. Praying for the spiritual growth of other believers you know is always a good thing too, but don’t forget to first and foremost thank God for His goodness and grace!

-Read Genesis 1:14-19

“And God said, “Let there be **lights** in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, 15 and let them be **lights** in the expanse of the heavens to give **light** upon the earth.” And it was so. 16 And God made the two great **lights**—the greater **light** to rule the day and the lesser **light** to rule the night—and the stars. 17 And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give **light** on the earth, 18 to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the **light** from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. 19 And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.”

-v.14 What did God create to serve as signs to mark the seasons, days, and years?

-v.15 What was God’s purpose in putting light in the sky?

-v.16-17 What further purpose is stated for the sun, and moon?

-v.18 What third purpose was given for the sun, moon, and stars? _____

-v.18 “And God saw that it was _____.”

Something to Think About: From the very beginning of the world, light was separated from darkness. All of God’s creation was created exactly as God wanted it and everything was given a specific job. Light was given

the job of separating day from night, showing the passage of time, and to provide life-giving light to the earth. It is also interesting to note that “light” was created before the sun was created.

We, as God’s children, have a job to do as well. We are to glorify God as we become more like Christ in everything we say and do. We are to have the same servant’s heart that Jesus demonstrated while on earth. We are to use the opportunities God gives us to share what wonderful things He has done for us to the people we meet, including sharing the need for a Savior.

How are you doing in fulfilling your purpose? What areas could use some updating and improving? Pray about this—then get started!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

——**Light in the Book of Exodus**——

Monday, June 6, 2022

-Prayer time! What a privilege to “carry everything to God in prayer”! Be sure to pause before beginning your Bible study to ask God for help to concentrate, understand what you are reading, and apply it to your thinking and actions. Praying for the spiritual growth of other believers you know is always a good thing too, but don’t forget to first and foremost thank God for His goodness and grace!

-Read Exodus 10

“Then the Lord said to Moses, “Go in to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may show these signs of mine among them, 2 and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and of your grandson how I have dealt harshly with the Egyptians and what signs I have done among them, that you may know that I am the Lord.” 3 So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh and said to him, “Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, ‘How long will you refuse to humble yourself before me? Let my people go, that they may serve me. 4 For if you refuse to let my people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your country, 5 and they shall cover the face of the land, so that no one can see the land. And they shall eat what is left to you after the hail, and they shall eat every tree of yours that grows in the field, 6 and they shall fill your houses and the houses of all your servants and of all the Egyptians, as neither your fathers nor your grandfathers have seen, from the day they came on earth to this day.’” Then he turned and went out from Pharaoh. 7 Then Pharaoh's servants said to him, “How long shall this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the Lord their God. Do you not yet understand that Egypt is ruined?” 8 So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh. And he said to them, “Go, serve the Lord your God. But which ones are to go?” 9 Moses said, “We will go with our young and our old. We will go with our sons and daughters and with our flocks and herds, for we must hold a feast to the Lord.” 10 But he said to them, “The Lord be with you, if ever I let you and your little ones go! Look, you have some evil purpose in mind. 11 No! Go, the men among you, and serve the Lord, for that is what you are asking.” And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence. 12 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, so that they may come upon the land of Egypt and eat every plant in the land, all that the hail has left.” 13 So Moses stretched

out his staff over the land of Egypt, and the Lord brought an east wind upon the land all that day and all that night. When it was morning, the east wind had brought the locusts. 14 The locusts came up over all the land of Egypt and settled on the whole country of Egypt, such a dense swarm of locusts as had never been before, nor ever will be again. 15 They covered the face of the whole land, so that the land was darkened, and they ate all the plants in the land and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left. Not a green thing remained, neither tree nor plant of the field, through all the land of Egypt. 16 Then Pharaoh hastily called Moses and Aaron and said, “I have sinned against the Lord your God, and against you. 17 Now therefore, forgive my sin, please, only this once, and plead with the Lord your God only to remove this death from me.” 18 So he went out from Pharaoh and pleaded with the Lord. 19 And the Lord turned the wind into a very strong west wind, which lifted the locusts and drove them into the Red Sea. Not a single locust was left in all the country of Egypt. 20 But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the people of Israel go. 21 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness to be felt.” 22 So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was pitch darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. 23 They did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place for three days, but all the people of Israel had **light** where they lived. 24 Then Pharaoh called Moses and said, “Go, serve the Lord; your little ones also may go with you; only let your flocks and your herds remain behind.” 25 But Moses said, “You must also let us have sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God. 26 Our livestock also must go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind, for we must take of them to serve the Lord our God, and we do not know with what we must serve the Lord until we arrive there.” 27 But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go. 28 Then Pharaoh said to him, “Get away from me; take care never to see my face again, for on the day you see my face you shall die.” 29 Moses said, “As you say! I will not see your face again.”

- v.1-2 Why did God harden Pharaoh's heart? _____
- _____
- v.21 What was the ninth plague? _____
- v.22 How long was the land covered in darkness? _____
- v.23 In contrast, what did the Israelites have? _____
- _____

Something to Think About: This passage is full of some pretty important truths. First of all, although God gave the reasons for the hardships He would bring to Egypt, in our lives we don't always know the “why” of the hard things He brings or allows. Ultimately it should cause us to acknowledge that God is God and worthy of worship and trust. We also see God's grace in this passage. Even while the Egyptians were paralyzed by the absolute blackout, the Israelites had light to go about their business. There is a HUGE spiritual application here! We know that all who have not believed in Jesus as their Savior from the penalty of sin are in absolute spiritual darkness and cannot understand spiritual truth. Conversely, we who belong to Jesus have “light,” an ability to understand the amazing truth God has given to us in His written Word, the Bible.

P.S. The only reason a Christian might not “see” spiritual truth is if they have chosen to hang out in the dark by allowing sin to reside in their lives. Choose to keep a clean account with God! Choose light!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, June 7, 2022

-Prayer time! What a privilege to “carry everything to God in prayer”! Be sure to pause before beginning your Bible study to ask God for help to concentrate, understand what you are reading, and apply it to your thinking and actions. Praying for the spiritual growth of other believers you know is always a good thing too, but don’t forget to first and foremost thank God for His goodness and grace!

-Read Exodus 13

“The Lord said to Moses, 2 “Consecrate to me all the firstborn. Whatever is the first to open the womb among the people of Israel, both of man and of beast, is mine.” 3 Then Moses said to the people, “Remember this day in which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of slavery, for by a strong hand the Lord brought you out from this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten. 4 Today, in the month of Abib, you are going out. 5 And when the Lord brings you into the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which he swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, you shall keep this service in this month. 6 Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the Lord. 7 Unleavened bread shall be eaten for seven days; no leavened bread shall be seen with you, and no leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory. 8 You shall tell your son on that day, ‘It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt.’ 9 And it shall be to you as a sign on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the law of the Lord may be in your mouth. For with a strong hand the Lord has brought you out of Egypt. 10 You shall therefore keep this statute at its appointed time from year to year. 11 “When the Lord brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as he swore to you and your fathers, and shall give it to you, 12 you shall set apart to the Lord all that first opens the womb. All the firstborn of your animals that are males shall be the Lord's. 13 Every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, or if you will not redeem it you shall break its neck. Every firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem. 14 And when in time to come your son asks you, ‘What does this mean?’ you shall say to him, ‘By a strong hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery. 15 For when Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the Lord killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of animals. Therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all the males that first open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.’ 16 It shall be as a mark on your hand or frontlets between your eyes, for by a strong hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt.” 17 When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near. For God said, “Lest the people change their minds when they see war and return to Egypt.” 18 But God led the people around by the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea. And the people of Israel went up out of the land of Egypt equipped for battle. 19 Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for Joseph had made the sons of Israel solemnly swear, saying, “God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones with you from here.” 20 And they moved on from Succoth and encamped at Etham, on the edge of the wilderness. 21 And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them **light**, that they might travel by day and by night. 22 The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people.”

- v.3 What were the Israelites to commemorate? _____
- v.18 Where did God lead the people? _____
- v.21 How did God lead them during the day? _____
- At night? _____
- v.22 Did God ever leave them? _____

-Read Exodus 14:19-20

“Then the angel of God who was going before the host of Israel moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them, coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the cloud and the darkness. And it **lit** up the night without one coming near the other all night.”

- What miracle did God perform at the edge of the Red Sea? _____
-

Something to Think About: In this passage, God led His people in a visible way. He showed His guiding presence as a cloud during the day and as a pillar of fire by night. This is one of the early biblical references to God AS light. We will discover many more references to God as light (and how all that which opposes Him is often called “darkness”).

Although we do not see God as a cloud or fire today, we have His written Word to guide us in our steps—and as Psalm 119:105 says, it is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path! We only have to read, believe, and obey.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

——**Light in the Book of Job**——

Wednesday, June 8, 2022

-Prayer time! What a privilege to “carry everything to God in prayer”! Be sure to pause before beginning your Bible study to ask God for help to concentrate, understand what you are reading, and apply it to your thinking and actions. Praying for the spiritual growth of other believers you know is always a good thing too, but don’t forget to first and foremost thank God for His goodness and grace!

-Read Job 12:13-25

“With God are wisdom and might; he has counsel and understanding. 14 If he tears down, none can rebuild; if he shuts a man in, none can open. 15 If he withholds the waters, they dry up; if he sends them out, they overwhelm the land. 16 With him are strength and sound wisdom; the deceived and the deceiver are his. 17 He leads counselors away stripped, and judges he makes fools. 18 He looses the bonds of kings and binds a waist-cloth on their hips. 19 He leads priests away stripped and overthrows the mighty. 20 He deprives of speech those who are trusted and takes away the discernment of the elders. 21 He pours contempt on princes and loosens the belt of the strong. 22 He uncovers the deeps out of darkness and brings deep darkness to **light**. 23 He makes nations great, and he destroys them; he enlarges nations, and leads them away. 24 He takes away understanding from the chiefs of the people of the earth and makes them wander in a trackless waste. 25 They grope in the dark without **light**, and he makes them stagger like a drunken man.”

-v.13 With God are _____

-He has _____

-v.16 What else belongs to God? _____

-v.22 What does He reveal? _____

-What does He bring into light? _____

-v.25 Why do evil leaders grope in darkness? _____

Something to Think About: God is in control. He knows His creation and is sovereign over it. He also knows the evil (darkness) in man’s heart and exposes it by the spiritual light of truth, causing it to be fully revealed for the wickedness it is. There is nothing that can be hidden from God. How much better to live in His light by doing that which pleases Him at all times!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Thursday, June 9, 2022

-Prayer time! What a privilege to "carry everything to God in prayer"! Be sure to pause before beginning your Bible study to ask God for help to concentrate, understand what you are reading, and apply it to your thinking and actions. Praying for the spiritual growth of other believers you know is always a good thing too, but don't forget to first and foremost thank God for His goodness and grace!

-Read Job 38

"Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said: 2 "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? 3 Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me. 4 "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. 5 Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? 6 On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, 7 when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? 8 "Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb, 9 when I made clouds its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band, 10 and prescribed limits for it and set bars and doors, 11 and said, 'Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stayed'? 12 "Have you commanded the morning since your days began, and caused the dawn to know its place, 13 that it might take hold of the skirts of the earth, and the wicked be shaken out of it? 14 It is changed like clay under the seal, and its features stand out like a garment. 15 From the wicked their **light** is withheld, and their uplifted arm is broken. 16 "Have you entered into the springs of the sea, or walked in the recesses of the deep? 17 Have the gates of death been revealed to you, or have you seen the gates of deep darkness? 18 Have you comprehended the expanse of the earth? Declare, if you know all this. 19 "Where is the way to the dwelling of **light**, and where is the place of darkness, 20 that you may take it to its territory and that you may discern the paths to its home? 21 You know, for you were born then, and the number of your days is great! 22 "Have you entered the storehouses of the snow, or have you seen the storehouses of the hail, 23 which I have reserved for the time of trouble, for the day of battle and war? 24 What is the way to the place where the **light** is distributed, or where the east wind is scattered upon the earth? 25 "Who has cleft a channel for the torrents of rain and a way for the thunderbolt, 26 to bring rain on a land where no man is, on the desert in which there is no man, 27 to satisfy the waste and desolate land, and to make the ground sprout with grass? 28 "Has the rain a father, or who has begotten the drops of dew? 29 From whose womb did the ice come forth, and who has given birth to the frost of heaven? 30 The waters become hard like stone, and the face of the deep is frozen. 31 "Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades or loose the cords of Orion? 32 Can you lead forth the Mazzaroth in their season, or can you guide the Bear with its children? 33 Do you know the ordinances of the heavens? Can you establish their rule on the earth? 34 "Can you lift up your voice to the clouds, that a flood of waters may cover you? 35 Can you send forth lightnings, that they may go and say to you, 'Here we are'? 36 Who has put wisdom in the inward parts or given understanding to the mind? 37 Who can number the clouds by wisdom? Or who can tilt the waterskins of the heavens, 38 when the dust runs into a mass and the clods stick fast together? 39 "Can you hunt the prey for the lion, or satisfy the appetite of the young lions, 40 when they crouch in their dens or lie in wait in their thicket? 41 Who provides for the raven its prey, when its young ones cry to God for help, and wander about for lack of food?"

- v.1 Who answered Job? _____
- v.4 Who laid earth's foundation? _____
- v.7 How did the angels respond to God's work? _____
- v.19 What does only God know? _____
- v.24 What does no man know? _____

Something to Think About: Job asked for God to answer him and God did! I cannot even begin to imagine what these four men were experiencing while God pointed out in no uncertain terms that He is supreme over all and no creature has the right to question His sovereignty or righteousness.

This passage also demonstrates that God's goodness is clearly evident in His care of His creation. The long and short of it is this: God knows everything going on and is in complete charge of it. He loves us and can be trusted in everything. We don't have to understand how or why, we just need to trust Him and obey His Word.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

——Light in the Book of Psalms——

Friday, June 10, 2022

-Prayer time! What a privilege to "carry everything to God in prayer"! Be sure to pause before beginning your Bible study to ask God for help to concentrate, understand what you are reading, and apply it to your thinking and actions. Praying for the spiritual growth of other believers you know is always a good thing too, but don't forget to first and foremost thank God for His goodness and grace!

-Read Psalm 4

To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. A Psalm of David. 1 Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have given me relief when I was in distress. Be gracious to me and hear my prayer! 2 O men, how long shall my honor be turned into shame? How long will you love vain words and seek after lies? Selah 3 But know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself; the Lord hears when I call to him. 4 Be angry, and do not sin; ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent. Selah 5 Offer right sacrifices, and put your trust in the Lord. 6 There are many who say, "Who will show us some good? Lift up the **light** of your face upon us, O Lord!" 7 You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound. 8 In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety."

- v.1 Who is David calling to and why? _____
- v.3 Who does God set apart for Himself and listen to? _____
- v.4 What is a good practice before sleep? _____
- v.6 What is on God's face towards those who please Him? _____
- v.8 "I will lie down and sleep in _____, for _____ alone, O Lord, make me dwell in _____."

Something to Think About: Verse 6 reminds us that God’s favor (“*light of Your face*”) rests on those who live according to His Word. What a wonderful picture to think of: God’s face shining with joy at us! Definitely a great incentive to work harder and longer!

Also of note is David’s confidence that God WILL be with him and help him—because God has called him to a specific purpose (to be Israel’s king AND an ancestor of the Messiah). We, too, as Christians, can be assured that God has a specific purpose and plan in mind for each one of us. Ultimately it is that we be becoming like His Beloved Son. This will, of course, also bring Him great glory. Simply being aware of God’s perfect and continual care can help us have joy, peace, and rest easy at night—just like David.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Saturday, June 11, 2022

-Prayer time! What a privilege to “carry everything to God in prayer”! Be sure to pause before beginning your Bible study to ask God for help to concentrate, understand what you are reading, and apply it to your thinking and actions. Praying for the spiritual growth of other believers you know is always a good thing too, but don’t forget to first and foremost thank God for His goodness and grace!

-Read Psalm 18:28-32

“For it is you who **light** my lamp; the Lord my God **lightens** my darkness. 29 For by you I can run against a troop, and by my God I can leap over a wall. 30 This God—his way is perfect; the word of the Lord proves true; he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him. 31 For who is God, but the Lord? And who is a rock, except our God?— 32 the God who equipped me with strength and made my way blameless.”

-v.28 For it is you who _____ my _____; the Lord my God _____ my darkness.

-v.29 For by you I _____ against a troop, and by my God I _____ over a wall.

-v.30 This God—_____ is perfect; the word of the Lord _____ true; he is a shield for all those who take refuge _____.

-v.31 For who is God, but the Lord? And who is a rock, except _____ God?

-v.32 the God who equipped me with _____ and made my way blameless.”

Something to Think About: If we want to live a pleasing life before God, all any of us have to do is to ask Him to help us—and continue to ask Him each and every day we have here on earth. He is the one and only Source of all that is light and He LOVES to help each and every one of His children walk blamelessly, victoriously, and joyously!

PS I hope we NEVER take for granted that God’s way is perfect or that He is 100% trustworthy, THE reliable shield to take refuge behind, and a rock of unmeasurable strength and wisdom!

Here’s a song that I’ve long loved and appreciate about this:

His Way is Perfect (listen to it: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gajFqd6OSWo>)
By The Wilds

When my way seems dark and drear and the future I don't know, My heart feels so empty as the tears unending flow. When my heart breaks with sorrow and a tempest fills my soul, This one thing I know for sure: my God is in control. His way is perfect, His way is perfect. Though I don't understand His wise and loving plan, His way is perfect. His way is perfect. Take my life and make a vessel purified. God makes no mistakes, His way is best. When the toils of life are come and my heart is worn with care, I faint 'neath the burden of a cross I cannot bear. When the joy has departed from my sorrow stricken soul, This one thing I know for sure: my God is in control. His way is perfect, His way is perfect. Though I don't understand His wise and loving plan, His way is perfect. His way is perfect. Take my life and make a vessel purified. God makes no mistakes, His way is best.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Sunday, June 12, 2022

-Prayer time! What a privilege to “carry everything to God in prayer”! Be sure to pause before beginning your Bible study to ask God for help to concentrate, understand what you are reading, and apply it to your thinking and actions. Praying for the spiritual growth of other believers you know is always a good thing too, but don’t forget to first and foremost thank God for His goodness and grace!

-Read Psalm 27

“The Lord is my **light** and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? 2 When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall. 3 Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident. 4 One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple. 5 For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will lift me high upon a rock. 6 And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to the Lord. 7 Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud; be gracious to me and answer me! 8 You have said, “Seek my face.” My heart says to you, “Your face, Lord, do I seek.” 9 Hide not your face from me. Turn not your servant away in anger, O you who have been my help. Cast me not off; forsake me not, O God of my salvation! 10 For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord will take me in. 11 Teach me your way, O Lord, and lead me on a level path because of my enemies. 12 Give me not up to the will of my adversaries; for false witnesses have risen against me, and they breathe out violence. 13 I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living!

14 Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!”

-v.1 The Lord is my _____ and my _____ whom shall I _____?
The Lord is the _____ of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?”
-v.11 Teach me your _____, O Lord, and lead me on a level _____.
-v.14 _____ for the Lord; be _____ and let your _____ take
_____; wait for the _____.

Something to Think About: To say, “The Lord is my light,” is to express confidence in Him as the Source of all the benefits listed in this Psalm and more! In fact, because God is our Light, we can be strong, remain encouraged, and wait patiently for His timing in all our struggles and concerns. Fear is not in the picture.

BTW, did you ever notice how many Psalms begin as pleas to God but end with rejoicing? Know why? It is as we place our dependence and utter trust in God that we begin to calm down and realize that God has everything in perfect control. The application? When distressed, turn to God FIRST, not as a last resort.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Monday, June 13, 2022

-Prayer time! What a privilege to “carry everything to God in prayer”! Be sure to pause before beginning your Bible study to ask God for help to concentrate, understand what you are reading, and apply it to your thinking and actions. Praying for the spiritual growth of other believers you know is always a good thing too, but don’t forget to first and foremost thank God for His goodness and grace!

-Read Psalm 36:1-10

*“To the choirmaster. Of David, the servant of the Lord. 1 Transgression speaks to the wicked deep in his heart; there is no fear of God before his eyes. 2 For he flatters himself in his own eyes that his iniquity cannot be found out and hated. 3 The words of his mouth are trouble and deceit; he has ceased to act wisely and do good. 4 He plots trouble while on his bed; he sets himself in a way that is not good; he does not reject evil. Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds. 6 Your righteousness is like the mountains of God; your judgments are like the great deep; man and beast you save, O Lord. 7 How precious is your steadfast love, O God! The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings. 8 They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights. 9 For with you is the fountain of life; in your **light** do we see **light**. 10 Oh, continue your steadfast love to those who know you, and your righteousness to the upright of heart!”*

-v.5 What extends to the heavens? _____

-What extends to the clouds? _____

-v.7 What is precious? _____

-Where is there refuge? _____

-v.9 How are people able to see light? _____

-v.10 Who is able to continue in God’s steadfast love and righteousness? _____

Something to Think About: It is only in God that we are able to see light and live as light. What a privilege! What an honor!

However, I think it is wise to stop and re-read the characteristics of the wicked in verses 1-4 to honestly evaluate ourselves before God to see if any of these things describe US.

- Do you have a reverential awe (fear) of Who God is?
- Do you think so highly of your own opinions that you no longer think of some things as sin, even though God does?
- Do your words please God by being edifying, lovely, pure, and good, or are they wicked by speaking in anger, or by gossiping, or by speaking haughtily?
- Do you use the time before sleep to confess sin and commit the next day to God, or do you decide what you intend to do with “your” day?

No one likes to think of themselves as wicked, but what do the cold hard facts show? In God’s light we see truth and find help to live for Him.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, June 14, 2022

-Prayer time! What a privilege to “carry everything to God in prayer”! Be sure to pause before beginning your Bible study to ask God for help to concentrate, understand what you are reading, and apply it to your thinking and actions. Praying for the spiritual growth of other believers you know is always a good thing too, but don’t forget to first and foremost thank God for His goodness and grace!

-Read Psalm 37:1-11

“Fret not yourself because of evildoers; be not envious of wrongdoers! 2 For they will soon fade like the grass and wither like the green herb. 3 Trust in the Lord, and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness. 4 Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. 5 Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act. 6 He will bring forth your righteousness as the **light**, and your justice as the noonday. 7 Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices! 8 Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil. 9 For the evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait for the Lord shall inherit the land. 10 In just a little while, the wicked will be no more; though you look carefully at his place, he will not be there. 11 But the meek shall inherit the land and delight themselves in abundant peace.”

-v.1 Who is not to be envied? _____

-v.2 Why not? _____

-v.3 Rather, we must _____ and _____.

- v.4 _____ in the Lord, He will give you the _____.
- v.5 _____ your way to the Lord; _____ in Him.
- v.6 God will make our righteousness as the _____.
- v.7 “Be _____ before the Lord and wait _____ for Him.”
- v.11 Who will inherit the land and enjoy great peace? _____

Something to Think About: Our word “light” is found in verse 6. It has to do with the joy and blessings God has planned for those who obey Him. This Psalm, in fact, makes it pretty clear that God rewards and blesses those who choose to obey Him and live in a manner that is pleasing to Him—and—God rejects utterly those who choose to live for self and to defy His sovereignty.

This truth, as in most of the Bible, can be looked at in two ways. The most important is that of those who have trusted in Christ as Savior (and who are now permanent members of His family, destined to live in His presence for all of eternity) and those who have not trusted in Christ (who are already condemned to spend eternity in Hell because of the sin they—and all people—are born with).

The second way the truth of obeying/pleasing God versus disobeying/displeasing God can be looked at is entirely for the saved (those who have trusted in Christ as Savior and are members of God’s family). We, too, can either embrace obeying God and seeking to please Him or disregard the Bible and “choose for ourselves” how we want to live. This, of course, is NEVER the right thing—and always leads to all sorts of unpleasant things (anxiety, anger, depression, discontent—and much more).

The solution? Verse 3 says, “*Trust in the Lord and do good.*” Verse 4 goes on to instruct us to make God OUR DELIGHT, knowing that when we do, our heart’s desires will line up with His. Verses 5 and 6 encourages us that our growth in righteousness (*as the light!*) can and will happen when we simply choose to think, speak, and act in keeping with what pleases and honors God. This is our lifelong challenge—and our eternity-long blessing!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, June 15, 2022

-Prayer time! What a privilege to “carry everything to God in prayer”! Be sure to pause before beginning your Bible study to ask God for help to concentrate, understand what you are reading, and apply it to your thinking and actions. Praying for the spiritual growth of other believers you know is always a good thing too, but don’t forget to first and foremost thank God for His goodness and grace!

-Read Psalm 43

“Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause against an ungodly people, from the deceitful and unjust man deliver me! 2 For you are the God in whom I take refuge; why have you rejected me? Why do I go about mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? 3 Send out your **light** and your truth; let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling! 4 Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceed-

ing joy, and I will praise you with the lyre, O God, my God. 5 Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.”

-v.1 What does the psalmist ask for? _____

-v.3 The psalmist asks for _____ and _____ to lead him.

-v.4 What will he do when he gets to the Temple? _____

-v.5 Instead of being downcast, what should we do? _____

Something to Think About: Verse 5 reminded me of something I read once. The author was pointing out that when we are downcast or discouraged, what we REALLY often need is a good stern talking to—from ourselves to ourselves! However, we're more likely to figure out some way to comfort ourselves instead—often in the wrong ways.

When we choose to feel sorry for ourselves and otherwise indulge ourselves in a “poor me” mindset, we’re most definitely NOT helping anything. We must, instead, turn on ourselves*, upbraid ourselves, critique ourselves, and exhort ourselves—TO TRUST IN GOD. We must sternly remind ourselves Who God is, what He has done and will do, and say instead, “I will yet praise Him, my Savior and my God!”

Turning AWAY from self and TOWARD God is always the right decision—and the way to bask in the light of His truth, love, comfort, mercy, and grace.

**I am NOT suggesting some sort of self-torture or punishment, simply that turning focus away from self and to God is the necessary first step to right thinking and actions.*

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Thursday, June 16, 2022

-Prayer time! What a privilege to “carry everything to God in prayer”! Be sure to pause before beginning your Bible study to ask God for help to concentrate, understand what you are reading, and apply it to your thinking and actions. Praying for the spiritual growth of other believers you know is always a good thing too, but don’t forget to first and foremost thank God for His goodness and grace!

-Read Psalm 56

To the choirmaster: according to The Dove on Far-off Terebinths. A Miktam of David, when the Philistines seized him in Gath. 1 “Be gracious to me, O God, for man tramples on me; all day long an attacker oppresses me; 2 my enemies trample on me all day long, for many attack me proudly. 3 When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. 4 In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me? 5 All day long they injure my cause; all their thoughts are against me for evil. 6 They stir up strife, they lurk; they watch my steps, as they have waited for my life. 7 For their crime will they escape? In wrath cast down the peoples, O God! 8 You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book? 9 Then my enemies will turn back in the day when I call. This I know, that God is for me. 10 In God, whose word I

praise, in the Lord, whose word I praise, 11 in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me? 12 I must perform my vows to you, O God; I will render thank offerings to you. 13 For you have delivered my soul from death, yes, my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the **light** of life.”

- v.3 “When I am _____, I _____ my trust _____ You.”
- v.4 “In God, Whose word I _____, in God I _____; I shall _____ be afraid.”
- v.8 Is God aware of our tears? _____
- v.13 “For You _____ delivered my soul from death and my _____ from falling, that I may walk before God in the _____ of life.”

Something to Think About: Did you notice that this prayer of David had a ton to do with harmful words? The wicked slander, twist words, and conspire to cause trouble and hurt. David chose to use his words to pray and declare His trust in God, to praise God, and to thank God for helping him walk before Him in the “light of life.”

What sorts of words do you choose—and why?

P.S. Did you note that verse 8 says that God cares so much about the struggles we face that He collects our tears! Wow! Have you thanked Him lately for His compassion and grace?

-You and the Lord:

- Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

- What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

- What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

- Today’s top few prayer requests:

Friday, June 17, 2022

-Prayer time! What a privilege to “carry everything to God in prayer”! Be sure to pause before beginning your Bible study to ask God for help to concentrate, understand what you are reading, and apply it to your thinking and actions. Praying for the spiritual growth of other believers you know is always a good thing too, but don’t forget to first and foremost thank God for His goodness and grace!

-Read Psalm 74:12-17

“Yet God my King is from of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth. 13 You divided the sea by your might; you broke the heads of the sea monsters on the waters. 14 You crushed the heads of Leviathan; you gave him as food for the creatures of the wilderness. 15 You split open springs and brooks; you dried up ever-flowing streams. 16 Yours is the day, yours also the night; you have established the heavenly **lights** and the sun. 17 You have fixed all the boundaries of the earth; you have made summer and winter.”

- v.12 What word begins this section? _____
- Who does all the amazing deeds to follow? _____
- v.16 What belongs to God? _____
- What did He establish? _____
- v.17 What did God set? _____
- What did He make? _____

Something to Think About: In the middle of our discussion of light versus dark, never forget that God created everything, sustains everything, and has complete command of it all. Even though darkness symbolizes evil/sin, NOTHING is ever out of God's watchful eye or control. He is and remains the Victor.

Have you thanked God lately for rescuing you from darkness and bringing you into His kingdom of light?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Saturday, June 18, 2022

-Prayer time! What a privilege to "carry everything to God in prayer"! Be sure to pause before beginning your Bible study to ask God for help to concentrate, understand what you are reading, and apply it to your thinking and actions. Praying for the spiritual growth of other believers you know is always a good thing too, but don't forget to first and foremost thank God for His goodness and grace!

-Read Psalm 89:1-18

"I will sing of the steadfast love of the Lord, forever; with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations. 2 For I said, "Steadfast love will be built up forever; in the heavens you will establish your faithfulness." 3 You have said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: 4 'I will establish your offspring forever, and build your throne for all generations.'" Selah 5 Let the heavens praise your wonders, O Lord, your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones! 6 For who in the skies can be compared to the Lord? Who among the heavenly beings is like the Lord, 7 a God greatly to be feared in the council of the holy ones, and awesome above all who are around him? 8 O Lord God of hosts, who is mighty as you are, O Lord, with your faithfulness all around you? 9 You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, you still them. 10 You crushed Rahab like a carcass; you scattered your enemies with your mighty arm. 11 The heavens are yours; the earth also is yours; the world and all that is in it, you have founded them. 12 The north and the south, you have created them; Tabor and Hermon joyously praise your name. 13 You have a mighty arm; strong is your hand, high your right hand. 14 Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; steadfast love and faithfulness go before you. 15 Blessed are the people who know the festal shout, who walk, O Lord, in the **light** of your face. 16 who exult in your name all the day and in your righteousness are exalted. 17 For you are the glory of their strength; by your favor our horn is exalted. 18 For our shield belongs to the Lord, our king to the Holy One of Israel."

-v.1 I will sing of the _____ love of the Lord, forever; with my _____ I will make known your _____ to _____ generations.

-v.5 Let the heavens _____ your _____.

-v.8 O Lord God Almighty, who is _____ as you are?

-v.11 The _____ are yours, the _____ also is Yours; the world and _____ that is in it, you have founded them.

-v.15-16 _____ are the who...walk, O Lord, in the _____ of your face. Who _____ in your name all the day and in your _____ are exalted.

- v.17 _____ are the glory of their strength.
 -v.18 God is our king, the _____ of Israel.

Something to Think About: You may recognize verse 1 as the source of the Bible chorus, “I Will Sing of the Mercies of the Lord Forever” (though the ESV translates mercies as steadfast love).

It is ALWAYS a great thing to speak, pray, and sing Scripture. There are so many, many things we should be praising God for every single day—especially the joy of being able to walk (live) in the light of God’s presence both now and forever.

What are you singing about? Who are you singing to? Why are you singing? Prayerfully consider the “new song” God wants each of His children to have in their hearts and on their tongues each and every new morning!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Sunday, June 19, 2022

-Prayer time! What a privilege to “carry everything to God in prayer”! Be sure to pause before beginning your Bible study to ask God for help to concentrate, understand what you are reading, and apply it to your thinking and actions. Praying for the spiritual growth of other believers you know is always a good thing too, but don’t forget to first and foremost thank God for His goodness and grace!

-Read Psalm 97

“The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad! 2 Clouds and thick darkness are all around him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne. 3 Fire goes before him and burns up his adversaries all around. 4 His lightnings **light** up the world; the earth sees and trembles. 5 The mountains melt like wax before the Lord, before the Lord of all the earth. 6 The heavens proclaim his righteousness, and all the peoples see his glory. 7 All worshipers of images are put to shame, who make their boast in worthless idols; worship him, all you gods! 8 Zion hears and is glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoice, because of your judgments, O Lord. 9 For you, O Lord, are most high over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods. 10 O you who love the Lord, hate evil! He preserves the lives of his saints; he delivers them from the hand of the wicked. 11 **Light** is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart. 12 Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous, and give thanks to his holy name!”

- v.1 Why must the entire earth be glad? _____
 -v.6 What proclaims God’s righteousness? _____
 -How many see God’s glory? _____
 -v.10 Those who love God must hate what? _____
 -v.11 What is sown for the righteous? _____
 -What is shed on the upright in heart? _____

-v.12 What two things must the righteous do? _____

Something to Think About: This psalmist rejoices in God's righteous reign over all the earth. What is the right response to this reassuring fact? To be glad, to rejoice, to worship God, to exalt God, to hate evil, and to praise His holy name.

FYI Did you know that this Psalm is referring to Jesus' Millennial Reign as the King of the earth? We'll be there, you know! We'll be part of the army that He brings from heaven after the Tribulation Period and sets up His rule in Jerusalem. His rule will be one of perfect righteousness and justice—one of LIGHT. BUT, we don't have to wait until then to live in the way that brings Him much glory. We can choose today to "love the Lord and hate evil." That is to reject utterly all that is opposed to Him and CHOOSE to do all that honors and pleases Him.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Monday, June 20, 2022

-Prayer time! What a privilege to "carry everything to God in prayer"! Be sure to pause before beginning your Bible study to ask God for help to concentrate, understand what you are reading, and apply it to your thinking and actions. Praying for the spiritual growth of other believers you know is always a good thing too, but don't forget to first and foremost thank God for His goodness and grace!

-Read Psalm 104 carefully.

"O Lord my God, you are very great! You are clothed with splendor and majesty, 2 covering yourself with **light** as with a garment, stretching out the heavens like a tent. 3 He lays the beams of his chambers on the waters; he makes the clouds his chariot; he rides on the wings of the wind; 4 he makes his messengers winds, his ministers a flaming fire. 5 He set the earth on its foundations, so that it should never be moved. 6 You covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. 7 At your rebuke they fled; at the sound of your thunder they took to flight. 8 The mountains rose, the valleys sank down to the place that you appointed for them. 9 You set a boundary that they may not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth. 10 You make springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills; 11 they give drink to every beast of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst. 12 Beside them the birds of the heavens dwell; they sing among the branches. 13 From your lofty abode you water the mountains; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work. 14 You cause the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth 15 and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine and bread to strengthen man's heart. 16 The trees of the Lord are watered abundantly, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted. 17 In them the birds build their nests; the stork has her home in the fir trees. 18 The high mountains are for the wild goats; the rocks are a refuge for the rock badgers. 19 He made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun knows its time for setting. 20 You make darkness, and it is night, when all the beasts of the forest creep about. 21 The young lions roar for their prey, seeking their food from God. 22 When the sun rises, they steal away and lie down in their dens. 23 Man goes out to his work and to his labor until the evening. 24 O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your

creatures. 25 Here is the sea, great and wide, which teems with creatures innumerable, living things both small and great. 26 There go the ships, and Leviathan, which you formed to play in it. 27 These all look to you, to give them their food in due season. 28 When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things. 29 When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. 30 When you send forth your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground. 31 May the glory of the Lord endure forever; may the Lord rejoice in his works, 32 who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke! 33 I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being. 34 May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the Lord. 35 Let sinners be consumed from the earth, and let the wicked be no more! Bless the Lord, O my soul! Praise the Lord!"

-Write your own praise to God for the amazing world He gave us. Conclude your psalm similarly to verses 33-35.

Something to Think About: There are certainly many things we could address in this awesome Psalm, but I had to stop first at the first phrase, “O Lord MY God. . .”. Has it been a while since you last thanked God for choosing you to become His child? Since you paused to contemplate His awesome plan that provided a way for mankind to be saved from the condemnation they brought upon themselves through sin? That our Father looked down through the corridors of time to place you when you were born, where you were born, and among the people He knew were the right ones for you?

How about thanking God for the impossible-to-describe rich treasure of His Word in written form, the Bible? How about for the gift of the Third Person of the Trinity, the HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD Who resides permanently and constantly within you?

Bless THE LORD, O MY soul! I WILL SING praise to MY God!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, June 21, 2022

-Prayer time! What a privilege to “carry everything to God in prayer”! Be sure to pause before beginning your Bible study to ask God for help to concentrate, understand what you are reading, and apply it to your thinking and actions. Praying for the spiritual growth of other believers you know is always a good thing too, but don’t forget to first and foremost thank God for His goodness and grace!

-Read Psalm 112

“Praise the Lord! Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in his commandments! 2 His offspring will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed. 3 Wealth and riches are in his house, and his righteousness endures forever. 4 **Light** dawns in the darkness for the upright; he is gracious, merciful, and righteous. 5 It is well with the man who deals generously and lends; who conducts his affairs with justice. 6 For the righteous will never be moved; he will be remembered forever. 7 He is not afraid of bad news; his heart is firm, trusting in the Lord. 8 His heart is steady; he will not be afraid, until he looks in triumph on his adversaries. 9 He has distributed freely; he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever; his horn is exalted in honor. 10 The wicked man sees it and is angry; he gnashes his teeth and melts away; the desire of the wicked will perish!”

- v.1 Who is blessed? _____
- v.4 Who experiences light even in darkness? _____
- v.7 Describe the heart of the one who trusts in the Lord? _____
- v.8 Do the same from this verse: _____

Something to Think About: Who doesn’t want to experience calmness and a feeling of well-being—even in the face of trials and hardships! This sounds almost too good to be true. However, God’s Word is nothing BUT truth. He says that we CAN have peace, joy, stability, and LIGHT—because of Him. Our job is to trust Him (that all He does is good, right, and rightly timed), then to prove it by obeying His Word in the nitty-gritty of life. It is HIS job to take care of every tiny detail (which He does to utter perfection).

When our understanding is right about Who God is, then calmness and a right focus follows. Simple, yet profound.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, June 22, 2022

-Prayer time! What a privilege to “carry everything to God in prayer”! Be sure to pause before beginning your Bible study to ask God for help to concentrate, understand what you are reading, and apply it to your thinking and actions. Praying for the spiritual growth of other believers you know is always a good thing too, but don’t forget to first and foremost thank God for His goodness and grace!

-Read Psalm 119:129-136

“Your testimonies are wonderful; therefore my soul keeps them. 130 The unfolding of your words gives **light**; it imparts understanding to the simple. 131 I open my mouth and pant, because I long for your commandments. 132 Turn to me and be gracious to me, as is your way with those who love your name. 133 Keep steady my steps according to your promise, and let no iniquity get dominion over me. 134 Redeem me from man's oppression, that I may keep your precepts. 135 Make your face shine upon your servant, and teach me your statutes. 136 My eyes shed streams of tears, because people do not keep your law.”

- v.129 We should want to obey God's testimonies (statutes) because they are _____.
- v.130 What gives light? _____
- v.132 What does God give to those who love His name? _____
- v.133 What keeps our steps steady? _____
- v.135 Learning God's Word can cause our face to _____.

Something to Think About: As you know, Psalm 119:105 is our main verse of study this year and teaches that God's Word is both a lamp to our feet and a light for our path, but later in this same Psalm, verses 129-136, the author adds that the unfolding of God's words gives light/understanding. It helps to “steady our steps,” that is, give us direction, instruction, and even encouragement.

I love, too, the rich rewards that are ours when we simply trust and obey. First, there's this recognition of the wonders of God and the delights of His Word, then there is a growing understanding of Who God is, what matters to Him, and His immeasurable love for us. We see an increasing realization of His care, grace, and daily help to both cope with life's challenges as well as knowledge how to think, act, and speak in a more Christlike way. I even love the picture of a heart that is hurting for those who do not yet belong to God or are not living a life of victory. A tender heart is always a pleasing thing in God's eyes.

These few verses are, simply put, yet another reminder that our Bibles are absolutely essential to our daily lives. Read it. Think about what you read. Obey it. Pray for others to also trust in Christ as their Savior and then learn to know and love our amazing Father and Savior.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Thursday, June 23, 2022

-Prayer time! What a privilege to “carry everything to God in prayer”! Be sure to pause before beginning your Bible study to ask God for help to concentrate, understand what you are reading, and apply it to your thinking and actions. Praying for the spiritual growth of other believers you know is always a good thing too, but don't forget to first and foremost thank God for His goodness and grace!

-Read Psalm 139

“O Lord, you have searched me and known me! 2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. 3 You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. 4 Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether. 5 You hem me in, behind and

before, and lay your hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it. 7 Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? 8 If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! 9 If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, 10 even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. 11 If I say, “Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the **light** about me be night,” 12 even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as **light** with you. 13 For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. 14 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. 15 My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. 16 Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them. 17 How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! 18 If I would count them, they are more than the sand. I awake, and I am still with you. 19 Oh that you would slay the wicked, O God! O men of blood, depart from me! 20 They speak against you with malicious intent; your enemies take your name in vain. 21 Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord? And do I not loathe those who rise up against you? 22 I hate them with complete hatred; I count them my enemies. 23 Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! 24 And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!”

-v.1-6 Summarize how well God knows us:

-v.7-12 Summarize God’s presence in our lives:

- v.13 How does God know us so well? _____
- v.14 What is our response? _____
- v.23-24 What should our desire? _____

Something to Think About: This certainly is a very special Psalm—full of assurances of our magnificent God knowing us and caring about us.

Verse 12 tells us that even darkness cannot hide us from God or God from us. What comfort! What praiseworthy truth! I don’t know about you, but I was often a bit uneasy playing games in the dark as a child. There was something unnerving about not seeing things properly or the idea of someone jumping out at you. Even as an adult, being in the dark can still be frightening, but there is great comfort in knowing that it cannot hide God from me or me from Him.

BONUS: Isn’t it interesting to note (in the last few verses) that when we come to truly love and appreciate God, at the same time we will come to hate all that is evil and/or opposed to Him? We can use Bible truths like this to help us figure out how to handle some things. For example, if we find that we are enjoying something a bit too much (say a TV show) that we know isn’t entirely pleasing to God, perhaps we could question whether or not we love God enough (and we come to love Him more simply by learning more about Him from His Word, from listening to sermons and Bible studies, from hanging out with godly believers, and from living our biblical principles in our lives). Similarly, if we want to know how to love God more, then we could deliberately turn our backs on anything and everything that is unholy, displeasing to Him, opposed to Him, or otherwise encourages unbiblical thought or action.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Friday, June 24, 2022

-Prayer time! What a privilege to "carry everything to God in prayer"! Be sure to pause before beginning your Bible study to ask God for help to concentrate, understand what you are reading, and apply it to your thinking and actions. Praying for the spiritual growth of other believers you know is always a good thing too, but don't forget to first and foremost thank God for His goodness and grace!

-Read Psalm 148.

"Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights! 2 Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his hosts! 3 Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you **shining** stars! 4 Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens! 5 Let them praise the name of the Lord! For he commanded and they were created. 6 And he established them forever and ever; he gave a decree, and it shall not pass away. 7 Praise the Lord from the earth, you great sea creatures and all deeps, 8 fire and hail, snow and mist, stormy wind fulfilling his word! 9 Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars! 10 Beasts and all livestock, creeping things and flying birds! 11 Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the earth! 12 Young men and maidens together, old men and children! 13 Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted; his majesty is above earth and heaven. 14 He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his saints, for the people of Israel who are near to him. Praise the Lord!"

-Fill in the blanks that follow "Praise the Lord..."

-v.1 from the _____ ... in the _____.

-v.2 all His _____...all His _____.

-v.3 sun and _____... all you shining _____.

-v.4 you highest _____ and you _____ above the skies.

-v.7 from the _____, you great _____ and all deeps.

-v.8 fire and _____, snow and _____, stormy wind.

-v.9 _____ and all hills, fruit trees and all _____.

-v.10 _____ and all livestock, creeping things and all flying _____.

-v.11 kings of the earth and _____ nations, you princes and _____ the earth.

-v.12 young men and _____, old men and children.

-v.13 "Let them praise the name of the Lord, for His name _____ is _____; His majesty is _____ earth and heaven.

Something to Think About: Insert Your name: Praise the Lord, _____!

Now list a few reasons you personally have to praise God (some older ones, but also recent ones):

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

——Light in the Book of Proverbs——

Saturday, June 25, 2022

-Prayer time! What a privilege to "carry everything to God in prayer"! Be sure to pause before beginning your Bible study to ask God for help to concentrate, understand what you are reading, and apply it to your thinking and actions. Praying for the spiritual growth of other believers you know is always a good thing too, but don't forget to first and foremost thank God for His goodness and grace!

-Read Proverbs 4:1-19

"Hear, O sons, a father's instruction, and be attentive, that you may gain insight, 2 for I give you good precepts; do not forsake my teaching. 3 When I was a son with my father, tender, the only one in the sight of my mother, 4 he taught me and said to me, "Let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commandments, and live. 5 Get wisdom; get insight; do not forget, and do not turn away from the words of my mouth. 6 Do not forsake her, and she will keep you; love her, and she will guard you. 7 The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom, and whatever you get, get insight. 8 Prize her highly, and she will exalt you; she will honor you if you embrace her. 9 She will place on your head a graceful garland; she will bestow on you a beautiful crown." 10 Hear, my son, and accept my words, that the years of your life may be many. 11 I have taught you the way of wisdom; I have led you in the paths of uprightness. 12 When you walk, your step will not be hampered, and if you run, you will not stumble. 13 Keep hold of instruction; do not let go; guard her, for she is your life. 14 Do not enter the path of the wicked, and do not walk in the way of the evil. 15 Avoid it; do not go on it; turn away from it and pass on 16 For they cannot sleep unless they have done wrong; they are robbed of sleep unless they have made someone stumble. 17 For they eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence. 18 But the path of the righteous is like the **light** of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day. 19 The way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know over what they stumble."

-v.5,7 What two things are essential for us to "get?" _____

-v.12 How does godly wisdom help us? _____

-v.18 What is the path of the righteous compared to? _____

-This path shines _____ and _____ until full day.

-v.19 What is the way of the wicked compared to? _____

Something to Think About: According to verse 18, believers have all the guidance and protection we need to live godly lives. Isn't that encouraging!

How, you might ask? By gaining wisdom and understanding from Scripture. In fact, the author likens this to obtaining a great treasure that we cling to with all our might, refusing to let it out of our grasp, so precious it is to us! This, of course, raises the question: what value do we place on Scripture? More pointedly, despite what we may SAY, what do our ACTIONS prove? Do we read our Bible every day, not just sounding out the words, but meditating on what it says? Are we considering how it changes how we think and act?

Interestingly, we are reminded again that the remedy to avoid sin and a life of wickedness lies in cherishing and obeying God's Word. In fact, our obedient and faithful lives can and will encourage others to greater god-

liness in their own lives. How exciting is that!

Don't you love the picture of a maturing Christian as one who is shining brighter and brighter each and every day? What a lovely goal to work towards as we seek to be becoming more like Christ during our sojourn on earth!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Sunday, June 26, 2022

-Prayer time! What a privilege to "carry everything to God in prayer"! Be sure to pause before beginning your Bible study to ask God for help to concentrate, understand what you are reading, and apply it to your thinking and actions. Praying for the spiritual growth of other believers you know is always a good thing too, but don't forget to first and foremost thank God for His goodness and grace!

-Read Proverbs 6:16-23

"There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him: 17 haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, 18 a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, 19 a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers. 20 My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching. 21 Bind them on your heart always; tie them around your neck. 22 When you walk, they will lead you; when you lie down, they will watch over you; and when you awake, they will talk with you. 23 For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a **light**, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life."

-v.16-19 List the seven things God finds detestable: _____

-v.20 How can we avoid these detestable things? _____

-v.23 God's commands is a _____.

-This teaching is a _____.

-The reproofs of discipline are the way of _____.

Something to Think About: We've looked at this passage earlier this year in reference to the word "walk" in verse 22. Now, we have gone another verse further to discover that God's Word—all that He asks of us and for us—is a lamp and a light (just like Psalm 119:105).

You may have heard me say before that the Bible is loaded with what I like to call biblical remedies to help us in our quest to turn away from what is ugly and sinful so that we can please Him and be a good testimony to others. What then are the remedies to avoid these seven things God hates?

-Arrogance. *“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”* Philippians 2:3-4

-Lying. *“Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.”* Ephesians 4:25

-Violence against the innocent. *“And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.”* Galatians 6:9-10

-Creating trouble for others/Choosing sinful actions. *“I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.”* Psalm 119:11

-Telling untruths about others. *“Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips!”* Psalm 141:3

-Manipulating people so they get upset with each other. *“So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.”* Romans 14:19

P.S. Just for fun, here’s a Bible passage that shares what God LOVES: *“Thus says the Lord: “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the Lord. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.”* Isaiah 66:2-3

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Monday, June 27, 2022

-Prayer time! What a privilege to “carry everything to God in prayer”! Be sure to pause before beginning your Bible study to ask God for help to concentrate, understand what you are reading, and apply it to your thinking and actions. Praying for the spiritual growth of other believers you know is always a good thing too, but don’t forget to first and foremost thank God for His goodness and grace!

-Read Proverbs 13:1-9

“A wise son hears his father's instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke. 2 From the fruit of his mouth a man eats what is good, but the desire of the treacherous is for violence. 3 Whoever guards his mouth preserves his life; he who opens wide his lips comes to ruin. 4 The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, while the soul of the diligent is richly supplied. 5 The righteous hates falsehood, but the wicked brings shame and disgrace. 6 Righteousness guards him whose way is blameless, but sin overthrows the wicked. 7 One pretends to be rich, yet has nothing; another pretends to be poor, yet has great wealth. 8 The ransom of a man's life is his wealth, but a poor man hears no threat. 9 The **light** of the righteous rejoices, but the lamp of the wicked will be put out.”

-v.1 What is the difference between a wise person and a scoffer? _____

-v.3 How can we “preserve” our life? _____

-v.5 What do the righteous hate? _____

-v.9 What rejoices? _____

Something to Think About: The end of the story is already written. God has won and we wait only for the fulfillment of this victory, not the victory itself. The wicked have lost and their life has been lost forever. On the other hand, those who love and serve God shine brightly both now and forever. Live in the victory God has already given us!

P.S. This Proverb also reminds us that we are wise to listen to godly counsel and advice—even when it occasionally comes as a rebuke.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

——**Light in the Book of Isaiah**——

Tuesday, June 28, 2022

-Prayer time! What a privilege to “carry everything to God in prayer”! Be sure to pause before beginning your Bible study to ask God for help to concentrate, understand what you are reading, and apply it to your thinking and actions. Praying for the spiritual growth of other believers you know is always a good thing too, but don't forget to first and foremost thank God for His goodness and grace!

-Read Isaiah 5:20-21

“Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for **light** and **light** for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! 21 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight!”

-v.20 What three things are we warned against? _____

-v.21 What else is warned against? _____

Something to Think About: God warns us many times in many ways against contradicting what He says. The only opinion about ANYTHING that is the final, ultimate authority is God's. To be fair, we don't usually say, “I disagree with God.” We usually reword things so they sound better or justify how our disobedience is okay because of our “unique” circumstances. God very clearly defines evil, good, light, dark, bitter, and sweet. Our job is to say, “Yes, Lord.” and obey. This pleases Him.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, June 29, 2022

-Prayer time! What a privilege to "carry everything to God in prayer"! Be sure to pause before beginning your Bible study to ask God for help to concentrate, understand what you are reading, and apply it to your thinking and actions. Praying for the spiritual growth of other believers you know is always a good thing too, but don't forget to first and foremost thank God for His goodness and grace!

-Read Isaiah 9:1-7

"But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. 2 The people who walked in darkness have seen a great **light**; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has **light** shone. 3 You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. 4 For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. 5 For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. 6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this."

-v.2 What have the people in darkness seen? _____

-v.3 What emotion is in abundance? _____

-v.6 Why? ("For...") _____

-What titles are given to the Messiah? _____

-v.7 How long will Christ's kingdom last? _____

Something to Think About: In the middle of some pretty awful consequences for sin we find "a great Light."

No matter what ugly things may surround us, Jesus brings light to dispel darkness. Jesus' light includes His role as Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. Wow! We need never live in gloom again. Because of His grace, we are on the side of THE Great Light!

BONUS Those of us living in twenty-first century America may feel a lot of kinship with those living in Isaiah's time. It feels pretty dark out there in the world and hope seems to be a challenging thing to hold on to. BUT, don't miss that the promise to the Israelites in Isaiah 9 WAS FULFILLED when Jesus Christ became a Man some 2,000 years ago. And His advent wasn't the end of this overwhelming promise of light, it was just the beginning! Jesus is coming again, but the next time He is coming as the King of kings! The first-ever completely Righteous Judge—and you and I will be at His side.

Brighter days are just around the corner, dear child of God. Keep your gaze focused up—both to "look to"

Jesus as the Perfect Example of how to think and live, but physically to look at the sky because He will be meeting us in the clouds at literally any moment!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Thursday, June 30, 2022

-Prayer time! What a privilege to "carry everything to God in prayer"! Be sure to pause before beginning your Bible study to ask God for help to concentrate, understand what you are reading, and apply it to your thinking and actions. Praying for the spiritual growth of other believers you know is always a good thing too, but don't forget to first and foremost thank God for His goodness and grace!

-Read Isaiah 60:19-20

"The sun shall be no more your **light** by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give you **light**; but the Lord will be your everlasting **light**, and your God will be your glory. 20 Your sun shall no more go down, nor your moon withdraw itself; for the Lord will be your everlasting **light**, and your days of mourning shall be ended."

-Read Revelation 21:22-25

"And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. 23 And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it **light**, and its lamp is the Lamb. 24 By its **light** will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, 25 and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there."

-Read Revelation 22:3-5

"No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 And night will be no more. They will need no **light** of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their **light**, and they will reign forever and ever."

-What is no longer needed? _____

-Why? _____

- "The Lord will be your _____ and your days of mourning shall be _____." (Isaiah 60:20)

Something to Think About: Both Isaiah and Revelation prophesy about the amazing day when Jesus becomes our physical light as well as our spiritual one. What an incredible thing that will be to experience – and—it is simply a matter of time!

There's a lot of pain and hardship around us in this crazy, mixed up world! Use it to remind yourself that sin is only ever ugly and despicable (and that genuine peace and joy are only ever coupled with living as God wants.).

Use it, too, to be reminded that this world will not last forever, nor is it our real home. We are citizens of heaven and our real home is in the presence of Jesus Christ, where sin has no place whatsoever.

The ugliness of this world is very temporary and the light of God's presence is eternal.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Friday, July 1, 2022

-Prayer Time! God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Review Time! Either look back on your work on the word "light" (beginning June 4th) or use the following verses to remind yourself what you have learned about light from the sampling of Old Testament passages.

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, "Let there be **light**," and there was **light**. And God saw that the **light** was good. And God separated the **light** from the darkness. God called the **light** Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day." (Genesis 1:1-5)

There are many who say, "Who will show us some good? Lift up the **light** of your face upon us, O Lord!" You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound. In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety." (Psalm 4:6-8)

"For it is you who **light** my lamp; the Lord my God **lightens** my darkness. For by you I can run against a troop, and by my God I can leap over a wall. This God—his way is perfect; the word of the Lord proves true; he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him. For who is God, but the Lord? And who is a rock, except our God?— the God who equipped me with strength and made my way blameless." (Psalm 18:28-32)

"The Lord is my **light** and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm 27:1)

"For with you is the fountain of life; in your **light** do we see **light**." (Psalm 36:9)

"Blessed are the people who know the festal shout, who walk, O Lord, in the **light** of your face." (Psalm 89:15)

"The unfolding of your words gives **light**; it imparts understanding to the simple." (Psalm 119:130)

"For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a **light**, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life." (Proverbs 6:23)

“Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for **light** and **light** for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! 21 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight!” (Isaiah 5:20-21)

Something to Think About: Looking at the many uses of the word “light” in the Old Testament has been enlightening (get it????). If you can overcome the bad pun, it is true! Until God gives light either physically or spiritually, we cannot see anything at all. All is pitch-black and scary. But, God DID give light in both of these areas. He created light to serve in essential ways on this earth and He gave light in sending His only Son, Jesus Christ, to pay the price for sin that we could not pay.

For those who believe in Jesus as Savior, the Holy Spirit takes up residence in us and helps us see the truth clearly. He also helps us obey it. Continue to pray for our daily Bible studies. God has so much to show willing hearts!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

——-**Light in the Book of Matthew**——-

Saturday, July 2, 2022

-Prayer Time! God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today’s Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read Matthew 5:13-16

“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. 4 “You are the **light** of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people **light** a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives **light** to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your **light** shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

-v.13 What is the purpose of salt? _____

-Is it useful when it no longer tastes salty? _____

-v.14 “You are the _____ of the _____...”

-v.15 What must be done before a lamp can be useful? _____

-What is the purpose of a lamp? _____

-v.16 What is our purpose? _____

Something to Think About: We have already studied these verses when we worked on the word “lamp,” but our focus is on light this time. To that end, did you notice that a lamp cannot shine—whether it is on a stand or under a bowl—if no one lights it first? This is a simple truth, but pretty important as we launch into our

study this month. In order for our lives to shine and praise God, we need to do good deeds. What is a good deed? Whatever Scripture says it is! As we study, let's keep a running list of the things God asks us to do on behalf of others. This can't help but be an exciting and challenging focus to our devotions—and to our Christian walk.

P.S. I would be remiss if I failed to note that NO ONE can shine their light without first trusting in Jesus Christ as their Savior from the sin that all humans are born with. This is because until we come to the point where we have acknowledged that we are a sinner before a holy God and that we need to trust that Christ died to pay the penalty for sin that we could not pay, we have no light. None. Even if we were plugged into a socket, it's as if the lightbulb were missing. In fact, causing our light—spiritually—to turn on is exactly what the Holy Spirit (the Third Person of the Godhead) does for each one of us in order for us to recognize (a) that we are a sinner, that (b) Jesus Christ died on the cross to pay the price God imposed on sin, and (c) that He rose again to life after three days, providing victory over sin and death to all who believe in His name.

If you're not sure that you have done this, please read John 3:16, John 1:12, Acts 16:31, Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23, and Ephesians 2:8-9 (you can Google the references if you need help finding them). You can also talk to your pastor, to a mature Christian, or contact me. It would be our pleasure to help you understand how to have light and be a light. It's an incredible gift from God to YOU!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Sunday, July 3, 2022

-Prayer Time! God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read Matthew 6:19-24

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. 22 "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of **light**, 23 but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the **light** in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! 24 "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."

-v.22 Which body part represents a lamp? _____

-What is a body full of light indicative of? _____

-v.23 In contrast, what is true of our body if our eyes are bad? _____

Something to Think About: Sometimes when we read a passage of Scripture like this, we may wonder who goofed and put verses about eyes smack dab in the middle of warnings about placing too much importance on

money and “things.” The simple answer is: it is not a mistake. The reference to our eyes has to do with spiritual insight and whether or not we truly “see” biblical truth. When we search Scripture with open eyes (with the added implication of an open heart), allowing the Holy Spirit to illuminate (light up) areas where we need to better please God, our entire being will be full of peace and joy. Sadly, if our focus is on earthly “treasures” and money, our insight will be faulty due to darkness. A good eye is the one fixed on Jesus.

P.S. Having money and things is not “bad!” That is, if we are using what God has given us for His glory. If we are using our time, talents, and treasures to help and bless others—without being selfish or self-centered. Basically put, when we are living here on earth AS citizens of HEAVEN, then all that we are and do will have the focus of pleasing God, bringing Him glory, and edifying and blessing others.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Monday, July 4, 2022

-Prayer Time! God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today’s Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read Matthew 17:1-8

“And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. 2 And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as **light**. 3 And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. 4 And Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” 5 He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.” 6 When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. 7 But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and have no fear.” 8 And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.”

-v.1 Who did Jesus bring with Him on the mountain? _____

-v.2 Describe Jesus’ appearance when He transfigured: _____

-v.3 What additional guests showed up? _____

-v.5 Who deserves all attention and focus? _____

-Write out exactly what God said: _____

Something to Think About: There is a lot of really important information in this passage and it would be wise to frequently study it and meditate on it. One of the important things is God’s command to listen to Jesus. This is, of course, the focus of our entire year of Bible study: to listen to Jesus by reading His written Word (the Bible) in order to obey it. Let us each recommit ourselves to work hard to focus on Jesus alone and to listen to Him first and most.

I love, too, God the Father's declaration of love for His Son and the command to listen to Him. The first is wonderful because—through Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection—God loves you and me as much as He loves His Son! Isn't that just too marvelous? Too wonderful?

God also states that He is well pleased with Jesus. This, we should be aware, is not something God grants unconditionally or unreservedly as He does His love. God loves His children—no matter what. Being pleasing, however, is something that we get to take an active role in. When we choose to obey His Word (which is the same as NOT choosing to please ourselves), God is pleased with us. When we choose to follow Jesus' example with some attitude or action (as opposed to the self-serving way of the world around us), God is pleased with us. When we make the decision to set aside the time for Bible study, prayer, and church attendance, God is pleased with us. In fact, the Bible is all about helping us know how to think and live in order to one day stand before the Father and our Savior and hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" God had gifted us each new day with the opportunity to shine our light for His glory and be found at day's end, pleasing to Him.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, July 5, 2022

-Prayer Time! God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read Matthew 24:29-31

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its **light**, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

-v.29 What will happen to the sun? _____

-The moon? _____

-The stars? _____

-The heavenly bodies? _____

-v.30 Who will appear? _____

-In what manner? _____

Something to Think About: Although these events are not for us believers living in the Church Age (they have to do with events in the Tribulation Period), they still ought to shake us up. They ought to cause us to take even more seriously the way we view sin in our own lives. They ought to cause us to speak more openly about God's mercy to those who do not know Jesus as Savior. There is still time for them to turn to Christ today, but there is no guarantee of tomorrow. Who do you need to talk to today?

FYI The Bible teaches that there is nothing that has to be accomplished before the Rapture, the next event on God's timetable. At a time that only the Father knows, He will send Jesus Christ to meet all those who have trusted in Him as Savior (alive and dead) since the point in time of His resurrection. He will then bring us into heaven where we will stand before Him at the Bema Seat Judgment (a judgment of what we have done for Him since salvation, NOT for sin) followed by the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Meanwhile, the seven-year Tribulation Period will be happening on earth. This is a truly horrible time and we should be thanking God every day that we will not be a part of it. Nonetheless, as noted in today's study, our family and friends who have not trusted in Christ as their Savior might very well be subject to its horrors. Keep praying for them! Keep sharing the good news of how Jesus died on their behalf! Keep living in such a way as to showcase the love of God and all the wonders of being His child!

End Times. What's next?:

- Rapture (of Christians)
- Tribulation Period (a seven year time period that begins after the Rapture)
- Jesus returns to earth ("Second Coming"); the Battle of Armageddon/satan and his demons are locked up for 1,000 years
- Millennium (1,000 years with King Jesus on the throne in Jerusalem ruling the entire world)
- Satan is released, mayhem results; Battle of Gog & Magog; satan and his followers are thrown into hell forever.
- Humans who have rejected Jesus as Savior are thrown into hell forever.
- New Heavens and New Earth; eternity begins—with no sin, sorrow, sickness, or pain! We will live forever in the presence of God's light and love!

-You and the Lord:

- Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

- What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

- What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

- Today's top few prayer requests:

——Light in the Book of Luke——

Wednesday, July 6, 2022

-Prayer Time! God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read Luke 8:16-18

"No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand, so that those who enter may see the **light**. 17 For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to **light**. 18 Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away."

-v.16 What is the purpose for lighting a lamp? _____

-v.17 What will be disclosed? _____

-What will be brought out into the light? _____
-v.18 What warning is given to those who don't use their lights? _____

Something to Think About: God intends for us to share with others what He has given us and taught us—our time, our talents, and our treasures. He expects us to demonstrate Jesus Christ to others in our words, actions, and attitudes. The opportunity to do so will not be open forever, though, so we need to do it today. Much like the old adage “Use it or lose it,” our opportunities to speak of Christ, to act in a Christ-like way, and to share God’s truths with both the saved and unsaved is kind of like muscles. If we stop using one or more, they atrophy and eventually we become unable to use them. No child of God will ever stop BEING a child of God (salvation cannot be “lost”), however, a child of God can stop being useful to God—and God may stop giving that believer opportunities to serve Him. This would be tragic on several levels! One part of the tragedy is that this would most definitely affect the joy and peace Christians are given as they rely on God and draw near to Him. Another is that it will affect just how much we get to serve God throughout eternity and whether or not we will be greeted with “Well done, good and faithful servant!” upon entering glory.

Don't put off until tomorrow what you know you are supposed to do today! It is a blessing to obey and honor the Lord! Prayerfully consider what God has been nudging you to do, then ask His help to implement it as soon as possible.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Thursday, July 7, 2022

-Prayer Time! God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read Luke 11:33-36

“No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar or under a basket, but on a stand, so that those who enter may see the **light**. 34 Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of **light**, but when it is bad, your body is full of darkness. 35 Therefore be careful lest the **light** in you be darkness. 36 If then your whole body is full of **light**, having no part dark, it will be wholly bright, as when a lamp with its rays gives you **light**.”

-v.33 What is the purpose for lighting a lamp? _____

-v.34 What is the lamp of the body? _____

-v.35 What must we be careful to avoid? _____

-v.36 What is a body full of light compared to? _____

Something to Think About: Have you met Christians whose faces shine with a kind of inner glow? It certainly can happen and when it does, it is because they have been in God's Word and have cleansed themselves

from known sin, and they are walking hand-in-hand with their Creator in love, trust, and obedience.

You and I can do that too—simply by confessing our sin to God and by giving time and effort to Bible study. How beautiful is the face that is “full of light!”

The alternate is true too. When a Christian is allowing other “truths” to feed their mind - things that are in opposition to God’s Word, their “sight” becomes a bit cloudy (like when someone has cataracts!) and they are no longer able to live to their full potential for Christ. Sadly, it’s super easy to get busy with our daily demands and let Bible study slip . . . let prayer become more of a ritual habit than a heartfelt communing with the Father. . . let church attendance become a bit less often and a bit less important to us.

God saved us to shine His light to all the world! He wants us to have bright lights that shine BEAUTIFULLY. When we refuse to let anything come between our time with Him, then we too will have faces that shine with the glorious glow of a heart that is wholly devoted to God.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Friday, July 8, 2022

-Prayer Time! God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today’s Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read Luke 16:1-15

“He also said to the disciples, “There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was wasting his possessions. 2 And he called him and said to him, ‘What is this that I hear about you? Turn in the account of your management, for you can no longer be manager.’ 3 And the manager said to himself, ‘What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. 4 I have decided what to do, so that when I am removed from management, people may receive me into their houses.’ 5 So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he said to the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ 6 He said, ‘A hundred measures of oil.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.’ 7 Then he said to another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ He said, ‘A hundred measures of wheat.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, and write eighty.’ 8 The master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of **light**. 9 And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth, so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal dwellings. 10 “One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. 11 If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? 12 And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? 13 No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.” 14 The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they ridiculed him. 15 And he said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.”

- v.2 What was the manager asked to do? _____
- v.4-7 Summarize what he did: _____
- _____
- v.8 Why was the manager commended? _____
- How are believers described? (“sons of...”) _____
- v.10 One who is faithful in a very _____ is _____ faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much.
- v.15 What does God know? _____

Something to Think About: Few people would disagree that wealth and possessions are considered extremely important by our society. God, however, has a very different viewpoint. He calls money a “little” thing. He says possessions are not “true riches” and that a wrong view of the importance of money is, in fact, detestable. Wow. And to think how hard we work for our paychecks!

Don’t be confused, God does want us to be hard workers. Earning our paycheck through hard work and effort is a good thing. In fact, money isn’t even a bad thing. The LOVE of money and placing too much importance on it is the problem. In our day and age it is very easy to fall into the mindset of thinking money is essential to life (maybe especially when living in a recession!), but we must remember that we are “people of light” and our priority is to serve God. Our “things” are merely tools to use in our service to Him. God is best honored when we use all that we are and have for His glory and to help others grow in the Lord—whether that is with a lot by worldly standards or barely anything at all. God’s job is to provide for our needs, ours is to be good stewards of what we have.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

——**Light in the Book of John**——

Saturday, July 9, 2022

-Prayer Time! God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today’s Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read John 1:1-14

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life, and the life was the **light** of men. 5 The **light** shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness, to bear witness about the **light**, that all might believe through him. 8 He was not the **light**, but came to bear witness about the **light**. 9 The true **light**, which gives **light** to everyone, was coming into the world. 10 He was in the

world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. 11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. 12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

- v.1 What was in the beginning? _____
- v.5 Where did Jesus’ light shine? _____
- v.7,8 What was John’s job? _____
- v.9 Who is the true Light? _____
- v.12 What is given to everyone who believes in Jesus’ name? _____
- v.14 And the Word became _____ and dwelt _____ us, and we have seen his _____, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of _____ and _____.

Something to Think About: We all need to read and re-read these verses until we either fall to our knees in humility or shout with incredible joy and gratitude - or both. When all was lost and dark in sin, Jesus, the true Light, came to make us God’s children. We could never see truth, understand truth, or reflect truth without Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Are you living a life of gratitude and obedience? How could we not!

P.S. When Jesus died and was resurrected, He forever defeated spiritual darkness and those who trust in Him as their Savior now have the ability to see truth and live a light-filled life. Currently, our world is very much bathed in darkness, BUT Jesus will defeat that darkness too! At just the right time, He will return as King and set up the first-ever wholly righteous Kingdom, giving all of mankind still alive the opportunity to trust in Him as their Savior. From that time onward, darkness will never again have a chokehold on the earth. Hang in there, child of God! Darkness CAN NOT defeat God—and YOU belong to Him! He is ever ready to help you say “No” to sin and “Yes” to all He defines as good.

-You and the Lord:

- Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

- What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

- What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

- Today’s top few prayer requests:

Sunday, July 10, 2022

-Prayer Time! God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today’s Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read John 3:1-21

“Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.” 3 Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” 4 Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?” 5 Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say

to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ 8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” 9 Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” 10 Jesus answered him, “Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? 11 Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. 12 If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? 13 No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. 14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. 16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. 19 And this is the judgment: the **light** has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the **light** because their works were evil. 20 For everyone who does wicked things hates the **light** and does not come to the **light**, lest his works should be exposed. 21 But whoever does what is true comes to the **light**, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”

- v.1 Who came to Jesus? _____
- Write out verse 16: _____
- _____
- _____
- v.19 What came into the world? _____
- What did men love? _____
- Why? _____
- v.20 Who hates light? _____
- Why? _____
- v.21 Who gives the power to do good? _____

Something to Think About: Because we are all born with a sin nature, our first and “automatic” choice is evil/sin/darkness. Only in and through the true Light, Jesus Christ, can we be and act as light. If we are looking to people—including ourselves—or anything other than God as our guide or light, we will mess up. Our hope and help is always in God alone.

There seems to be a warning here too. Did you see it? While it's true that those who haven't trusted in Christ as Savior are unable to see God's truth until the Holy Spirit “turns on the light,” even Christians can have their spiritual vision dimmed by sin. When we allow something into our heart or life that is contrary to God's Word, we may realize that our walk with God has grown a little cold or that we don't have the same insight into Scripture, or some other troubling happening. The solution is always the same: get right with God. We do this by confessing any and all sin that is in our life (I John 1:9). If we're not sure what all that might be, ask God. He will gladly show you through His Word, through your pastor's counsel, or through the wise advice of mature believers. In fact, starting every single day and ending every single day with a plea for a clean heart before God is a valuable and necessary tool to maintain the right view of light v. darkness, good v. evil. What we need to avoid at all costs is the desire to hide from the light because we don't want our hearts exposed for all to see. How much better to humble ourselves and choose to be light-filled!

-You and the Lord:

- Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture: _____
- _____
- What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it? _____
- _____
- What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture? _____
- _____

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Monday, July 11, 2022

-Prayer Time! God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read John 8:12-18

"Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the **light** of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the **light** of life." 13 So the Pharisees said to him, "You are bearing witness about yourself; your testimony is not true." 14 Jesus answered, "Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. 15 You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. 16 Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. 17 In your Law it is written that the testimony of two people is true. 18 I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me."

-v.12 Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the _____ of the _____. Whoever follows me will _____ walk in darkness, but will have the _____ of _____."

Something to Think About: Jesus was speaking in the Treasury, the part of the Temple where the offerings were put and where oil lamps were burned to symbolize the pillar of fire that led the Hebrew people through the wilderness for forty years (read about it in Exodus).

The burning lamps, then, symbolized God's protection, leading, and presence. All this makes Jesus' declarative statement, "I AM the Light of the world!" that much more impactful! The Jews knew what the lights in the Treasury were all about, so when they heard Jesus declare that He WAS the Light, they should have believed Him immediately and rejoiced over God's gift to them. Sadly, most refused to listen or believe.

All these centuries later, we face a similar problem: people refuse to believe Who Jesus said He is. Jesus is currently in heaven, seated at the right hand of the Father, but you and I are here. WE can be a light so that others are attracted to Jesus, the Light of the world. When we choose to be imitators of God and live lives in keeping with Scripture, others may see and want to know why we are different, giving us the opportunity to tell them about our loving Father and Savior so that they don't need to walk in darkness any longer, but can have the light of life.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, July 12, 2022

-Prayer Time! God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read John 9:1-41

"As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 3 Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. 4 We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the **light** of the world." 6 Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud 7 and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing. 8 The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" 9 Some said, "It is he." Others said, "No, but he is like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." 10 So they said to him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" 11 He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed and received my sight." 12 They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know." 13 They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. 14 Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. 15 So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, "He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see." 16 Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And there was a division among them. 17 So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet." 18 The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight 19 and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" 20 His parents answered, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. 21 But how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." 22 (His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.) 23 Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." 24 So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, "Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner." 25 He answered, "Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." 26 They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" 27 He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" 28 And they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. 29 We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." 30 The man answered, "Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. 31 We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. 32 Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." 34 They answered him, "You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?" And they cast him out. 35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" 36 He answered, "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" 37 Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you." 38 He said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him. 39 Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind." 40 Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, "Are we also blind?" 41 Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains."

-v.1 What was wrong with the man Jesus came across? _____

-v.3 Why was he born blind? _____

-v.4 Why must we all do the work today that God has for us? _____

-v.5 "I am the _____."

-v.31 Who does God listen to and not listen to? _____

-v.38 Did this man trust in Jesus as Savior? _____

Something to Think About: Jesus said He was the Light of the world... while He was in the world. Reflecting this light is our job now as God's children.

The title Christian means "little Christ" or "like Christ." Are you properly reflecting Jesus' light in your life through your actions and attitudes? How about through your words? The blind man did it in a very simple way. He simply stated what God had done for him. Our testimony can be equally short and sweet. "I was dead in my sin and now I am alive in Christ."

Prepping ahead is a wise thing to do in pretty much every area of life. With that in mind, why not take a few minutes to write out your story of salvation? You don't have to be fancy or long-winded (it's probably best that you don't do that), just tell where you were when you understood that you were a sinner, but that Jesus came to earth, was crucified, then came back to life in three days in order to pay for your sin. Perhaps you could include one or two Bible verses that talk about this. Doing this (and reviewing it on occasion) will help you feel more confident when God gives you a chance to tell another person about your relationship to God—and how they can have one too.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, July 13, 2022

-Prayer Time! God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read John 11:1-44

"Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. 3 So the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." 4 But when Jesus heard it he said, "This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." 5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. 6 So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. 7 Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." 8 The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?" 9 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the **light** of this world. 10 But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the **light** is not in him." 11 After saying these things, he said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him." 12 The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover." 13 Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. 14 Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died, 15 and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." 16 So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." 17 Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. 18 Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, 19 and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning

their brother. 20 So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. 21 Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.” 23 Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” 24 Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” 25 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” 27 She said to him, “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.” 28 When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.” 29 And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. 30 Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. 31 When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. 32 Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” 33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. 34 And he said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” 35 Jesus wept. 36 So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” 37 But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?” 38 Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. 39 Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days.” 40 Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?” 41 So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. 42 I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.” 43 When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out.” 44 The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

- v.1 Who was sick? _____
- v.3 How is he described? _____
- v.4 Why had he gotten sick? _____
- v.8 Why didn't the disciples want Jesus to go to Bethany? _____
- v.9 What keeps man from stumbling? _____
- v.10 Why is night a problem? _____

Something to Think About: This reference to light is in the physical sense AND a spiritual one. Jesus often used the world around Him to teach deeper truths. In that day, of course, nighttime would have been pitch black. There were no streetlights, nightlights, or outside illumination other than the moon and stars. Jesus was telling them that people needed to hear about their need of a Savior right now—regardless of personal danger or inconvenience.

We love to have our lives ordered by our own agendas and plans, but I expect you noticed that God seldom provides witnessing opportunities at our convenience. We are to speak out when He provides the chance or we may forfeit the chance entirely. Just consider what your life would be like if you didn't know the Lord and know of His love for You. Don't you want that same assurance and joy for others?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Thursday, July 14, 2022

-Prayer Time! God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read John 12:35-36; 44-50

35 "So Jesus said to them, "The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the **light**, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. 36 While you have the **light**, believe in the **light**, that you may become sons of **light**." . . . 44 And Jesus cried out and said, "Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. 45 And whoever sees me sees him who sent me. 46 I have come into the world as **light**, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. 47 If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. 48 The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. 49 For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. 50 And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me."

- v.35 How does Jesus refer to Himself? _____
- v.36 How do we become sons of light? _____
- v.45 Who do people see when they see Jesus? _____
- v.46 Why did Jesus come? _____
- v.49 Whose authority did Jesus live under while on earth? _____
- v.50 Jesus spoke _____ the Father told Him to.

Something to Think About: Jesus was speaking to the crowds before His death, burial, and resurrection. He knew that His time on earth was very limited and He desired that ALL would trust in Him as their Savior and forever move from walking in darkness to walking in His glorious light. However, Jesus HAS finished His mission on earth and has returned to heaven until the Father declares the end of the Church Age (when we will be raptured to meet Jesus in the clouds, then on to heaven). The task of being lights for God is now being carried on by believers! We are now the ones with limited time to display God's light so those walking in darkness might become sons of light too.

So, how do we represent Jesus' light in our life to the people we meet and interact with? Just like Jesus did! We can

- live in such a way that our actions, attitudes, goals, words—everything—reflects God and is in keeping with what the Bible says glorifies and pleases Him.
- point others to Christ, sharing the good news of the gospel.
- use our words to share Scripture, sharing what God says about big things, little things, and everything in between.
- rely on God through prayer to help us know how to use our minutes, days, weeks, and lives in a way that honors Him and points others to Him.
- simply live "as" the Father has told us.

Jesus' overriding purpose, goal, and desire was to glorify the Father, do what He wanted, and say what He wanted. We can have no loftier goal than that either.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

—Light in the Book of Acts—

Friday, July 15, 2022

-Prayer Time! God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read Acts 9:1-19

"But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest 2 and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. 3 Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a **light** from heaven shone around him. 4 And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" 5 And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. 6 But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." 7 The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. 8 Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. 9 And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank. 10 Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." 11 And the Lord said to him, "Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, 12 and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight." 13 But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. 14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name." 15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. 16 For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." 17 So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." 18 And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; 19 and taking food, he was strengthened. For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus.

- v.1 Who threatened the Lord's disciples? _____
- v.3 What suddenly shone around him? _____
- v.4 What did the Voice ask? _____
- v.5 Who was speaking to Saul? _____
- v.10,11 Who did God send to Saul? _____
- v.15 What was Saul's work to be? _____
-

Something to Think About: In this well-known story, Jesus appears to Saul (Paul) as light. Saul immediately recognizes Jesus as God and submits to Him—and his life was never the same again.

You know, we each have a "moment of light" where the Holy Spirit showed us our sin and our need of a Savior. Mine was when I was 7 years old. My pastor was preaching—and all of a sudden I heard him say that every single person is born with sin, but that Jesus came to die for that sin, and that if we believed in Him as our Savior, we would become children of God and have eternal life in God's presence. I'm sure I heard him say this before, but that was the first time I truly heard it. It was literally as if the Holy Spirit had turned a lightbulb on over my head telling me to say, "He's talking about me! I need to trust in Christ Jesus as my Sav-

ior!” And I did, praise the Lord!

What’s your salvation “story”? Each and every one is a miracle straight from the Father! More to the point of today’s Scripture, is your life different since you trusted in Jesus as your Savior? We are definitely not all called to sacrifice in the way Saul did, but there should be a big difference in every area of our lives when we are living obediently before God. It may start out with small changes, but the more we come to know God, the more we will love Him. The more we love God, the more we will DELIGHT in obeying Him and pleasing Him. The more we delight in Him and please Him, the more we LOVE doing those things. This circle of joy and peace just keeps growing. The light just gets ever brighter.

How’s your walk? How bright is your light for the Lord?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Saturday, July 16, 2022

-Prayer Time! God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today’s Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read Acts 12:1-17

“About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. 2 He killed James the brother of John with the sword, 3 and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. This was during the days of Unleavened Bread. 4 And when he had seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people. 5 So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church. 6 Now when Herod was about to bring him out, on that very night, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison. 7 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood next to him, and a **light** shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, “Get up quickly.” And the chains fell off his hands. 8 And the angel said to him, “Dress yourself and put on your sandals.” And he did so. And he said to him, “Wrap your cloak around you and follow me.” 9 And he went out and followed him. He did not know that what was being done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. 10 When they had passed the first and the second guard, they came to the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, and they went out and went along one street, and immediately the angel left him. 11 When Peter came to himself, he said, “Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting.” 12 When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying. 13 And when he knocked at the door of the gateway, a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer. 14 Recognizing Peter’s voice, in her joy she did not open the gate but ran in and reported that Peter was standing at the gate. 15 They said to her, “You are out of your mind.” But she kept insisting that it was so, and they kept saying, “It is his angel!” 16 But Peter continued knocking, and when they opened, they

saw him and were amazed. 17 But motioning to them with his hand to be silent, he described to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, "Tell these things to James and to the brothers." Then he departed and went to another place."

- v.3 Who did Herod have seized? _____
- v.4 Was he tightly guarded? _____
- v.5 So Peter was kept in prison, _____ earnest prayer for him was made to God by the _____.
- v.7 What happened? _____
- v.9 Did Peter understand what was happening? _____
- v.11 Did he figure it out? _____
- v.12 Where did he go? _____
- v.15 Did the Christians believe their prayers had been answered at first? _____

Something to Think About: This passage came up because of the reference to light appearing with the angel in Peter's cell, but there are many pretty awesome things to note in it. It is an amazing story full of God's goodness—and how we can in one moment pray to God for deliverance BUT doubt His answer in the next. How patient and loving He is with us!

My prayer is that each of us would bathe every single part of every single day in prayers of petition and trust in God and that we will have open eyes to see and believe the miraculous things God provides in His answers.

I want to pray earnestly AND believe. How about you?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Sunday, July 17, 2022

-Prayer Time! God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read Acts 16:16-40

"As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. 17 She followed Paul and us, crying out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation." 18 And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour. 19 But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers. 20 And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, "These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city. 21 They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice." 22 The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. 23 And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer

to keep them safely. 24 Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. 25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, 26 and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened. 27 When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. 28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." 29 And the jailer called for **lights** and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. 30 Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." 32 And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. 34 Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God."

- v.17 What did the demon in the girl recognize? _____
- v.18 Who had the power to order the demon out? _____
- v.23 What was the result of Paul's kindness? _____
- v.25 What did they do while in jail? _____
- Were they alone? _____
- v.29 What did the jailer need before he could find out what happened? _____
- v.30 What did he want to know? _____
- v.31 What was the answer? _____

Something to Think About: This is another story that we are pretty familiar with. It is much loved for a good reason. Sometimes when I hear a story I am pretty familiar with I try to find something in it that I might not have noticed before. One thing that I found interesting here is that the demon "witnessed" to the crowd! Even though it was evil and had evil purposes, it knew very clearly Who Paul and Silas served and why. It is sad, that we, the children whom God has adopted into His own family, don't always tell others in an equally forthright way. Let's start today.

BONUS:

Other awesome things to note from this account:

- Paul and his companion MADE time for prayer even though they were very busy and very tired.
- Sinful humans take advantage of evil for their own gain.
- Sinful humans do NOT like having their plans upset and generally respond in unpleasant ways.
- Godly people DO suffer persecution and hardship.
- Godly people are able to sing praises to God in spite of persecution and hardship.
- Responding in the right way is a testimony and witness to others.
- Once again, we see that light is needed to see physically and spiritually.
- God DOES intervene in miraculous and unexpected ways when that is His perfect will.
- Caring for the needs and welfare of others is pleasing to God.
- Simple belief in Jesus Christ as the Savior for sins is all that is needed to become a Christian.
- Once someone is saved, we often see a softer person—one who wants to do helpful things for others.
- Rejoicing over our salvation and considering all the wonderful things God does ought to be something all Christians do constantly.

P.S. The jailer's household was not saved because the jailer believed in Jesus as Savior. They had to each do that personally too (and the wording here seems to indicate that they all did).

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

——Light in the Book of Romans——

Monday, July 18, 2022

-Prayer Time! God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read Romans 13:8-14

"Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. 9 For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." 10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. 11 Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. 12 The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of **light**. 13 Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires."

-v.8 Name a debt that is good to keep? _____

-v.10 What fulfills the law? _____

-v.11 Why do we need to wake up? _____

-v.12 What are we to put on? _____

-v.14 How are we to clothe ourselves? _____

Something to Think About: This is another reminder about the limited time we all have to be lights in the world as God intends for us to be. Ephesians 4 is a great passage that teaches the biblical principle of putting off ungodly practices and putting on God honoring ones.

This passage tells us that if we want to be victorious in no longer living like the unsaved we need to "put on" the Lord Jesus Christ. We do this by displaying outwardly what has taken place inside of us. Today's passage reminds us that one of the chief traits that should be seen in all children of God is love—a desire to consider the needs of others as more important than our own, a sacrificial servant's heart in the area of helping others, a priority of encouraging others to greater godliness, and much more — all found within the pages of Scripture.

I like the picture of putting on the Lord Jesus Christ in the morning along with my clothing and shoes. In fact, we might use the act of putting on our clothes and shoes to REMIND us to pray and ask the Father to help us think, speak, and act in a Christlike way. Of course, the illustration fails a bit because we eventually take off our shoes and undress—and we should never NOT be imitators of God, but still, it's a nice visual picture and a nice way to remember to commit each and every day to our Lord and Savior!

BONUS:

Here's another great passage that tells us what "putting on the Lord Jesus" looks like:

"Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." Colossians 3:12-17

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

——**Light in the Book of I & II Corinthians**——

Tuesday, July 19, 2022

-Prayer Time! God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read I Corinthians 4:1-5

"This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful. 3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. 4 For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. 5 Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to **light** the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God."

-v.1 What are servants of Christ stewards of? _____

-v.2 Those given a trust must be found _____.

-v.5 Who is the only true Judge? _____

-What will He bring to light? _____

-What will He disclose? _____

Something to Think About: As you can see, the word "light" in this passage is the concept of revealing something hidden (specifically, something that takes place in someone's heart). In fact, this passage is telling us that only God can see what's inside someone, making it not our job to judge someone in some way that we cannot know for sure. We may be able to observe certain behaviors and hear certain words, but what's going on in that person's heart is something only they and God know.

What should we be focusing on instead? What is in OUR heart. Sooner or later, what is really there WILL show itself. One day God will reward us based on it. In the meantime, Scripture will help us stay true to God, not only in external behavior but in our interior life—our souls (see Hebrews 4:12).

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, July 20, 2022

-Prayer Time! God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read II Corinthians 4:1-18

"Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. 2 But we have re-nounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. 3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the **light** of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5 For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. 6 For God, who said, "Let **light** shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the **light** of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. 8 We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10 always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. 11 For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12 So death is at work in us, but life in you. 13 Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, "I believed, and so I spoke," we also believe, and so we also speak, 14 knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. 15 For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. 16 So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. 17 For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, 18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal."

-v.1 What must we not lose? _____
-v.4 Who has blinded minds to the light of the gospel? _____
-v.6 For God, who said, "Let _____ out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the _____ of the glory of God in the _____ of Jesus Christ.
-v.16 So we do _____ lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being _____ day by day.
-v.17 For this light momentary affliction is _____ for us an eternal weight of glory _____ all comparison,

Something to Think About: Do not lose heart!

But why not?

According to this passage:

- God has given us the exciting job of telling what wonderful things He has done for us;
- evil will not always be in our world because Jesus is the Victor;
- God is all sufficient, even when we are frail;
- our difficulties aren't really all that overwhelming when viewed in the light of eternity. In fact, the eternal

glory is far greater than all the suffering we may experience in this life.

Are you losing heart? Look to Christ Jesus and what He has done, continues to do, and will ultimately bring to perfection. Dwell on His love, His mercy, and His grace. He has promised that eternity in His presence will be worth it all!

BONUS: “Be Strong in the Lord” by Linda Lee Johnson, sung by the Herbster Trio

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AwB3EEWj46U>

Be strong in the Lord, and be of good courage;
your mighty Defender is always the same.
Mount up with wings, as the eagle ascending;
victory is sure when you call on his name.

Refrain:

Be strong, be strong, be strong in the Lord,
and be of good courage for he is your guide.
Be strong, be strong, be strong in the Lord,
and rejoice for the victory is yours.

So put on the armor the Lord has provided,
and place your defense in his unfailing care.
Trust him for he will be with you in battle,
lighting your path to avoid every snare.

Refrain

Be strong in the Lord, and be of good courage;
your mighty Commander will vanquish the foe.
Fear not the battle for the victory is always his;
he will protect you wherever you go.

Refrain

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-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Thursday, July 21, 2022

-Prayer Time! God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today’s Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your

life.

-Read II Corinthians 6:14-18

“Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has **light** with darkness? 15 What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? 16 What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, 18 and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty.”

-v.14 Why shouldn't we join forces with unbelievers? _____

-v.15 Who can Belial (satan) have no harmony with? _____

-v.16 Who are we the temple of? _____

-v.17 God commands that we come out and be _____.

Something to Think About: This command to be separate is one that, prayerfully, will with time become more and more particular and applicable in our minds and hearts. The most obvious and basic way to not “yoke” with unbelievers is in any legal sense such as marriage, business partners, etc. But as we become more like Christ, we should want to separate ourselves from dark (sinfulness) more and more. Eventually, everything we say and do and think and wear and are will fall directly into the camp of light or dark. With God, there is no gray. There is no compromise. The more we love Him, the more we won't want to associate with anything that He doesn't associate with.

On the other hand, when we are fully invested in becoming like Christ, obeying God cheerfully and wholeheartedly in every area, the closer our relationship with God grows—and the friendships we have with other faithful believers become more precious! It's truly a beautiful thing—and one well worth cultivating and working toward. The light-filled Christian is BEAUTIFUL because of Christ Jesus in us—and this light just gets brighter, more delightful, and more and more glorifying to God.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Friday, July 22, 2022

-Prayer Time! God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read II Corinthians 11:1-15

“I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness. Do bear with me! 2 For I feel a divine jealousy for you,

since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. 3 But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. 4 For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough. 5 Indeed, I consider that I am not in the least inferior to these super-apostles. 6 Even if I am unskilled in speaking, I am not so in knowledge; indeed, in every way we have made this plain to you in all things. 7 Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached God's gospel to you free of charge? 8 I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you. 9 And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied my need. So I refrained and will refrain from burdening you in any way. 10 As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be silenced in the regions of Achaia. 11 And why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do! 12 And what I am doing I will continue to do, in order to undermine the claim of those who would like to claim that in their boasted mission they work on the same terms as we do. 13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of **light**. 15 So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds."

-v.13 How does Paul describe men who preach things other than Christ? _____

-v.14 How does Satan masquerade himself? _____

-Read Colossians 1:13. "*God has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,*" What is Satan's real dominion? _____

Something to Think About: Anyone can be duped by a smooth talker if they aren't comparing their message with Scripture. Satan himself is able to fool people all the time that he is light when he is the polar opposite of light: darkness. Be careful who and what you are using as the basis for your life. Be sure it is the genuine light and life of Scripture alone. Nothing else will be an accurate and safe lamp for your feet or light for your path!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

—Light in the Book of Ephesians—

Saturday, July 23, 2022

-Prayer Time! God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read Ephesians 5:1-20

“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. 3 But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. 4 Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. 5 For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. 7 Therefore do not become partners with them; 8 for at one time you were darkness, but now you are **light** in the Lord. Walk as children of **light** 9 (for the fruit of **light** is found in all that is good and right and true), 10 and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. 11 Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. 12 For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. 13 But when anything is exposed by the **light**, it becomes visible, 14 for anything that becomes visible is **light**. Therefore it says, “Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” 15 Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, 19 addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, 20 giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

- v.1 Be imitators of _____...
- v.2 And walk in _____...
- v.8 Despite what we were before trusting in Christ, we become _____ in the Lord.
- v.9 The fruit of light is all that is _____
- v.10 What do we need to find out? _____
- v.11 What must we expose? _____
- v.13 What makes everything visible? _____
- v.16 Make excellent use of your _____
- Write out verse 20 _____

Something to Think About: As children of light, we have more to do than just “be” light (demonstrating God-honoring characteristics and behavior). We are also commanded to stay away from the ugly things associated with sin—and even take it a step further by exposing them.

Take a stand for what is right. Refuse to allow sinful things to take up residence in you or around you.

P.S. Did you notice the “biblical remedies” found here to help us in our fight against darkness and the ugly things around us? There are a few (look for them!), but one of my favorites is the reminder to never stop focusing on gratitude to God for EVERYTHING! Gratitude and griping simply cannot exist in the same place!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

—Light in the Book of Colossians—

Sunday, July 24, 2022

-Prayer Time! God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read Colossians 1:3-14

"We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, 4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, 5 because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, 6 which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, 7 just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf 8 and has made known to us your love in the Spirit. 9 And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in **light**. 13 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

-v. 9 And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to _____ for you, asking that you may be filled with the _____.

-v.10 so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, _____.

-v.12 _____ to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in _____.

-v.13 He has _____ us from the domain of darkness and _____ us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,

-v.14 in whom we have _____, the forgiveness of sins."

Something to Think About: Most gals love a good tale involving castles, knights, and dragons! This passage teaches us that we, as believers in Jesus Christ, have been rescued from the evil rebel kingdom of darkness and despair, and brought to live as royalty in the rightful kingdom of Light by God's own Son, Jesus Christ. WOW! It doesn't get any better than that!

A few important questions to consider, though, are these:

-Does your conduct reflect your new allegiance?

-As a Christian belonging to the Kingdom of Light, can others see this in you?

-Do you thank God regularly for your salvation from the domain of darkness?

-Do you tell others that God wants to rescue THEM from the domain of darkness?

-Do you pray for other members of the Kingdom of Light—for their faithfulness to God, for victory over sin, for not giving up or giving in?

-Do you have a love for others in the Kingdom? How do you demonstrate it?

-Is it your daily goal to walk in such a way as to be fully pleasing to God? To bear fruit in what you do for the Lord? To increase in your knowledge of God?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

——Light in the Book of I Thessalonians——

Monday, July 25, 2022

-Prayer Time! God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read I Thessalonians 5:1-11

"Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. 2 For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 4 But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. 5 For you are all children of **light**, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. 6 So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. 8 But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing."

-v.5 What do we not belong to? _____

-v.6 What should we do? _____

-v.8 What should we wear? _____

-v.9-10 Why? _____

-v.11 What must we do daily? _____

Something to Think About: This passage goes nicely with yesterday's because it tells us exactly what we should be like as royalty in the kingdom of light. The idea of the imminent return of Jesus shouldn't make us anxious or afraid. Our lives should already be rock-solid anyway. We should be alert, self-controlled, full of faith, love, and hope. We should be encouraging other believers and building them up in the faith. This is our responsibility—but it is also our privilege.

Is your life in order should Jesus return today? Are you already living as a resident of the kingdom of light? With God's help, we all can be!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

—Light in the Book of I Peter—

Tuesday, July 26, 2022

-Prayer Time! God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read I Peter 2:1-12

"So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. 2 Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation— 3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. 4 As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, 5 you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." 7 So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," 8 and "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. 9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous **light**. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. 11 Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. 12 Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation."

-v.1-2 Put away all the ugly things and long for the pure _____.

-v.3 Taste that the Lord is _____.

-v.4, What was rejected by men is _____ and _____ in the sight of God.

-v.9 But you are a _____ race, a royal priesthood, a _____ nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the _____ of him who called you out of darkness _____ his marvelous light.

-v.10 Once you were not a people, _____ you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

-v.12 Keep your conduct among the Gentiles _____, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and _____ on the day of visitation.

Something to Think About: Our focus and great purpose in life should be to glorify God. Our activities and behavior should cause others to want to glorify God. Evaluate how you are doing today and prayerfully decide how to excel still more.

BONUS POINTS:

Use this passage to start the evaluation process (and with time, add more and more passages to fine tune what constitutes living with excellence according to God's standard):

-Have you "put away" malice (wickedness, naughtiness, evil, trouble)?

-Have you put away deceit (telling partial truth or outright lies)?

-Have you put away hypocrisy (saying one thing, but thinking or acting in another)?

-Have you put away envy (wishing you had something someone else has)?

-Have you put away slander (speaking unkindly or maliciously about someone else)?

. . . And all that's from verse 1! Keep going to see what else marks the child of light!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

——Light in the Book of I John——

Wednesday, July 27, 2022

-Prayer Time! God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read I John 1:1-10

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— 2 the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— 3 that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. 4 And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. 5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is **light**, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the **light**, as he is in the **light**, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

-v.5 What message is being declared? _____

-v.6 What would be a lie? _____

-v.7 How can we have great fellowship with other believers? _____

-v.8 When do we deceive ourselves? _____

-v.9 How can we be purified from unrighteousness? _____

-v.10 What causes God to look like a liar? _____

Something to Think About: We are pretty good at fooling ourselves by pretending that some sins look okay. We easily give multiple reasons why we are the exception to the rules or how our doing something makes it acceptable—even if Scripture says otherwise. This passage makes it pretty clear that sin is sin and our only hope lies in agreeing with God that it is (known as "confession"). The amazing merciful truth to remember is that when we do acknowledge our sin before God, He forgives us and makes us "clean" again. Are you clean before God?

P.S. Praise God that He is light and in Him is NO DARKNESS AT ALL!!!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Thursday, July 28, 2022

-Prayer Time! God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read I John 2:1-11

"My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 2 He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. 3 And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. 4 Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, 5 but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: 6 whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked. 7 Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard. 8 At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true **light** is already shining. 9 Whoever says he is in the **light** and hates his brother is still in darkness. 10 Whoever loves his brother abides in the **light**, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. 11 But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes."

-v.1 What should be our goal? _____

-v.3 What does living obediently show? _____

-v.6 Who is our ultimate Example? _____

-v.8 What is shining right now? _____

-v.9 We cannot be in the light if we do what? _____

-v.11 What does darkness do? _____

Something to Think About: Did you know that love is not an emotion? It is an action; a decision to treat others well (whether or not we feel affection toward them). Hate is not an emotion, either. It is an attitude expressed in actions—ugly actions, actions that do NOT reflect Christ.

Did you know that we are commanded to love? What we are commanded to do is not optional for the child of God (thankfully, God provides the strength and ability to do all that He commands us to do!) When we choose to obey God, we please God and we don't "stumble" in our attempt to walk as Jesus did (or cause others to stumble!). We display light and not darkness.

I John is an awesome little book—packed full of critically important truths about God that will help us in our goal to be becoming like Christ. Read it often!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Friday, July 29, 2022

-Prayer Time! God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

Review Time!

-Look back on your work on the word "light" in the New Testament (begun on the 2nd of this month).

-What have you learned that you didn't know before?

-How have you been challenged in your current walk with God?

-What are you going to do about it?

-Are there any questions you have that need to be pursued?

-What words, concepts, truths do you feel the need to do more research on?

Something to Think About: The New Testament is written to believers. Many passages that are sometimes assumed to be telling unsaved people how to get saved, are actually warnings to us (believers) to live like light in this world full of darkness. They are reminders that one day we will all give account for our actions AND attitudes—and will be rewarded for those that were light-filled and Christ-like (while the selfish ungodly ones are discarded because they are of no value to God).

What should we do about all that?

-Read Scripture and obey it. It has everything we need to know to live godly, light-filled lives.

-Join, attend, and invest in a Bible-based local church. The current time period we are living in according to God's time-table is the Church Age. It was His specific plan for people to get saved, join themselves to a body

of believers in a local church so they could be taught from His Word, encourage and build each other up in the things of the Lord, and serve the Lord as family/one body.

-Don't neglect personal Bible study and prayer on a daily basis (or more!). Become a true student of the Word, learning to LOVE what you are studying so that you can better please God and better honor Him.

-Spend time wisely and well. We're only given so much time in each day (and life!), why waste it on "empty" pursuits and actions? Choose to find out what special tasks God created YOU for (Eph. 2:10), then give your whole heart to them.

-Spend time with godly friends, the kind who help us to mature spiritually and who help us to say "no" to sin, satan, and the strong pull of the world. BE that kind of friend!

What else? Look again at this month's study of light in the New Testament and see what you can add to this list! (Let me know!)

This next section of our year-long look at the words of Psalm 119:105 is a study of Old Testament references using the word "path."

It was a little trickier looking up verses in the Bible using the word "path" than I thought it would be because the definition of path in Psalm 119:105 means, "a way, possibly narrow and rugged, on which one travels," but it is also often used metaphorically for one's way of life. It would be helpful to think of it as having to do with our daily practices and habits, our conduct, or our manner of life. Having said that, path, road, and way are often mentioned as literal paths, roadways, and means by which something is accomplished (as in, "This is the way I bake bread.") It all gets confusing! Nonetheless, God graciously helps us understand when we ask!

Saturday, July 30, 2022

-Prayer Time! God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read Genesis 18:1-2; 16-19 (v.19, way)

"And the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. 2 He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth. . . 16 Then the men set out from there, and they looked down toward Sodom. And Abraham went with them to set them on their way. 17 The Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, 18 seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? 19 For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, so that the Lord may bring to Abraham what he has promised him."

-v.1 (& v.16) Who did the Lord appear to? _____

-v.18 What had God chosen Abraham to become? _____

-v.19 In addition, what would Abraham direct his family to keep? _____

-What would he need to do to direct them? _____

Something to Think About: Jesus, in His pre-incarnate form, came to Abraham to both tell him that Sarah would have a baby within one year's time, and that He would be destroying Sodom and Gomorrah due to their great sinfulness. In this passage we are given one of Abraham's great challenges in his role as patriarch of the Hebrew nation. He was to help them to know how to "keep the way of the Lord." That is, to find out Who God was, what He wanted His people to do/be, and how, when, where, etc.

Abraham would be able to be an excellent leader by doing what God wanted (doing what is right and just) in

his own life. This is our charge, too! In every decision, in every word that proceeds from our mouths, in everything we allow our eyes to see—if it is right and just, we will be keeping the way of the Lord. (Philippians 4:8 is a great New Testament verse that supports this challenge.)

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Sunday, July 31, 2022

-Prayer Time! God has something specific that He wants you to notice and apply to your life from today's Bible study. Pray before beginning your study, asking for His help to recognize it and put into practice in your life.

-Read Exodus 18:13-23 (v.20, way)

"The next day Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood around Moses from morning till evening. 14 When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, and all the people stand around you from morning till evening?" 15 And Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God; 16 when they have a dispute, they come to me and I decide between one person and another, and I make them know the statutes of God and his laws." 17 Moses' father-in-law said to him, "What you are doing is not good. 18 You and the people with you will certainly wear yourselves out, for the thing is too heavy for you. You are not able to do it alone. 19 Now obey my voice; I will give you advice, and God be with you! You shall represent the people before God and bring their cases to God, 20 and you shall warn them about the statutes and the laws, and make them know the **way** in which they must walk and what they must do. 21 Moreover, look for able men from all the people, men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe, and place such men over the people as chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. 22 And let them judge the people at all times. Every great matter they shall bring to you, but any small matter they shall decide themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. 23 If you do this, God will direct you, you will be able to endure, and all this people also will go to their place in peace."

-v.13 What was one of Moses' jobs? _____

-v.16 What did Moses teach those with disputes? _____

-v.17-18 Why did Jethro say Moses' plan wasn't good? _____

-v.20 What was Moses to teach and show the people? _____

-v.21 What kind of men would qualify to help Moses? _____

-v.23 What important point does Jethro make (all the organizing in the world won't help if Who doesn't allow it)? _____

Something to Think About: Clearly Moses had a tough job leading this new nation while they were on their way to the Promised Land! What I especially love is his understanding that disputes can only be settled God's way. He uses God's decrees and laws as the bottom line as to how to live and why. Jethro also has a very val-

id concern. Proper delegation can be a blessing to many (as long as the people chosen are also using God's Word for wisdom and direction).

Pray for your pastor and others who lead folks in Bible studies, Sunday School classes, and other ministries! Pray for your deacons! Your Bible teachers! Your missionaries! Your musicians! Your fellow church members! Others who are serving the Lord faithfully in other parts of our country and world!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Monday, August 1, 2022

-Prayer Time! Be sure to pause before opening God's Word so that you can ask Him for insight, understanding, and clear direction how to use what you discover to help you be becoming more like Christ, to be an encouragement to other believers, and to tell the unsaved all that God has done, is doing, and will do in the eons to come.

-Read Exodus 33:12-17 (v.13 ways)

"Moses said to the Lord, 'See, you say to me, 'Bring up this people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my sight.' 13 Now therefore, if I have found favor in your sight, please show me now your **ways**, that I may know you in order to find favor in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people.' 14 And he said, 'My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.' 15 And he said to him, 'If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here. 16 For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?' 17 And the Lord said to Moses, 'This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name.'"

-v.12 Who is Moses speaking to? _____

-God had told Moses that He knows him by _____ and that Moses had found _____ on His sight.

-v.13 Moses asked God to show him His _____.

-Why? "That I may _____"

-v.17 Did God agree to keep His presence with the Israelites (and Moses)? _____

-Why? "for you have found _____ in My sight and I know you _____."

Something to Think About: Do you remember being in elementary school and finding a new friend? One of the standard things that you do is to find out a bit about them. You want to know their name, if they have a favorite color, what are the games they like to play or the snacks they like to eat. Later on, in high school, say, we not only want to know the same things, but we also want to know what makes that person tick. What's important to them? What is their view on various hot topics? Later still, if it was God's design for you to marry and you have met "THE ONE," you are even more intent on digging deep into the soul of that other person so

that you can discover who they really are at their core.

If knowing special friends and family members deeply and well is important to us, how much MORE should we be laboring to learn about our Father in heaven and our Savior? Far from being some boring, dry search of facts, digging into Scripture to find out exactly WHO God is and what He's all about ought to be a delightful passion, something we yearn to do every single day.

But, what if it isn't? What if our devotions are a bit stale and less-than-fun for us? Well, the first thing all of God's children should consider when life is a bit "wrong" is if there is some sin in our life. This sin could be a sin of commission (something we are doing that God wants us to stop) - or- a sin of omission (something God wants us to begin doing but we haven't). Simply praying and asking Him to point this out to us is usually all that is needed. The Holy Spirit will use Scripture and/or the counsel of a mature believer to point us in the right direction. Once we are sure that we are in a good standing with God, then the answer might be as simple as switching up how we are doing our devotions. There are many, many different ways to study the Bible and it can be super useful to change what you are doing from time to time. If you would like a list of several options to choose from, email me and I will send them to you (it would take forever to list them all here!).

Moses' request to learn of God's ways was fulfilled in Exodus 34:6,7 (look it up!). He learned that God is compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to the thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion, and sin. What a God we serve!

Maybe right now would be a great time to stop and thank God for Who He is and that He knows YOU by name.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, August 2, 2022

-Prayer Time! Be sure to pause before opening God's Word so that you can ask Him for insight, understanding, and clear direction how to use what you discover to help you be becoming more like Christ, to be an encouragement to other believers, and to tell the unsaved all that God has done, is doing, and will do in the eons to come.

-Read Deuteronomy 5:22-33 (v.33 way)

"These words the Lord spoke to all your assembly at the mountain out of the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, with a loud voice; and he added no more. And he wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me. 23 And as soon as you heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, you came near to me, all the heads of your tribes, and your elders. 24 And you said, 'Behold, the Lord our God has shown us his glory and greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire. This day we have seen God speak with man, and man still live. 25 Now therefore why should we die? For this great fire will consume us. If we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, we shall die. 26 For who is there of all flesh, that has heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of fire

as we have, and has still lived? 27 Go near and hear all that the Lord our God will say, and speak to us all that the Lord our God will speak to you, and we will hear and do it.' 28 "And the Lord heard your words, when you spoke to me. And the Lord said to me, 'I have heard the words of this people, which they have spoken to you. They are right in all that they have spoken. 29 Oh that they had such a heart as this always, to fear me and to keep all my commandments, that it might go well with them and with their descendants forever! 30 Go and say to them, "Return to your tents." 31 But you, stand here by me, and I will tell you the whole commandment and the statutes and the rules that you shall teach them, that they may do them in the land that I am giving them to possess.' 32 You shall be careful therefore to do as the Lord your God has commanded you. You shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. 33 You shall walk in all the way that the Lord your God has commanded you, that you may live, and that it may go well with you, and that you may live long in the land that you shall possess."

-v.22 Describe what it was like when God gave Moses and the people the ten commandments.

-v.24 What had God shown them? _____

-v.25-27 The people wanted Moses to be their spokesman, fearing that if they heard God personally, they would all _____.

-v.28 Did God hear them? _____

-v.29 What was God's wish concerning the people? _____

-v.32 Moses and the people were to be careful to do _____ the Lord commanded, not _____ to the right or left.

-v.33 You shall walk in _____ the _____ that the Lord your God has commanded you.

Something to Think About: Can you identify specific days that were turning points in your life? Certainly, high school graduation qualifies—as does your first job, marriage, the birth of a child, and so forth. There are other turning points, though, those that speak to our character, life goals, and the reason for doing what we do (and why we DON'T do what we refuse to do). They, of course, should be based on what God tells us is good and what is evil. Every human, in fact, should have a Mt. Sinai moment like the Children of Israel did—one in which we fully "get" Who God is and how absolutely essential it is to "fear" Him, to keep His commands, and to maintain a close relationship to Him.

We are not Moses, of course, nor are we Israel. God doesn't have the same relationship with us as He did with them. He has not promised health, wealth, and well-being when we are living obediently according to His Word to believers in the church age. However, we do have other promises. Obedience keeps our walk with God vibrant, fruitful, and joyful. It causes God to be pleased with us and proud of us. It promotes peace, joy, and a clear direction. It also brings rewards and treasures in heaven and throughout eternity!

Having a right view of God and choosing to obey Him, please Him, and bring Him glory is ALWAYS the right decision!

PS The first 21 verses of Deuteronomy 5 are the Ten Commandments. If we want to know a bit more about what God's "ways" look like, they're a very useful list to reference regularly. These commandments were given to the Jews, and they are not in effect for church age believers. However, the underlying character of God that they reveal does not change. For example, the commands to "have no other god before Me" and "you shall not make for yourself any carved image" demonstrate the principle that God alone—Jehovah, the God of the Bible—is the only true and living God, and He alone is worthy of worship, trust, and devotion. This principle runs through both the Old Testament and the New Testament. So even though the Ten Commandments were specifically for the Jews in the Old Covenant relationship they had with God, the PRINCIPLE, the character of God that lies behind those commands, is timeless.

In addition, the New Testament puts great focus on our heart. God wants us to obey, true, but He also wants us to do it out of love for Him and a desire to please Him, not merely to conform to external rules. If we focus solely on doing the external behaviors while our hearts are far from the Lord, we are hypocrites!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, August 3, 2022

-Prayer Time! Be sure to pause before opening God's Word so that you can ask Him for insight, understanding, and clear direction how to use what you discover to help you be becoming more like Christ, to be an encouragement to other believers, and to tell the unsaved all that God has done, is doing, and will do in the eons to come.

-Read Deuteronomy 10:12-22 (v.12 ways)

"And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I am commanding you today for your good? 14 Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it. 15 Yet the Lord set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day. 16 Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn. 17 For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. 18 He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. 19 Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. 20 You shall fear the Lord your God. You shall serve him and hold fast to him, and by his name you shall swear. 21 He is your praise. He is your God, who has done for you these great and terrifying things that your eyes have seen. 22 Your fathers went down to Egypt seventy persons, and now the Lord your God has made you as numerous as the stars of heaven."

-v.12-13 What five things does Moses tell the people that God requires? _____

-v.14 What belongs to God? _____

-Re-read God's amazing attributes in v.17-21 and what our response should be. Jot down one or two that especially blessed or challenged you. _____

Something to Think About: I'm kind of a big fan of knowing what the rules are. You see, it seems unfair to be unhappy with someone's behavior because they are behaving in a way that is contrary to what you know is right if no one ever told them the rules. How could they know? How could they understand that there is a right way and a wrong way? They couldn't, of course.

I was trying to think of an occasion where I was placed in some situation and expected to act a certain way, but no one told me what the expectations were. The only big example I could think of from recent years is thanks to my 5-year-old granddaughter. She invited me to play a game involving corn bags, a board with a hole, and HER RULES. Unfortunately for me, the rules were pretty fluid and mostly involved her getting all the points and me getting none. =>

It's pretty much impossible to do well at something if there are not rules and parameters. That's one of the

many reasons we can be SO THANKFUL for our Bibles! God has given us all sorts of do's and don'ts. This passage alone lists a bunch (including to walk in God's "ways"). But, better than school rules, better than a list of job requirements, better than clear directions as to how a game is played, God's requirements are BECAUSE HE LOVES US. They are for OUR GOOD. Isn't that wonderful!

Furthermore, the One Who made the rules CHOSE to love us PERSONALLY. He is the ONLY true God, He is The Great, The Mighty, The Awesome God Who executes justice, cares for the needs of those often overlooked or neglected, and provides all our needs physically and spiritually.

When we consider Who our God is and all He has done for us, is doing for us, and will yet do for us throughout eternity, how could we NOT praise His name and walk in all His ways!

BONUS:

-Micah 6:8 also lists some of what God requires.

-To circumcise the heart is to set it apart for God's use (the most important things to you, your deepest desires, your life's goals and ambitions); to be becoming holy as God is holy.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Thursday, August 4, 2022

-Prayer Time! Be sure to pause before opening God's Word so that you can ask Him for insight, understanding, and clear direction how to use what you discover to help you be becoming more like Christ, to be an encouragement to other believers, and to tell the unsaved all that God has done, is doing, and will do in the eons to come.

-Read Judges 2:11-23 (v.17, 19, 22 way)

"And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals. 12 And they abandoned the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. They went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed down to them. And they provoked the Lord to anger. 13 They abandoned the Lord and served the Baals and the Ashtaroth. 14 So the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he gave them over to plunderers, who plundered them. And he sold them into the hand of their surrounding enemies, so that they could no longer withstand their enemies. 15 Whenever they marched out, the hand of the Lord was against them for harm, as the Lord had warned, and as the Lord had sworn to them. And they were in terrible distress. 16 Then the Lord raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those who plundered them. 17 Yet they did not listen to their judges, for they whored after other gods and bowed down to them. They soon turned aside from the way in which their fathers had walked, who had obeyed the commandments of the Lord, and they did not do so. 18 Whenever the Lord raised up judges for them, the Lord was with the judge, and he saved them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge. For the Lord was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who afflicted and oppressed them. 19 But whenever the judge died, they turned back and were more corrupt than their fathers, going after other gods, serving them and bowing down to them. They did not drop any

of their practices or their stubborn **ways**. 20 So the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he said, “Because this people have transgressed my covenant that I commanded their fathers and have not obeyed my voice, 21 I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations that Joshua left when he died, 22 in order to test Israel by them, whether they will take care to walk in the **way** of the Lord as their fathers did, or not.” 23 So the Lord left those nations, not driving them out quickly, and he did not give them into the hand of Joshua.”

-v.11 The people of Israel did what was _____ in the sight of the Lord.

-v.12 They _____ the Lord.

-v.13 They abandoned God in order to serve _____

-v.14-15 What was God’s punishment? _____

-v.16 How did God show mercy? _____

-v.17 Did this turn the people back to Him? _____

-v.18-19 Summarize the period of the Judges: _____

Something to Think About: Israel was severely punished because they chose to forsake God and the “way” of obedience to His commands and instead worshiped the various “gods” of the people around them.

We may not have a statue of Chemosh the false god of the Moabites in our backyard, but it’s good to ask the question: are we any different when we watch “popular” TV shows or listen to the world’s music—or any number of things that the “people around us” say is perfectly fine—even though we know it doesn’t please God?

It is a very good plan to periodically analyze our habits to find out who we are REALLY worshiping. This helps us differentiate between our stated theology and our practical theology. That is, what we SAY we believe v. what our actions actually show.

Discouraged? Don’t be! One of the biggest blessings about recognizing areas of sin is that there is a solution (unlike the world’s therapies or diagnoses which offer no real hope). Sin can be confessed and done away with. The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, then helps us to turn our backs on it and, instead, turn TOWARD God, doing what pleases Him—walking in all His “ways.” God gave mercy to the Israelites all those years ago—and He gives it to us, too, when we turn to Him and ask for help to love Him better. God DELIGHTS in helping His children grow more and more faithful!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Friday, August 5, 2022

-Prayer Time! Be sure to pause before opening God’s Word so that you can ask Him for insight, understanding, and clear direction how to use what you discover to help you be becoming more like Christ, to be an en-

couragement to other believers, and to tell the unsaved all that God has done, is doing, and will do in the eons to come.

-Read I Samuel 8:1-22 (v.3,5 ways)

“When Samuel became old, he made his sons judges over Israel. 2 The name of his firstborn son was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba. 3 Yet his sons did not walk in his **ways** but turned aside after gain. They took bribes and perverted justice. 4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah 5 and said to him, “Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your **ways**. Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations.” 6 But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, “Give us a king to judge us.” And Samuel prayed to the Lord. 7 And the Lord said to Samuel, “Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them. 8 According to all the deeds that they have done, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you. 9 Now then, obey their voice; only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them.” 10 So Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who were asking for a king from him. 11 He said, “These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen and to run before his chariots. 12 And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. 13 He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. 14 He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants. 15 He will take the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants. 16 He will take your male servants and female servants and the best of your young men and your donkeys, and put them to his work. 17 He will take the tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. 18 And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the Lord will not answer you in that day.” 19 But the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, “No! But there shall be a king over us, 20 that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.” 21 And when Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the ears of the Lord. 22 And the Lord said to Samuel, “Obey their voice and make them a king.” Samuel then said to the men of Israel, “Go every man to his city.”

- v.3 In what ways did Samuel’s sons not live like him? _____
- v.5 What did the people want? _____
- v.6 Where did Samuel go for wisdom? _____
- v.7 What was God’s answer? _____
- Why did the people really want a king? _____
- v.19 Did the people listen to Samuel’s warning? _____
- v.20 Who did they want to be like? _____

Something to Think About: Following in the footsteps of our parents ought to be a good thing. But what if they weren’t obeying God wholeheartedly? What if they obeyed God in some areas, but disregarded His Word in others?

I kind of doubt any of us would be stumped for too long with this question, especially when we’ve spent day after day looking at the command to follow God’s ways fully. We can take and use the good while choosing a better “way” for all the areas that weren’t in line with Scripture. In addition, whether or not our parents are saved or not, living wholeheartedly for God or not, we still must show respect. We must still show biblical love. God doesn’t make mistakes, so His choice of your parents for you is JUST RIGHT. Thank Him. Honor Him by honoring your parents.

Perhaps a more important question to ask about now is this: what sort of example are WE living? Whether we are married or single, parents or not, we ALL have people in our lives whom we can influence for the Lord in word and deed, but also in attitude. Whether we interact with these folks on a daily basis—or are only ever seen from afar—we can live in such a way as to reflect the light of Jesus Christ. We can walk the way He walked—which will demonstrate God’s characteristics and glory. We can choose to “only do the will of the Father,” demonstrating our complete dependence on God in the here and now and for our eternity. Who knows who will see us and want to know more about God or see us and want to be more faithful in their own walk? We don’t know, but God does!

P.S. The Israelites, the very people God had chosen to bless and call His own, rejected Him, instead choosing

to be just like their lost and troubled neighbors. Are you, child of God, “just like” your neighbors? Have you rejected God’s way in order to fulfill your own desires? The only path to genuine peace and joy is the one that leads to the only genuine God.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Saturday, August 6, 2022

-Prayer Time! Be sure to pause before opening God’s Word so that you can ask Him for insight, understanding, and clear direction how to use what you discover to help you be becoming more like Christ, to be an encouragement to other believers, and to tell the unsaved all that God has done, is doing, and will do in the eons to come.

-Read II Samuel 22:22-33 (v. 22, 31, 33 way)

“For I have kept the **ways** of the Lord and have not wickedly departed from my God. 23 For all his rules were before me, and from his statutes I did not turn aside. 24 I was blameless before him, and I kept myself from guilt. 25 And the Lord has rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to my cleanness in his sight. 26 “With the merciful you show yourself merciful; with the blameless man you show yourself blameless; 27 with the purified you deal purely, and with the crooked you make yourself seem tortuous. 28 You save a humble people, but your eyes are on the haughty to bring them down. 29 For you are my lamp, O Lord, and my God lightens my darkness. 30 For by you I can run against a troop, and by my God I can leap over a wall. 31 This God—his **way** is perfect; the word of the Lord proves true; he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him. 32 “For who is God, but the Lord? And who is a rock, except our God? 33 This God is my strong refuge and has made my **way** blameless.”

-v.22 What did David keep? _____

-v.25 The Lord rewarded David according to his _____

-v.26 Who does God show mercy to? _____

-v.28 What is God’s view of arrogance? _____

-v.29 God is our _____ and He _____ our darkness.

-v.31 What is true about God’s way? _____

-God’s word proves _____

-v.33 God’s way is _____

Something to Think About: Among other things, the way of the Lord is to show mercy. Mercy is, of course, withholding some punishment or outcome that someone deserves; that they have “earned.”

When considering mercy, our first thought ought always be to consider the many and constant ways our Father shows mercy to US, then to desire to pass on the blessing. I cannot even count the number of times I did something stupid or said something unkind—only to not be punished or humiliated for my foolishness. How thankful I am for that! Should I then go on to point out someone else’s mistake or not give them grace to not make a big deal over something they did that was thoughtless or rude? That wouldn’t seem quite right!

Thoughtfully, prayerfully, and gratefully consider these Bible verses addressing mercy:

“But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.” Luke 6:35-36

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.” Matthew 5:7

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.” Matthew 23:23

“Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” Hebrews 4:16

“The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.” Lamentations 3:22-23

“But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.” Titus 3:4-5

“The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.” Psalm 103:8

“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.” Ephesians 2:4-5

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Sunday, August 7, 2022

-Prayer Time! Be sure to pause before opening God’s Word so that you can ask Him for insight, understanding, and clear direction how to use what you discover to help you be becoming more like Christ, to be an encouragement to other believers, and to tell the unsaved all that God has done, is doing, and will do in the eons to come.

-The Books of I & II Kings are all about the leaders who walked in the ways of God and those who didn’t. Place a checkmark to indicate which kings pleased God and which didn’t.

King:

Walked in God's way:

Did NOT:

David (I Kings 3:14) _____
Solomon (I Kings 11:31-33) _____
Jeroboam (I Kings 13:33) _____
Nadab (I Kings 15:25,26) _____
Baasha (I Kings 15:33,34) _____
Zimri (I Kings 16:15,19) _____
Omri (I Kings 16:25,26) _____
Jehoshaphat (I Kings 22:41-43) _____
Ahaziah (I Kings 22:51,52) _____
Joram (II Kings 8:16-18) _____
Ahaz (II Kings 16:1-3) _____
Amon (II Kings 21:19-22) _____
Josiah (II Kings 22:1,2) _____

Something to Think About: I guess with all the “did not’s” checked, the “dids” stand out even more. I especially love Josiah’s story: only eight years old and he refused to turn aside to the right or the left. We need to pray for the children we know and mentor them, encouraging them to stay true to God.

We don’t know why so many names of mothers are recorded along with the names of the kings, but it is likely that their influence in the lives of their sons was great—some for good, some for evil. I hardly need to point out the obvious application here! Mothers and grandmothers, how are you influencing your children for God?

We, of course, cannot stop there! We KNOW that we ARE witnesses all the time to everyone simply by living our lives. Choosing to think and act in keeping with God’s Word will make us good witnesses (notice I didn’t say “perfect”!), living for self and reacting “just like” most people around us will send a wrong message, one that will not turn people to the only Source of true hope help, Jesus Christ.

BONUS: I didn’t really have a godly grandmother growing up. I did, however, have a parade of godly men and women who invested in me as I grew. Many impacted me in huge ways, but if I had to choose just one, it would probably be my youth director. God blessed me with his Bible teaching and godly counsel from age 12-17, and I attribute my NOT running away from godly living once I graduated from High School and entered the workforce at age 17 (even when the temptation was great) to the grounding he gave us kids in God’s Word. Take a moment to thank God for the brothers and sisters in Christ whom He used to help YOU learn, grow, and better honor God in your life!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Monday, August 8, 2022

-Prayer Time! Be sure to pause before opening God’s Word so that you can ask Him for insight, understanding, and clear direction how to use what you discover to help you be becoming more like Christ, to be an en-

couragement to other believers, and to tell the unsaved all that God has done, is doing, and will do in the eons to come.

-Read Job 23:10-14 (v.10,11 way)

“But he knows the **way** that I take; when he has tried me, I shall come out as gold. 11 My foot has held fast to his steps; I have kept his **way** and have not turned aside. 12 I have not departed from the commandment of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my portion of food. 13 But he is unchangeable, and who can turn him back? What he desires, that he does. 14 For he will complete what he appoints for me, and many such things are in his mind.”

- v.10 What does God always know about us? _____
- What is the outcome of Job’s being tested? _____
- v.11 Job says that his _____ has held fast to God’s steps and he has kept God’s _____.
- v.12 What did Job treasure more than the food? _____
- v.13 What God desires, He _____.
- v.14 God will _____ what He has appointed for His children.

Something to Think About: Job was in a tough spot. He had been extremely wealthy with a large and happy family, then in a blink, it was all gone. Unlike many people, Job didn’t rant and rave at God, he accepted that what is given to us and removed is God’s job—and no one can do God’s job right except God.

If that were the end of Job’s trials, he would still be sorrowful at the loss of his children (God understands our sorrow, after all, He watched His Son die a brutal death on the cross!), but he seemed to understand that at the core of life, God is good and all He does is for His glory and for our good, and in this he was comforted and at peace.

Sadly, Job’s friends came to help. And by “help,” I mean that they came to force him to admit that he must have sinned and that was why the various tragedies happened. The problem is that Job knew he hadn’t sinned. In fact, in today’s passage, he expressed confidence that God knows his heart and if he were to undergo an examination, he would come out as gold. That is, without defect or impurity (he, of course, didn’t mean sinless—just that he had confessed all sin and was not currently allowing sin to remain in his life).

Job had committed to keeping his “feet” (remind you of Psalm 119???) on God’s path, choosing to line up his thoughts and deeds with God’s Word. In fact, he said that he TREASURED God’s Word—even more than the food that his body required to stay alive! Job, too, expresses confidence (and maybe a bit of awe) that what God wills to happen WILL HAPPEN.

What an excellent example to all of us living these thousands of years later! We can react exactly as Job did when hard things come into our lives. We can, first, make sure that we are living faithfully according to God’s Word and doing away with anything that doesn’t please or honor God. We can then CHOOSE to remember what is TRUE: God is good, all that God does is good. In this, we can rejoice and in this, we can find tremendous comfort and direction. We can, along with Job, praise God for what He gives—and for what He takes away. Blessed be the Name of our LORD!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, August 9, 2022

-Prayer Time! Be sure to pause before opening God's Word so that you can ask Him for insight, understanding, and clear direction how to use what you discover to help you be becoming more like Christ, to be an encouragement to other believers, and to tell the unsaved all that God has done, is doing, and will do in the eons to come.

-Read Psalm 1:1-6 (v.1, 6, way)

"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the **way** of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; 2 but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. 4 The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; 6 for the Lord knows the **way** of the righteous, but the **way** of the wicked will perish."

-v.1 List the three actions that will lead to blessing: _____

-v.2 How does the blessed person feel about God's Word? _____

-What does he do with it? _____

-v.3 To what is he compared? _____

-v.6 What does God watch over (know)? _____

Something to Think About: Read this short psalm again. It is packed full of important truths:

-There is great joy in obeying God and refusing to listen to those who ridicule or discredit Him.

-God doesn't judge people on race or sex, but on the basis of their faith in Him and their obedience to His Word.

-We can learn how to please God by meditating on His Word. The more we know of His Word, the more help we will have in our daily struggles.

-The more we delight in obeying God, the more faithful we will be. On the other hand, the more we allow the world to affect our thoughts and attitudes, the more we separate ourselves from our Source of nourishment.

-If you want to despair, spend time with mocking sinners. If you want to be blessed, make friends with those who love God and His Word.

What else did the Holy Spirit impress upon YOU from this wonderful little psalm? Let me know! Tell HIM!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, August 10, 2022

-Prayer Time! Be sure to pause before opening God's Word so that you can ask Him for insight, understanding, and clear direction how to use what you discover to help you be becoming more like Christ, to be an encouragement to other believers, and to tell the unsaved all that God has done, is doing, and will do in the eons to come.

-Read Psalm 5:1-12 (v.8 way)

"Give ear to my words, O Lord; consider my groaning. 2 Give attention to the sound of my cry, my King and my God, for to you do I pray. 3 O Lord, in the morning you hear my voice; in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for you and watch. 4 For you are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil may not dwell with you. 5 The boastful shall not stand before your eyes; you hate all evildoers. 6 You destroy those who speak lies; the Lord abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man. 7 But I, through the abundance of your steadfast love, will enter your house. I will bow down toward your holy temple in the fear of you. 8 Lead me, O Lord, in your righteousness because of my enemies; make your **way** straight before me. 9 For there is no truth in their mouth; their inmost self is destruction; their throat is an open grave; they flatter with their tongue. 10 Make them bear their guilt, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; because of the abundance of their transgressions cast them out, for they have rebelled against you. 11 But let all who take refuge in you rejoice; let them ever sing for joy, and spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may exult in you. 12 For you bless the righteous, O Lord; you cover him with favor as with a shield."

-v.1,2 What are the different ways David addresses God in prayer? _____

-v.3 When is he praying? _____

-v.4-6 List a few things God hates: _____

-v.7 What does David say is the reason he gets to enter God's House? _____

-v.8 Summarize David's prayer _____

-v.11 What brings gladness and joy? _____

Something to Think About: I have to confess that I'm not much of a board game fan. Oh, if you can convince me to play, I usually enjoy it, but it may be a challenge to get me to agree. That being said, I'm aware that an awfully lot of games have paths as an important part of the game. Take a classic, Candyland, for example. You start your journey on the path to the delightful Candy Castle, passing fun things like lollipop forests, gumdrop mountains, and peppermint passes. These are all fun (and so pretty!), BUT there are also unpleasant things like molasses pits and penalty squares that slide you back and mess up your goal to get to the castle!

Why am I blathering on about that? It's the paths, of course! Psalm 119:105 says that God's Word will be a light to our path—and I think that King David figured that out. He is able to list clearly the things that God hates—and the things that He values, loves, and rewards. How did he find all that out? He studied God's Word! Interestingly, you and I have in our possessions FAR more Scripture than David ever did. He only had portions of the Old Testament (he didn't have the Psalms—because he wrote many of them!). Yet, what he DID have was enough for him to know how to live in a God honoring way.

We can do what David did so that we walk the path that pleases and honors God. In fact, David's prayer here (and in many other psalms) is a good pattern for our own prayers. We can talk to God about what He loves and hates and commit to Him to be a woman or man after His own heart. What a privilege! What an honor!

Let's all commit together to walk the path that God wants, not getting distracted by the lollipop forests OR the sticky molasses pits! Let's keep our eye on the Castle, that is, the Throne Room of God. It is there we will find help, comfort, encouragement, and hope.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Thursday, August 11, 2022

-Prayer Time! Be sure to pause before opening God's Word so that you can ask Him for insight, understanding, and clear direction how to use what you discover to help you be becoming more like Christ, to be an encouragement to other believers, and to tell the unsaved all that God has done, is doing, and will do in the eons to come.

-Read Psalm 16:1-11 (v.11 path)

"Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge. 2 I say to the Lord, "You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you." 3 As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight. 4 The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply; their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out or take their names on my lips. 5 The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. 6 The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance. 7 I bless the Lord who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. 8 I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. 9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. 10 For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption. 11 You make known to me the **path** of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

-v.1 Who is our refuge? _____

-v.2 Who is our only "good thing"? _____

-v.7 What is David's response to how wonderfully God has taken care of him? _____

-v.8 What kept David from being shaken? _____

-v.9 What other benefits come from a close walk with God? _____

-v.11 What three blessings can we praise God for? _____

Something to Think About: This Psalm actually has some Messianic prophecy in it—with some great doctrine, but let's address verse 11 since it is talking about paths. David (the author of this psalm) is praising God the Father for allowing him to recognize the path of life. He further identifies what's so wonderful about it by rejoicing that there is fullness of joy IN God's presence. In other words, true joy will not be found anywhere or with anyone besides GOD. We sure need to be reminded of this often in our instant-gratification society!

In addition, there are "pleasures forevermore" in God's presence ("at Your right hand"). Simply put, God is a limitless Source of what is good, wonderful, delightful, pleasurable, and joyful. Add whatever adjectives you want, just know those of us who belong to God because we have trusted in Jesus Christ as our Savior are blessed beyond measure right this very second—and every second for all of eternity!

Let's be praying for one another to NEVER stray from the path that focuses on pleasing and obeying God, that keeps us as close as possible to His presence! We say we "want the best" for our loved ones—and nothing is better than that!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Friday, August 12, 2022

-Prayer Time! Be sure to pause before opening God's Word so that you can ask Him for insight, understanding, and clear direction how to use what you discover to help you be becoming more like Christ, to be an encouragement to other believers, and to tell the unsaved all that God has done, is doing, and will do in the eons to come.

-Read Psalm 25:1-12 (v.4, 8, 9, 10, 12 ways/path)

"To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. 2 O my God, in you I trust; let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies exult over me. 3 Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame; they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous. 4 Make me to know your **ways**, O Lord; teach me your **paths**. 5 Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long. 6 Remember your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. 7 Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of your goodness, O Lord! 8 Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in the **way**. 9 He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his **way**. 10 All the **paths** of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies. 11 For your name's sake, O Lord, pardon my guilt, for it is great. 12 Who is the man who fears the Lord? Him will he instruct in the **way** that he should choose."

-v.2 Who is the only One worth all our trust? _____

-v.3 Who won't be put to shame? _____

-v.4 Make me to know You _____, O Lord; teach me Your _____.

-v.5 Lead me in Your _____.

-v.6 What two traits has God always had? _____

-v.8 Why does God bother to instruct sinners in the way to live? _____

-v.9 Who does God teach His way? _____

-v.10 All the paths of the Lord are _____

-v.12 Who else does God instruct in His way? _____

Something to Think About: I am slightly adjusting Psalm 25 so that we can make it extremely personal. Recite it as a prayer of commitment, gratitude, and praise to God.

To You, O Lord, I lift up my soul. O my God, in You I trust; let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies exult over me. I know that when I wait for You, I won't be put to shame (help me to do that!).

Make me to know Your **ways**, O Lord; teach me Your **paths**. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; for You I wait all the day long.

Remember Your mercy, O Lord, and Your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to Your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of Your goodness, O Lord!

Because You are good and upright, Lord, You instruct Me (a sinner!) in the **way**. You lead the humble in

what is right, and teach them Your **way**. All Your **paths**, Lord, are steadfast love and faithfulness, so help me to keep Your covenant and testimonies.

For Your name's sake, O Lord, pardon my guilt, for it is great.

When I live in proper fear of You, Lord, You will instruct me in the **way** that I should choose.

Thank You, Father!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Saturday, August 13, 2022

-Prayer Time! Be sure to pause before opening God's Word so that you can ask Him for insight, understanding, and clear direction how to use what you discover to help you be becoming more like Christ, to be an encouragement to other believers, and to tell the unsaved all that God has done, is doing, and will do in the eons to come.

-Read Psalm 32:1-11 (v.8 way)

"Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. 3 For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. 4 For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Selah 5 I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah 6 Therefore let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found; surely in the rush of great waters, they shall not reach him. 7 You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance. Selah 8 I will instruct you and teach you in the **way** you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you. 9 Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding, which must be curbed with bit and bridle, or it will not stay near you. 10 Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the Lord. 11 Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!"

-v.1 What is the psalmist thankful for? _____

-v.3-4 How did the psalmist describe his guilty conscience? _____

-v.5 What was the solution? _____

-How does God respond when we confess our sin to Him? _____

-v.8 What was being taught? _____

-v.9 Being unwilling to be taught or to turn from sin is likened to what animal? _____

-v.10 What surrounds the one who trusts in the Lord? _____

-v.11 Who is able to rejoice and shout for joy? _____

Something to Think About: I found myself standing extremely uncomfortably in a straight line with three of my sisters, a brother, and a few friends facing my angry mother. My head was lowered so that I didn't have to make eye contact with her. What was she doing? She was holding up a child's bathrobe that had a round burn hole in it. "Who put this robe on the lightbulb?" she asked. "You could have burned the house down! This was foolish and very dangerous. Which of you did it?" I hung my head a bit lower, dreading what I knew I had to do. I had to confess. "It was me," I murmured. All heads swiveled to me—happy that they were no longer in the hot seat.

I don't really remember if I got a spanking or not. I was little and my mother realized that I didn't really understand that putting thin cloth on a hot lightbulb was a bad idea. I was just playing a game! What I DO remember, however, is the feeling I had when the truth came out and I no longer needed to feel sick with dread because of guilt.

All these decades later, I STILL understand the unpleasant feeling a person gets when they know that they have done something wrong and that it needs to be made right. NO FUN. BUT, all these decades later, I ALSO still appreciate the peace and lightness that comes once my sin is confessed and forgiven. It's a wonderful thing—and like the psalmist, my praise goes to my Heavenly Father. He is my Hiding Place, He shows me the right way to go, His steadfast love (*hesed*) surrounds me. I am glad in the Lord and I rejoice!

The Bible teaches that confession is agreeing with God that He is right and we are wrong (that what we did was sin—not a mistake, poor judgment, or something not-that-important). Confessing our sin to God also indicates our plan to forsake it, and pursue instead, following God's ways more faithfully. When we do, He forgives and does not hold our sin against us (I John 1:9). In fact, He surrounds us with His unfailing love. What a God we serve! Praise His name!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Sunday, August 14, 2022

-Prayer Time! Be sure to pause before opening God's Word so that you can ask Him for insight, understanding, and clear direction how to use what you discover to help you be becoming more like Christ, to be an encouragement to other believers, and to tell the unsaved all that God has done, is doing, and will do in the eons to come.

-Read Psalm 37:5-7; 23-34 (v.5, 7, 23, 34 way)

"Commit your **way** to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act. 6 He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday. 7 Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his **way**, over the man who carries out evil devices! . . . 23 The steps of a man are established by the Lord, when he delights in his **way**; 24 though he fall, he shall not be cast headlong, for the Lord upholds his hand. 25 I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread. 26 He is ever lending generously, and his children become a blessing.

27 Turn away from evil and do good; so shall you dwell forever. 28 For the Lord loves justice; he will not forsake his saints. They are preserved forever, but the children of the wicked shall be cut off. 29 The righteous shall inherit the land and dwell upon it forever. 30 The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks justice. 31 The law of his God is in his heart; his steps do not slip. 32 The wicked watches for the righteous and seeks to put him to death. 33 The Lord will not abandon him to his power or let him be condemned when he is brought to trial. 34 Wait for the Lord and keep his way, and he will exalt you to inherit the land; you will look on when the wicked are cut off.”

-Summarize the verses that use the word “way”:

- v.5 _____
- v.7 _____
- v.23-24 _____
- v.34 _____

Something to Think About: Psalm 37 is a (Hebrew) alphabetic acrostic poem in that every other line begins with a succeeding letter of the Hebrew alphabet (Psalm 119, you may remember, is also an alphabetic acrostic poem). What is the theme of this psalm? The wicked will not get away with their wickedness forever—and the righteous will be rewarded in God’s timing and way. Though the unsaved and disobedient may SEEM to do well, only those who faithfully serve and obey God will do “well” throughout eternity.

Of course, when we are reading the Old Testament, especially passages directed specifically to Israel, there may not be a New Testament correlation to those of us living in the Church Age (the dispensation that is happening right now). Old Testament Israel was promised physical and financial blessings when they lived obediently according to God’s Word—and harsh punishment when they didn’t. The blessings and rewards that those of us living in the Church Age receive are peace in the midst of trials, joy in the face of hardship, and multiple rewards that will be revealed when we get to glory. Nonetheless, Psalm 37 has some pretty important reminders and encouragement:

- God blesses and directs the way of those who choose to live according to His Word.
- Godly living is bright like the noonday light in God’s view.
- It is not our job to fuss and fret about the evil and evildoers around us. Our role is to trust God and wait patiently for Him to deal with all of it.
- God directs each step of those who delight to live the way He wants us to.
- With age, we are able to see more and more of how God has taken care of His people and how He has never failed us.
- All those who belong to God will live eternally. Those who have rejected Him will die eternally.
- Simply living moment by moment trusting God to handle every problem, every challenge, every trial, brings peace and comfort in the here and now and great riches in glory.

-You and the Lord:

- Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

- What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

- What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

- Today’s top few prayer requests:

Monday, August 15, 2022

-Prayer Time! Be sure to pause before opening God's Word so that you can ask Him for insight, understanding, and clear direction how to use what you discover to help you be becoming more like Christ, to be an encouragement to other believers, and to tell the unsaved all that God has done, is doing, and will do in the eons to come.

-Read Psalm 67:1-7 (v.2 ways)

"May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, Selah 2 that your **way** may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations. 3 Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! 4 Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth. Selah 5 Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! 6 The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, shall bless us. 7 God shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth fear him!"

-Copy this short psalm:

Something to Think About: I recently had a visit from my just-turned-three granddaughter. She's at that fun age where she likes to help (and CAN do actual helpful things!). Her sister had a birthday during the visit and it became Christina's job to throw away the wrapping paper as the gifts were opened. Most people would wait until they got a stack, then deliver them to the trash all at once. Not Christina! She happily took every small piece one at a time to the trash, running there and back again. When she came back, I would say, "Good job, Christina!" to which her little face would beam with joy.

Why do I bring this up? Well, no matter how old each of us are physically, we should have this same joy when given the opportunity to do things for our Heavenly Father—be they big and "important" things, or simple, humble tasks. We should NEVER lose the tremendous joy of getting to do something for GOD. And when we do? God the Father's face shines upon us. What bliss! What delight!

Another HUGE privilege is to be able to tell others about our Father. It is His desire, in fact, that we who have received His mercy and grace share Him with our family, friends, co-workers, and all He brings into our lives. He wants us to tell others about His marvelous ways. The whole world praising God is how it should be. Let's get started on that today!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, August 16, 2022

-Prayer Time! Be sure to pause before opening God's Word so that you can ask Him for insight, understanding, and clear direction how to use what you discover to help you be becoming more like Christ, to be an encouragement to other believers, and to tell the unsaved all that God has done, is doing, and will do in the eons to come.

-Read Psalm 86:8-13 (v.11 way)

"There is none like you among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like yours. 9 All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name. 10 For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God. 11 Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name. 12 I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify your name forever. 13 For great is your steadfast love toward me; you have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol."

-v.8 There is _____ like you among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like yours.

-v.9 All the nations you have made shall come and _____ before you, O Lord, and shall _____ your name.

-v.10 For you are _____ and do _____ things; you alone are God.

-v.11 Teach me _____, O Lord, that I may walk in your _____; unite my heart to fear your name.

-v.12 I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my _____ heart, and I will glorify your name

_____.

-v.13 For great is your _____ toward me; you have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol."

Something to Think About: Have you ever wanted to learn a new skill? Perhaps it's a craft like knitting or an art like tole painting. Maybe you want to get really good at baking bread or sewing your own clothes. All I know is that it doesn't make sense to ask a world-renown baker to help you figure out the difference between knitting and pearling, nor does it make sense to ask the gal who teaches the tole painting class how to get your bread firm, yet moist. If we want to know the tricks and techniques about any given subject, it makes sense to go to the person who is experienced and knows their craft well.

Similarly, if we want to know what a book is all about—its purpose, the goal of the author, the hidden gems to find along the way, who better to go to than the author of that book? He or she is the only one who truly knows what they wrote, how, and why. So, if we want to plum the depths of the Bible, why WOULD'N'T we ask God for help??? David does exactly that in Psalm 86. He prays, "Teach me your way, O Lord." David wanted to live exactly the way God wanted him to—and knew he needed God's help and direction to do so. He also asked God to help him not be wishy-washy (divided) in his loyalties. He knew giving God the reverence due Him would help him in his obedience.

And when God does, indeed, teach us, lead us, and bless us, what should our reaction be? Praise ("There is none like you, O Lord!"), glorify Him ("You are great and do wondrous things!"), give thanks ("I give thanks to You, O Lord my God, with my whole heart.").

Prayerfully and carefully reread this Scripture, committing to better know God's way in your own life so that you can obey Him better and better.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, August 17, 2022

-Prayer Time! Be sure to pause before opening God's Word so that you can ask Him for insight, understanding, and clear direction how to use what you discover to help you be becoming more like Christ, to be an encouragement to other believers, and to tell the unsaved all that God has done, is doing, and will do in the eons to come.

-Read Psalm 103:1-22 (v.7 ways)

'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! 2 Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, 3 who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, 4 who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, 5 who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. 6 The Lord works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed. 7 He made known his **ways** to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel. 8 The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. 9 He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. 10 He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. 11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; 12 as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. 13 As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him. 14 For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust. 15 As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field; 16 for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more. 17 But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children, 18 to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments. 19 The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all. 20 Bless the Lord, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, obeying the voice of his word! 21 Bless the Lord, all his hosts, his ministers, who do his will! 22 Bless the Lord, all his works, in all places of his dominion. Bless the Lord, O my soul!"

-This Psalm is loaded with reasons to bless the Lord. Choose 4 verses to summarize:

-verse _____

-verse _____

-verse _____

-verse _____

Something to Think About: When you are feeling low, re-read this psalm. It will help you count your blessings and name them one by one.

Count Your Blessings, by Johnson Oatman

1 When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.

Refrain:

Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your blessings, see what God hath done;
Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your many blessings, see what God hath done.

2 Are you ever burdened with a load of care?
Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear?
Count your many blessings, ev'ry doubt will fly,
And you will be singing as the days go by. [Refrain]

3 When you look at others with their lands and gold,
Think that Christ has promised you His wealth untold;
Count your many blessings, money cannot buy
Your reward in heaven, nor your home on high. [Refrain]

4 So, amid the conflict, whether great or small,
Do not be discouraged, God is over all;
Count your many blessings, angels will attend,
Help and comfort give you to your journey's end. [Refrain]

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

The next few days we will be looking for "way" in Psalm 119. Remember that in the Hebrew language, this psalm is an alphabetic poem—each section begins with the next letter in the Hebrew alphabet. The theme of this psalm is love for the Bible and its Author, God. The focus of the reader is to believe God and His Word, love God and His Word, and to obey everything God tells us. (We aren't looking at every section of Psalm 119, just the ones with "way" or "path" in them.)

Thursday, August 18, 2022

-Prayer Time! Be sure to pause before opening God's Word so that you can ask Him for insight, understanding, and clear direction how to use what you discover to help you be becoming more like Christ, to be an encouragement to other believers, and to tell the unsaved all that God has done, is doing, and will do in the eons

to come.

-Read Psalm 119:1-8 “ALEPH” (the letter “A” in the Hebrew alphabet) (v. 1, 3, 5 ways)

“Blessed are those whose **way** is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord! 2 Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart, 3 who also do no wrong, but walk in his **ways**! 4 You have commanded your precepts to be kept diligently. 5 Oh that my **ways** may be steadfast in keeping your statutes! 6 Then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all your commandments. 7 I will praise you with an upright heart, when I learn your righteous rules. 8 I will keep your statutes; do not utterly forsake me!”

-v.1 Who is blessed? _____

-v.2 Who is blessed? _____

-v.3 How do they walk? _____

-v.4 How does God expect us to obey Him? _____

-v.5 What is a great prayer concerning our ways (lifestyle/habits)? _____

-v.7 What is the response to learning about God’s righteous laws? _____

Something to Think About: Verse 8 finishes this section with a promise to obey God. This is, in fact, what God requires of us. As parents, adults/grown-ups, etc, we expect to be obeyed when we tell someone under our authority what to do. There is joy in our hearts when that individual responds to our directions with joy and enthusiasm rather than a sour look—or worse yet, refusing to comply at all! God, our Father, is also pleased when we joyfully obey the guidelines He has set down for us. They are, after all, for our good and His glory.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Friday, August 19, 2022

-Prayer Time! Be sure to pause before opening God’s Word so that you can ask Him for insight, understanding, and clear direction how to use what you discover to help you be becoming more like Christ, to be an encouragement to other believers, and to tell the unsaved all that God has done, is doing, and will do in the eons to come.

-Read Psalm 119:9-16 “BETH” (v. 9 way)

“How can a young man keep his **way** pure? By guarding it according to your word. 10 With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! 11 I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. 12 Blessed are you, O Lord; teach me your statutes! 13 With my lips I declare all the rules of your mouth. 14 In the way of your testimonies I delight as much as in all riches. 15 I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways. 16 I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word.”

- v.9 What does living according to God's Word accomplish? _____
- v.11 What does hiding God's Word in our hearts accomplish? _____
- v.13 What should we do with what God has taught us? _____
- v.14 To what does the psalmist compare obedience to God's Word? _____
- v.15 Is thinking about Scripture important? _____

Something to Think About: What can YOU do with the nifty things you are learning about God from His Word?

- Tell others!
- Share by way of testimony time at church.
- Use it to encourage someone who may be facing hardship.
- Thank Him.
- Praise Him.
- Give Him glory.
- Make lengthy lists about what you're learning.
- Note how specific verses help you to choose to not sin.
- Memorize it!
- Pray about them.
- Write a poem about them/God.
- Write a song about them/God.
- Draw a picture expressing your appreciation.

In a nutshell? Use your words to talk about our amazing God in as many ways and to as many people as God gives you opportunity—today, and every day of your life.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Saturday, August 20, 2022

-Prayer Time! Be sure to pause before opening God's Word so that you can ask Him for insight, understanding, and clear direction how to use what you discover to help you be becoming more like Christ, to be an encouragement to other believers, and to tell the unsaved all that God has done, is doing, and will do in the eons to come.

-Read Psalm 119:25-32 "DALETH" (v.26, 29, 30, 32 ways, path)

"My soul clings to the dust; give me life according to your word! 26 When I told of my **ways**, you answered me; teach me your statutes! 27 Make me understand the **way** of your precepts, and I will meditate on your wondrous works. 28 My soul melts away for sorrow; strengthen me according to your word! 29 Put false **ways** far from me and graciously teach me your law! 30 I have chosen the **way** of faithfulness; I set your rules before me. 31 I cling to your testimonies, O Lord; let me not be put to shame! 32 I will run in the way of your commandments when you enlarge my heart!"

- v.26 What does the psalmist desire? _____
- v.27 What does he meditate on? _____
- v.28 When weary, what strengthens us? _____
- v.29 What needs to be avoided at all cost? _____
- v.30 What is the only right choice? _____

Something to Think About: I have loved verse 30 for many years, “*I have chosen the way of faithfulness; I set your rules before me.*” (CSB)

Basically put, in a dark, dark world—where the “rules” seem to change as often as our seasons - it is a tremendous comfort to look to God and God’s Word as our Source of truth and stability. The Bible not only provides facts and information, it gives us the reason behind how we are to live (and not live) and the end-point of our faith. With this understanding, how could we do anything BUT CHOOSE to be faithful to God and to live in the “faithful way” (according to what He has said is good, right, and true)? In order to live faithfully, we NEED to place God’s Word directly before us. We need, as the NIV says, to “set our heart” on all it says.

This is, of course, not a random decision nor an impetuous declaration. This is a somber and determined commitment to God. It is a NECESSARY commitment in order to fully please God and to be used by Him in what we say and do.

Have you made a commitment such as Psalm 119:130 in your life? Prayerfully consider doing this after slowly reading and thinking about this verse in these other translations.

“I have chosen to be faithful; I have determined to live by your regulations.” (NLT)

“I have chosen the faithful way; I have placed Your ordinances before me.” (NASB 95)

“I have chosen the faithful way; I have firmly placed your ordinances before me.: (ISV)

“I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid before me.” (KJV)

“I have chosen the way of faithfulness; I have set my heart on your laws.” (NIV 84)

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Sunday, August 21, 2022

-Prayer Time! Be sure to pause before opening God’s Word so that you can ask Him for insight, understanding, and clear direction how to use what you discover to help you be becoming more like Christ, to be an encouragement to other believers, and to tell the unsaved all that God has done, is doing, and will do in the eons

to come.

-Read Psalm 119:33-40 “HE” (v. 33, 35, 37 way, path)

“Teach me, O Lord, the **way** of your statutes; and I will keep it to the end. 34 Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart. 35 Lead me in the **path** of your commandments, for I delight in it. 36 Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to selfish gain! 37 Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your **ways**. 38 Confirm to your servant your promise, that you may be feared. 39 Turn away the reproach that I dread, for your rules are good. 40 Behold, I long for your precepts; in your righteousness give me life!”

-The psalmist asks God for something in these verses. What is it?

-v. 33

-v.34

-v.35

-v.36

-v.37

-v.38

-v.39

-v.40

Something to Think About: My grandchildren are finally getting old enough to begin to tell me some things about themselves—and to ask me a few questions about my thoughts and actions. It’s kind of fun to see them begin to think of people beyond themselves and to be cognizant enough to realize that things happen in other people’s lives besides their own. I’ll bet God is delighted when we, His children, begin to mature in our faith and our prayers become requests to know Him better. We’re pretty good at asking God for creature comforts (much like my little granddaughters are VERY good at asking me for treats!), but perhaps a regular practice of asking God for help to understand His Word and obey it would be a bigger blessing in our lives.

P.S. Sunday morning, especially, is a great time to pray and ask God to not only help you be a good listener, but to pray for the preacher and all who will be in attendance that day; that God’s Word be made clear and that people take it in and use it to become more Christlike.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Monday, August 22, 2022

-Prayer Time! Be sure to pause before opening God’s Word so that you can ask Him for insight, understanding, and clear direction how to use what you discover to help you be becoming more like Christ, to be an encouragement to other believers, and to tell the unsaved all that God has done, is doing, and will do in the eons to come.

-Read Psalm 119:57-64 “HETH” (v.59 ways)

“The Lord is my portion; I promise to keep your words. 58 I entreat your favor with all my heart; be gracious to me according to your promise. 59 When I think on my ways, I turn my feet to your testimonies; 60 I hasten and do not delay to keep your commandments. 61 Though the cords of the wicked ensnare me, I do not forget your law. 62 At midnight I rise to praise you, because of your righteous rules. 63 I am a companion of all who fear you, of those who keep your precepts. 64 The earth, O Lord, is full of your steadfast love; teach me your statutes!”

- v.58 What is the right amount of commitment to God? _____
- v.59 What has the psalmist considered? _____
- What was the result? _____
- v.60 Did he put off his commitment? _____
- v.61-62 Did he let the people around him mess with his focus on God? _____
- v.63 Who are his “companions”? _____
- v.64 The earth is full of God’s _____.

Something to Think About: I am often amazed to see how quickly I turn aside from promises made to God. It is easy for our focus to be distracted by schedules, friends, and the world around us. Like the psalmist, we must make a serious commitment, begin to follow it immediately, and refuse to allow anything or anyone to distract us. Is there some promise you made to God you haven’t followed through on? “*I will HASTEN and NOT delay to obey Your commands.*”

I also appreciated verse 63 in this section, the very practical reminder that our true friends must be those who are also serious about living faithfully for God and who have a right view of Him. Oh, we can have acquaintances, co-workers, and relatives whom we enjoy and like, but the people who are our deepest friends, the ones who understand what’s truly important in life, need to have a rock-solid relationship with God too. And when we have a friend (or more!) who loves God the same way this psalmist does, then the sky is the limit about what we can do for Him and others and all the “steadfast love” that we will be able to observe, appreciate, and thank God for!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, August 23, 2022

-Prayer Time! Be sure to pause before opening God’s Word so that you can ask Him for insight, understanding, and clear direction how to use what you discover to help you be becoming more like Christ, to be an encouragement to other believers, and to tell the unsaved all that God has done, is doing, and will do in the eons to come.

-Read Psalm 119:97-104 “MEM” (v. 101, 104 path)

“Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day. 98 Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies, for it is ever with me. 99 I have more understanding than all my teachers, for your testimonies are my

meditation. 100 I understand more than the aged, for I keep your precepts. 101 I hold back my feet from every evil way, in order to keep your word. 102 I do not turn aside from your rules, for you have taught me. 103 How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! 104 Through your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way.”

- What does the psalmist love in verse 97? _____
- What does he hate in verse 104? _____
- Why? _____
- What has he determined to do in verse 101? _____

Something to Think About: God’s Word both brings together and divides. It brings together serious students of the Word in their commitment to learn more so as to honor God more. It divides serious students of the Word from the world and its wicked ways—and from lackadaisical or wayward believers. Just look at Jesus’ words in Matthew 10:34-39,

“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”

What do you love and hate? Using verse 101 “I hold back my feet from every evil way, in order to keep Your word,” seems like an extremely useful frame of reference when we are faced with the dozens of decisions we need to make every day.

- Will we read that website or ex out of it because it contains things that will not please or honor God?
- Will we follow the advice of that celebrity we admire or will we find out what God says about that topic?
- Will we dress in a way that is trendy and fashion forward or will we make it our priority to choose to wear what is first and foremost modest and befitting a daughter of the King?
- Will we eat junk food all day (because we love it) or choose foods that we know will nourish and take care of the body God has given to us?

Why we do what we do is essential. Loving God will help us avoid “every false way.”

-You and the Lord:

- Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

- What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

- What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

- Today’s top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, August 24, 2022

-Prayer Time! Be sure to pause before opening God’s Word so that you can ask Him for insight, understanding, and clear direction how to use what you discover to help you be becoming more like Christ, to be an encouragement to other believers, and to tell the unsaved all that God has done, is doing, and will do in the eons to come.

-Read Psalm 119:105-112 “NUN” (v. 105 path)

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my **path**. 106 I have sworn an oath and confirmed it, to keep your righteous rules. 107 I am severely afflicted; give me life, O Lord, according to your word! 108 Accept my freewill offerings of praise, O Lord, and teach me your rules. 109 I hold my life in my hand continually, but I do not forget your law. 110 The wicked have laid a snare for me, but I do not stray from your precepts. 111 Your testimonies are my heritage forever, for they are the joy of my heart. 112 I incline my heart to perform your statutes forever, to the end.”

-Write out verse 105: _____

-What commitment has the psalmist made in the following verses?

-v.106 _____
-v.109 _____
-v.110 _____

Something to Think About: Do you try to remember to pray each and every morning to commit your day to God and ask for His help to please Him and obey Him? This is a great thing to do!

Verse 112 is a great example for us. The NIV translates it like this, “*My heart is set on keeping Your decrees to the very end.*” It is not uncommon to hear people say, “My heart is set on...” Seldom, however, does the sentence finish with a desire to obey God—and/or to obey God every single day of our life! What a wonderful thing!

I wonder? If you hadn’t just read this—and someone asked you to finish this sentence, “My heart is set on. . .” What would your answer have been? On getting thinner? On finishing a book? On getting a better career? On chasing down the dust bunnies under your bed? These are all important things, but first and foremost—ALWAYS—a child of God needs to learn to have our hearts set on obeying God’s Word, pleasing God moment by moment, and bringing Him glory in all we say and do.

(P.S. When we use the Bible as the lamp for our feet and the light for our path, we will be able to do just that!)

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Thursday, August 25, 2022

-Prayer Time! Be sure to pause before opening God’s Word so that you can ask Him for insight, understanding, and clear direction how to use what you discover to help you be becoming more like Christ, to be an encouragement to other believers, and to tell the unsaved all that God has done, is doing, and will do in the eons to come.

-Read Psalm 119:161-168 “SHIN” (v.168 ways)

“Princes persecute me without cause, but my heart stands in awe of your words. 162 I rejoice at your word like one who finds great spoil. 163 I hate and abhor falsehood, but I love your law. 164 Seven times a day I praise you for your righteous rules. 165 Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble. 166 I hope for your salvation, O Lord, and I do your commandments. 167 My soul keeps your testimonies; I love them exceedingly. 168 I keep your precepts and testimonies, for all my ways are before you.”

- v.162 God’s Word is compared to finding great _____
- v.165 What gives great peace? _____
- v.167 Why obey God’s Laws? _____
- v.168 Does God know our actions? _____

Something to Think About: Once upon a time, in a land far away, people didn’t know the intimate daily happenings of complete strangers. And then came the internet. . .

Don’t you find it pretty troubling just how much personal information people show the world on social media? Oh, to be sure, there’s all sorts of helpful information, interesting happenings, and scores of “random acts of kindness” to appreciate. But by and large, people seem okay with just anyone seeing “all their ways.”

Of course, even this “too much information” age is STILL limited. No one is being watched 24/7. That is, no one is being observed every second the way GOD is able to do. Psalm 119:168 reminds us that ALL our ways are before God. This could be scary and alarming, but only if we have chosen a life of disobedience and sin. If we belong to God (by believing in Jesus Christ as the Savior from our sin), then it is a JOY and DELIGHT to know that God is watching us and seeing our desire to please Him and make Him smile! This reminds me a little bit of how children are eager to gain the approval of the adults they love. Recently, my granddaughters came for a visit and there were six days of “Grandma, look at this!” and “Grandma, watch what I can do!” And I oohed and aahed over everything, bringing smiles of pleasure to their little faces.

God the Father enjoys seeing us CHOOSE to stand in awe of His Words, to rejoice at His Word like we found a great treasure, to hate everything evil and false, but love His Word. He enjoys seeing us come to love a Bible verse and take it to heart, allowing it to change our thinking—even discovering peace in the midst of a hard day and some “ammunition” to keep us from stumbling or giving up.

All your ways ARE before the Lord. What is He seeing? What are OTHERS seeing in your attitudes and actions?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Friday, August 26, 2022

-Prayer Time! Be sure to pause before opening God’s Word so that you can ask Him for insight, understand-

ing, and clear direction how to use what you discover to help you be becoming more like Christ, to be an encouragement to other believers, and to tell the unsaved all that God has done, is doing, and will do in the eons to come.

-Read Psalm 125:1-5 (v.5 ways)

“Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever. 2 As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds his people, from this time forth and forevermore. 3 For the scepter of wickedness shall not rest on the land allotted to the righteous, lest the righteous stretch out their hands to do wrong. 4 Do good, O Lord, to those who are good, and to those who are upright in their hearts! 5 But those who turn aside to their crooked **ways** the Lord will lead away with evildoers! Peace be upon Israel!”

- v.1 Describe those who trust in the Lord: _____
- v.2 What is God’s surrounding love compared to? _____
- v.3 Will the wicked always be among us? _____
- v.4 “Do _____, O Lord, to those who are _____, and to those who are _____ in their hearts.”
- v.5 What is the punishment for those who turn to crooked ways? _____

Something to Think About: Though this psalm references Old Testament Israel, the New Testament is full of parables and stories that teach in no uncertain terms that faithful living will be rewarded and unfaithful living will have serious consequences—even into eternity. This is basically what the psalmist is telling his listeners in Psalm 125. Trusting God and living obediently for Him brings many blessings, including feeling secure as if surrounded by huge mountains that cannot be scaled. AND, even if the wicked were to take over the land, none will have it forever—because God has promised that the only rightful King, the only **RIGHTEOUS** King, King Jesus, **WILL** sit on the throne in Jerusalem one day and **NONE** can defeat Him. Ever. There is no more secure place for our trust than God Almighty!

So, while this psalm points out there are consequences to living a life that dishonors God, a better focus is to be excited and encouraged to live in a way that pleases God so that we can enjoy the many benefits He gives to His faithful children both now and throughout eternity (peace being a biggie, as the last verse points out).

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Saturday, August 27, 2022

-Prayer Time! Be sure to pause before opening God’s Word so that you can ask Him for insight, understanding, and clear direction how to use what you discover to help you be becoming more like Christ, to be an encouragement to other believers, and to tell the unsaved all that God has done, is doing, and will do in the eons to come.

-Read Psalm 138:1-8 (v.5 ways)

"I give you thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart; before the gods I sing your praise; 2 I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word. 3 On the day I called, you answered me; my strength of soul you increased. 4 All the kings of the earth shall give you thanks, O Lord, for they have heard the words of your mouth, 5 and they shall sing of the **ways** of the Lord, for great is the glory of the Lord. 6 For though the Lord is high, he regards the lowly, but the haughty he knows from afar. 7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and your right hand delivers me. 8 The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands."

- v.1 I give you thanks, O Lord, with my _____; before the gods I sing your _____.
- v.2 I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your _____ and your _____, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word.
- v.3 On the day I called, _____.
- v.4 All the kings of the earth shall give you _____, O Lord, for they have heard the words of your mouth,
- v.5 and they shall sing of the **ways** of the Lord, for _____ is the glory of the Lord.
- v.6 For though the Lord is high, he regards the _____, but the haughty he knows from afar.
- v.7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and your right hand _____ me.
- v.8 The Lord _____ fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands."

Something to Think About: Use Psalm 138 to thoughtfully question your prayer life.

- Is your praise to God whole hearted? (v.1)
- Who do YOU sing praises to God in front of? (v.2) (DO you sing praises to God???)
- What are some of the attributes of God you most praise Him for? Why? (v.3)
- Who has heard God's words (Scripture) from your mouth? What was the result? (v.4)
- How is God's great glory a blessing to you personally? (v.5) Give examples.
- In what way might our prayers show arrogance and how can we reword them to be more humble? (v.6)
- List some examples of how God has saved you from trouble—both physically and spiritually. How have you thanked Him? (v.7)
- Contemplate ways you have grown spiritually. Thank God for His steadfast love in this regard and ask Him to help you come to resemble His Son more and more every day. (v.8)

What else about this psalm causes you to praise God or seek His help to honor Him even better in the days to come?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Sunday, August 28, 2022

-Prayer Time! Be sure to pause before opening God's Word so that you can ask Him for insight, understanding, and clear direction how to use what you discover to help you be becoming more like Christ, to be an encouragement to other believers, and to tell the unsaved all that God has done, is doing, and will do in the eons to come.

-Read Psalm 139:1-24 (v.3, 24 path, way)

"O Lord, you have searched me and known me! 2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. 3 You search out my **path** and my lying down and are acquainted with all my **ways**. 4 Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether. 5 You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it. 7 Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? 8 If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! 9 If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, 10 even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. 11 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night," 12 even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you. 13 For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. 14 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. 15 My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. 16 Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them. 17 How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! 18 If I would count them, they are more than the sand. I awake, and I am still with you. 19 Oh that you would slay the wicked, O God! O men of blood, depart from me! 20 They speak against you with malicious intent; your enemies take your name in vain. 21 Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord? And do I not loathe those who rise up against you? 22 I hate them with complete hatred; I count them my enemies. 23 Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! 24 And see if there be any grievous **way** in me, and lead me in the **way** everlasting!"

- v.3 What is God familiar with? _____
- v.4 Is God's knowledge of what we say limited to only the spoken word? _____
- v.7-12 Can we hide from God? _____
- v.23,24 "Search me, O God, and know my _____; try me and know my _____! And see if there be _____ grievous way _____ me, and lead me in the _____ everlasting."

Something to Think About: This beloved psalm is a prayer for God to thoroughly examine our hearts and see its true devotion. When our loyalty is firmly planted in God, it is our joy to have Him examine every minute thought and motivation to the end that all "grievous ways" be thoroughly and utterly removed. Is your heart completely God's?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Monday, August 29, 2022

-Prayer Time! Be sure to pause before opening God's Word so that you can ask Him for insight, understanding, and clear direction how to use what you discover to help you be becoming more like Christ, to be an encouragement to other believers, and to tell the unsaved all that God has done, is doing, and will do in the eons to come.

-Read Psalm 142:1-7 (v.3 way)

"With my voice I cry out to the Lord; with my voice I plead for mercy to the Lord. 2 I pour out my complaint before him; I tell my trouble before him. 3 When my spirit faints within me, you know my **way**! In the **path** where I walk they have hidden a trap for me. 4 Look to the right and see: there is none who takes notice of me; no refuge remains to me; no one cares for my soul. 5 I cry to you, O Lord; I say, "You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living." 6 Attend to my cry, for I am brought very low! Deliver me from my persecutors, for they are too strong for me! 7 Bring me out of prison, that I may give thanks to your name! The righteous will surround me, for you will deal bountifully with me."

- v.1,2 Who does David turn to when distressed? _____
- v.3 Why (what does God know)? _____
- v.5 Why does David call on God? _____
- v.7 How will David respond to God's help? _____

Something to Think About: Here is a reminder that God is our only refuge and our only true source of genuine help. This psalm demonstrates that God is okay with us being completely open and honest with Him about our circumstances, our emotions, and what is going on in our minds and hearts. He already knows everything at any given moment, but He desires for us to communicate and commune with Him in prayer. As we do so, leaning hard on His mighty power and His tender mercy, we come to realize, again, that He cares, even if no one else seems to. He's got answers, even if we are utterly stymied. How blessed we are to have the God of Creation, the Almighty, the Alpha and Omega help us, direct us, comfort us, and provide a place of refuge!

P.S. When someone turns to us for help and advice, be sure to turn them to God too. Then, together, you will be able to praise Him and thank Him for His goodness.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, August 30, 2022

-Prayer Time! Be sure to pause before opening God's Word so that you can ask Him for insight, understanding, and clear direction how to use what you discover to help you be becoming more like Christ, to be an encouragement to other believers, and to tell the unsaved all that God has done, is doing, and will do in the eons to come.

-Read Psalm 145:1-21 (v.17 ways)

“I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever. 2 Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever. 3 Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable. 4 One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts. 5 On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate. 6 They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds, and I will declare your greatness. 7 They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness and shall sing aloud of your righteousness. 8 The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. 9 The Lord is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made. 10 All your works shall give thanks to you, O Lord, and all your saints shall bless you! 11 They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom and tell of your power, 12 to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. 13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations. [The Lord is faithful in all his words and kind in all his works. 14 The Lord upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down. 15 The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. 16 You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing. 17 The Lord is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works. 18 The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. 19 He fulfills the desire of those who fear him; he also hears their cry and saves them. 20 The Lord preserves all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy. 21 My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord, and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever.”

-Summarize what these verses say about our amazing God:

-v.3

-v.4

-v.5

-v.6

-v.7

-v.8

-v.9

-v.14

-v.18

-v.17 “The Lord is _____ in _____. His ways and _____ in all his works.”
-v.21 “_____ mouth will speak the _____ of the Lord, and let _____ flesh bless his holy name forever and ever.”

Something to Think About: What an encouraging psalm! Hey, did you know that it is kind of fun to write your own poem? There are lots of ways you could do this. One way is to pick a word (faithful, loving, mercy, etc.) and use its letters—or use the alphabet and write something that gives honor to God to fit each letter. For example, “Faith” might become:

For
All
I
Trust
Him
(Try one of your own—a poem/psalm of praise to God!)

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, August 31, 2022

-Prayer Time! Be sure to pause before opening God's Word so that you can ask Him for insight, understanding, and clear direction how to use what you discover to help you be becoming more like Christ, to be an encouragement to other believers, and to tell the unsaved all that God has done, is doing, and will do in the eons to come.

-Read Psalm 146:1-10 (v.9 ways)

"Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul! 2 I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being. 3 Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation. 4 When his breath departs, he returns to the earth; on that very day his plans perish. 5 Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God, 6 who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, who keeps faith forever; 7 who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free; 8 the Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous. 9 The Lord watches over the sojourners; he upholds the widow and the fatherless, but the **way** of the wicked he brings to ruin. 10 The Lord will reign forever, your God, O Zion, to all generations. Praise the Lord!"

-What phrase begins and ends this psalm? _____

-v.2 How long should we praise God? _____

-Why praise God according to verse 6? _____

-v.7 Why praise God? _____

-v.8 Why praise God? _____

-v.9 Why praise God? _____

-v.10 Why praise God? _____

Something to Think About: Who doesn't like to hear a word of praise! A "well done" on some project you worked hard at? A "You look nice" when you have a new outfit on? A "Thanks for doing that!" when we helped someone with some project? Being thanked—and thanking others is always a good thing.

But, doesn't the most praise belong to GOD? Isn't He the TRUE Giver of all that is good? Of course! But, because God is ever, always gracious and merciful and kind, when we praise Him, we also receive many benefits.

-Praise takes our minds off our problems and shortcomings and helps us focus on God.

-Praise causes us to think about God and appreciate His character.

-Praise helps us prepare our hearts for learning and growing.

-Praise helps us trust in God (and recognize the pointlessness of trusting in people or things).

-Praise helps us have a light heart and a confidence in the future.

-Praise helps us to "see" more clearly and accurately; to discern what is God's truth v. satan's lies.

-Praise reminds us that we belong to God FOREVER—and His mercies never, ever end!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Thursday, September 1, 2022

-Pray before beginning to read Scripture to ask the Father to help you concentrate, understand His words, and apply them to your life to make you more and more like His Son.

-Read Psalm 23:1-6 (v.3 path)

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. 3 He restores my soul. He leads me in **paths** of righteousness for his name's sake. 4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

-v.1 Why do we never need to feel we are in "want"? _____

-v.2-3 What does Jesus provide so that we don't need to live an anxious "needy" life? _____

-v.4 Who escorts us safely and joyfully? _____

-v.5-6 What blessings does God provide for us now and into eternity? _____

Something to Think About: Have you ever played "follow the leader?" Of course you have! One person gets to be the leader and the job of everyone else is to do exactly what they do, how they do it. While this game COULD be a great learning game as far as spiritual truth, the childhood version of this usually involves the leader making his or her followers do silly, hard, or even dangerous things (which I suppose can be a spiritual lesson on choosing our leaders wisely!).

Jesus, the Great Shepherd, is the only true and 100% reliable Leader. His direction is always right/righteous, good (with no evil purposes EVER), and true (no falsehoods, no misdirections). In fact, rebelling against His leading is placing ourselves in a dangerous place. In other words, it's definitely in our best interest to live GOD'S way.

Verse 3 uses our word "path." When we obey Jesus and follow Him, He leads us in paths of righteousness, that is a life that is "right" with God and pleasing to Him. Further, His path is the one that brings peace, contentment, and the joy of obedience. It is when we determine to go our "own way" that we become discontent, needy, and disheartened.

Whose path are you on? What about your attitude and behavior proves or disproves it?

(Further Reading: John 10:11; Hebrews 3:20; I Peter 5:4)

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Friday, September 2, 2022

-Pray before beginning to read Scripture to ask the Father to help you concentrate, understand His words, and apply them to your life to make you more and more like His Son.

-Review Time! Look back on your work on the word "path" by either reviewing the lessons beginning on July 30th or by reviewing this sampling of verses:

Exodus 33:12-13

"Moses said to the Lord, "See, you say to me, 'Bring up this people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my sight.' Now therefore, if I have found favor in your sight, please show me now your **ways**, that I may know you in order to find favor in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people."

Deuteronomy 10:12

"And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his **ways**, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul,"

Job 23:10

"But he knows the **way** that I take; when he has tried me, I shall come out as gold."

Psalms 1:1-2

"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the **way** of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night."

Psalms 16:11

"You make known to me the **path** of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

Psalms 25:8-12

"Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in the **way**. He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his **way**. All the **paths** of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies. For your name's sake, O Lord, pardon my guilt, for it is great. Who is the man who fears the Lord? Him will he instruct in the **way** that he should choose."

Psalms 86:11

"Teach me your **way**, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name."

Psalms 119:9

"How can a young man keep his **way** pure? By guarding it according to your word."

My Thoughts:

Something to Think About: God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. That is to say, it is our Source of wisdom and direction in order to know how to live a pleasing life before God. The Bible tells us exactly what God's "way" is: truth, holiness, mercy, righteousness—and so much more! The Bible tells us exactly what God requires of us in our daily walk: refusal to sin, daily use of His Word as our guide, trusting in Him without always knowing why, speaking in love, encouraging others to grow in Christ, telling of God's greatness to everyone, having a servant's heart—and so much more! The Bible also tells us a bit about the wonderful things God has in store for His faithful children both now and forever: joy in His presence, satisfaction of hearing "Well done," opportunities to serve Him in even bigger and better ways—and so much more! It is indeed "worth it all."

The following study is part 2 of a study of Bible references using the word "path." Its purpose is to help us better understand Psalm 119:105.

"Path" in the Bible may be translated as: road, trail, way, etc. It is often used for the surface used to walk or ride on, but it is used just as often to mean how we are living our life from day to day and/or the direction we are taking in life in general. The particular word for "path" in Psalm 119:105 seems to focus especially on a road that may be rough and hard to travel. This is to help us understand just how important God's Word is in our lives as His children. Without it, we will not be able to "see" the right path to take to avoid the dangers—just as if we are trying to walk in a forest in the pitch-black of night. With it, its light shines not only on the path that is right before our feet (what we need for today), but also the whole area around us (what we need for this lifetime and the one to come).

Thank God for His Word. Cherish it. Study it. Obey it. Follow the example of the author of Psalm 119 and praise God for it over and over.

Saturday, September 3, 2022

-Pray before beginning to read Scripture to ask the Father to help you concentrate, understand His words, and apply them to your life to make you more and more like His Son.

-Read Proverbs 1:8-33 (v.15, 19, 31 ways)

"Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and forsake not your mother's teaching, 9 for they are a graceful garland for your head and pendants for your neck. 10 My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent. 11 If they say, "Come with us, let us lie in wait for blood; let us ambush the innocent without reason; 12 like Sheol let us swallow them alive, and whole, like those who go down to the pit; 13 we shall find all precious goods, we shall fill our houses with plunder; 14 throw in your lot among us; we will all have one purse"—15 my son, do not walk in the **way** with them; hold back your foot from their paths, 16 for their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed blood. 17 For in vain is a net spread in the sight of any bird, 18 but these men lie in wait for their own blood; they set an ambush for their own lives. 19 Such are the **ways** of everyone who is greedy for unjust gain; it takes away the life of its possessors. 20 Wisdom cries aloud in the street, in the markets she raises her voice; 21 at the head of the noisy streets she cries out; at the entrance of the city gates she speaks: 22 "How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple? How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing and fools hate knowledge? 23 If you turn at my reproof, behold, I will pour out my spirit to you; I will make my words known to you. 24 Because I have called and you refused to listen, have stretched out my hand and no one has heeded, 25 because you have ignored all my counsel and would have none of my reproof, 26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when terror strikes you, 27 when terror strikes you like a storm and your calamity comes like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you. 28 Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently but will not find me. 29 Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord, 30 would have none of my counsel and despised all my reproof, 31 therefore they shall eat the fruit of their **way**, and have their fill of their own devices. 32 For the

simple are killed by their turning away, and the complacency of fools destroys them; 33 but whoever listens to me will dwell secure and will be at ease, without dread of disaster.”

- v.8 Who has God given to us to teach and instruct us? _____
- v.10 What must be our response to being enticed to sin? _____
- v.15 We must not set even one _____ on the path of sinners.
- v.23 What is wisdom’s response to those who listen? _____
- v.28 How about when wisdom is ignored? _____
- v.31 What awaits those who refuse to listen to wisdom? _____
- v.33 How about those who do listen? _____

Something to Think About: Biblically speaking, wisdom is defined as (in my own simple paraphrase) using God’s Word as the basis for what we do/don’t do - the decisions we make, how we dress—all of it. Pastor Brown has defined it as the skill of applying the knowledge of God to the affairs of everyday life. The opposite of this, NOT using God’s Word (especially deliberately) is what the Bible defines as being a fool (so, it’s not just someone who is silly, but someone who deliberately lives life on their own terms, disregarding God’s commands and direction).

The Book of Proverbs sometimes personifies wisdom. That is, it makes it sound like a person in order to make a point. What is that point? That living God’s way pleases and honors Him and living for self (according to the example and goals of the world and our own sin natures) leads to foolish decisions, sorrow, fear, regret, and a whole lot of heartache. Following God’s WAY, though, leads to light, to life, to comfort, to joy, to certainty about the future, to peace—and to the delight in knowing we are pleasing to God and are bringing Him glory.

I’ve heard pastors say that the worst thing God can do to us is to let us go our own way (v.25) or get what we ask for. This is because relying on our own wisdom brings far more pain and trouble than fulfillment. How much “wiser” to look for and follow God’s way!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Sunday, September 4, 2022

-Pray before beginning to read Scripture to ask the Father to help you concentrate, understand His words, and apply them to your life to make you more and more like His Son.

-Read Proverbs 2:1-15 (v.8, 12, 13, 15, 19, 20 way/path)

“My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, 2 making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; 3 yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, 4 if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, 5 then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. 6 For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding; 7 he stores up sound wisdom for the upright; he is a shield to those who walk in integrity, 8 guarding the paths of justice and watching over the way of his saints. 9 Then you will under-

stand righteousness and justice and equity, every good **path**; 10 for wisdom will come into your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul; 11 discretion will watch over you, understanding will guard you, 12 delivering you from the **way** of evil, from men of perverted speech, 13 who forsake the **paths** of uprightness to walk in the **ways** of darkness, 14 who rejoice in doing evil and delight in the perverseness of evil, 15 men whose **paths** are crooked, and who are devious in their **ways**.”

- v.1-5 What actions will help us understand the fear of the Lord? _____
- v.6 Who gives wisdom, knowledge, & understanding? _____
- v.9 What will wisdom help us understand? “every good _____”
- v.12 What will it save us from? _____
- v.13-15 Summarize the path of the wicked _____

Something to Think About: Because my grandchildren live quite a distance away from us, my husband and I don’t get to see them face to face as often as we might like. So we have tried to make each summer visit something special. This last year we (he!) built a pirate ship playhouse. To go with the theme, we also decided to bury some “treasure” for them. Of course, they loved the idea and couldn’t wait to get here to dig it up and find out what it was. I mean, after all, who doesn’t love a good treasure hunt, be it toys in the backyard, a special sale at our favorite store, or picking out just the right treat at Zebs!

Our Scripture for today also mentioned a treasure. This treasure, though, is wisdom—wisdom from God through His Word, the Bible. Say, do you consider your Bible a treasure chest stuffed full of wonderful and amazing things? It is! I think that those of us in the United States are especially prone to feeling a little blasé about owning a Bible in our own language, but even though it’s 2022, many people around the world still don’t have a Bible—and some entire groups of people do not have a Bible in their own language. We need to thank God every day for our Bibles—and use them.

- What is worth treasuring according to Proverbs 2:
- Understanding what it means to fear the Lord.
 - Finding knowledge about God.
 - Finding wisdom, knowledge, and understanding.
 - Understanding righteousness, justice, equity, and what constitutes a good path.
 - Discretion to guard against the wrong path—and so much more!

God IS wisdom and He both gives it to us freely AND tells us to search for it as if for hidden treasure—and what a glorious treasure hunt it is!

-You and the Lord:

- Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture: _____
- What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it? _____
- What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture? _____
- Today’s top few prayer requests: _____

Monday, September 5, 2022

-Pray before beginning to read Scripture to ask the Father to help you concentrate, understand His words, and apply them to your life to make you more and more like His Son.

-Read Proverbs 3:5-26 (v.6, 17, 23 way)

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. 6 In all your **ways** acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. . . 13 Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding, 14 for the gain from her is better than gain from silver and her profit better than gold. 15 She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her. 16 Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. 17 Her ways are **ways** of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. 18 She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her; those who hold her fast are called blessed. 19 The Lord by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding he established the heavens; 20 by his knowledge the deeps broke open, and the clouds drop down the dew. 21 My son, do not lose sight of these— keep sound wisdom and discretion, 22 and they will be life for your soul and adornment for your neck. 23 Then you will walk on your **way** securely, and your foot will not stumble. 24 If you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet. 25 Do not be afraid of sudden terror or of the ruin of the wicked, when it comes, 26 for the Lord will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being caught.”

-How is “way” used in these verses?

- v.6 _____
- v.17 _____
- v.23 _____
- v.13 What is a blessed thing to find? _____
- v.19 The Lord by _____ founded the earth; by _____ He established the heavens.
- v.20 by His _____ the deeps broke open , and the clouds drop down dew.
- v.21 What two things are we to keep? _____
- v.25-26 Why don’t we need to have fear? _____

Something to Think About: I’ve been on a handful of official tours of various locations and attractions in my life, but most pale in comparison to being led to amazing destination after amazing destination in the Holy Land close to 40 years ago. Having someone who has the skill and knowledge to lead our group safely around a foreign country was comforting, but more so was the appreciation of their knowledge and wisdom of God’s Word applied to the Bible places we visited. It was truly a life changing experience to see first hand the Sea of Galilee, the oasis that is Jericho, the magnificent walls of Jerusalem, and most amazing of all, the Garden Tomb where my Savior was laid in death and from which He rose again!

I read in some study notes that God Himself offers to be our Guide in the area of wisdom in this chapter of Proverbs. As the Author of wisdom, Who better to help us in our search of the “treasure” of wisdom!

God wants to show us the right paths to take to understand Who He is and how He thinks so that we can know how to think and act to be pleasing to Him, to bring Him glory—and to benefit ourselves in areas such as security, a lack of unreasonable fear, the right view of wickedness, and a confidence in how to best live our lives as children of the King.

It begins with trusting God completely, then looking to Him for direction, purpose, and ability. He will always be the perfect lamp for our feet and light for our path!

(Further Reading: James 1; Matthew 6:33)

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, September 6, 2022

-Pray before beginning to read Scripture to ask the Father to help you concentrate, understand His words, and apply them to your life to make you more and more like His Son.

-Read Proverbs 4:20-27 (v.11, 14, 19, 26 way/path)

"My son, be attentive to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. 21 Let them not escape from your sight; keep them within your heart. 22 For they are life to those who find them, and healing to all their flesh. 23 Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life. 24 Put away from you crooked speech, and put devious talk far from you. 25 Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you. 26 Ponder the **path** of your feet; then all your **ways** will be sure. 27 Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your foot away from evil."

-v.20 My son, be _____ to my words; _____ your ear to my sayings.

-v.21 Let them not escape from your _____; keep them within your _____.

-v.22 For they are _____ to those who find them, and healing to all their flesh.

-v.23 Keep your heart with all vigilance, for _____ flow the springs of life.

-v.24 _____ from you crooked speech, and put devious talk far from you.

-v.25 Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be _____ before you.

-v.26 _____ the path of your feet; then all your ways will be sure.

-v.27 Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your foot away from _____."

Something to Think About: Ears, eyes, flesh, heart, speech, feet. . . God wants all of us! While I am far from any sort of expert in anatomy and physiology, I've been interested in how our bodies work for pretty much my whole life. So much so, that I trained while in high school to be a nurses's aid, then later returned to school to become a surgical technician. These jobs gave me an opportunity to see parts of human bodies that most people don't see (spoiler alert: intestines are FREAKY!). So, while I might not understand how and why our bodies are able to do all the incredible things they can do (other than to say that God is the Master Architect), I do understand that when one part of our body fails in some way, other parts will suffer too. For example, when my knees began to deteriorate due to arthritis, my feet, hips, and back also suffered.

Why am I telling you all this? Because there are all sorts of spiritual correlations to physical ones! In order to live wholeheartedly for God, we need ALL of us to be involved. Even though we may *walk* away from a bar, if we let our *eyes* linger on an unwholesome website, our entire spiritual well-being will suffer. If we *speak* words of love and support, yet never step up and use our *hands*, *feet*, and wallets to help others with their challenges, our words mean nothing and are of no use.

At the core of our physical bodies and our spiritual life is our heart (closely connected to our brains). Together, these two organs keep the rest of us functioning. So, if we have heart disease, our circulation, our lungs, and our overall strength begins to fail. If we have a tumor in our brain, all sorts of body operations begin to go wackadoodle. When we don't fully love God and want to obey Him in every area in our heart, then our eyes, and ears, and feet—and all of us will begin to get into trouble.

There will be some stumbling and some falling (read the rest of Proverbs 4 to hear more about this!). BUT, when we as children of God are attentive to God's Word and guard our hearts against all that is ungodly, we will be able to walk God's path with confidence and joy, looking straight ahead into His pleased eyes.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, September 7, 2022

--Pray before beginning to read Scripture to ask the Father to help you concentrate, understand His words, and apply them to your life to make you more and more like His Son.

-Read **Proverbs 14:1-15** (v.2, 8, 12, 14 ways)

"The wisest of women builds her house, but folly with her own hands tears it down. 2 Whoever **walks** in uprightness fears the Lord, but he who is devious in his **ways** despises him. 3 By the mouth of a fool comes a rod for his back, but the lips of the wise will preserve them. 4 Where there are no oxen, the manger is clean, but abundant crops come by the strength of the ox. 5 A faithful witness does not lie, but a false witness breathes out lies. 6 A scoffer seeks wisdom in vain, but knowledge is easy for a man of understanding. 7 Leave the presence of a fool, for there you do not meet words of knowledge. 8 The wisdom of the prudent is to discern his **way**, but the folly of fools is deceiving. 9 Fools mock at the guilt offering, but the upright enjoy acceptance. 10 The heart knows its own bitterness, and no stranger shares its joy. 11 The house of the wicked will be destroyed, but the tent of the upright will flourish. 12 There is a **way** that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death. 13 Even in laughter the heart may ache, and the end of joy may be grief. 14 The backslider in heart will be filled with the fruit of his **ways**, and a good man will be filled with the fruit of his **ways**. 15 The simple believes everything, but the prudent gives thought to his **steps**."

-v.1 What kind of woman gives of herself to her household? _____

-v.2 How can we tell someone fears the Lord? _____

-How can we tell someone despises the Lord? _____

-v.8 The prudent give thought to their _____

-v.12 The way that seems right, but isn't from God actually leads to _____

-v.14 What will be repaid/rewarded? _____

-v.15 What does a prudent man give thought to? _____

Something to Think About: This proverb seems to be talking a bit about truth v. falseness, what is seen on the surface v. what's happening on the inside, illusion v. reality. Basically put, it's fairly easy to portray some attitude while actually thinking something quite different. It's easy to say one thing, but mean another. It's easy to do what the masses say is "good," but it's often hard to live the Bible way (though, this "way" is the only RIGHT way and the only path that leads to blessings in the here and now and great rewards in eternity).

The idea of giving thought to our ways/paths comes up more than once in these fifteen short verses. Must be important! If we are not walking toward God (and WITH God), we are walking away from God (and WITHOUT Him). There is no "standing still" in God's eyes. There is no such thing as "partial" obedience.

BONUS: Women's magazines at the checkout have a lot to say about taking care of our families, but have you ever noticed that they encourage self-centered thoughts and actions—as if this will somehow help others? Focusing on self will "tear down" our home. Doing what GOD says will build it up. What does He say? A lot! But in a nutshell? Love Him supremely (seen in our wholehearted obedience to His Word) and love others as

self (consider their needs as more important than your own; help them in their biggest task of becoming more like Christ).

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Thursday, September 8, 2022

-Pray before beginning to read Scripture to ask the Father to help you concentrate, understand His words, and apply them to your life to make you more and more like His Son.

-Read Proverbs 16:1-33 (v. 2, 7, 9, 17, 25, 29 ways/steps/path)

"The plans of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord. 2 All the **ways** of a man are pure in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the spirit. 3 Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established. 4 The Lord has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble. 5 Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the Lord; be assured, he will not go unpunished. 6 By steadfast love and faithfulness iniquity is atoned for, and by the fear of the Lord one turns away from evil. 7 When a man's **ways** please the Lord, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. 8 Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues with injustice. 9 The heart of man plans his **way**, but the Lord establishes his **steps**. 10 An oracle is on the lips of a king; his mouth does not sin in judgment. 11 A just balance and scales are the Lord's; all the weights in the bag are his work. 12 It is an abomination to kings to do evil, for the throne is established by righteousness. 13 Righteous lips are the delight of a king, and he loves him who speaks what is right. 14 A king's wrath is a messenger of death, and a wise man will appease it. 15 In the light of a king's face there is life, and his favor is like the clouds that bring the spring rain. 16 How much better to get wisdom than gold! To get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver. 17 The highway of the upright turns aside from evil; whoever guards his **way** preserves his life. 18 Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. 19 It is better to be of a lowly spirit with the poor than to divide the spoil with the proud. 20 Whoever gives thought to the word will discover good, and blessed is he who trusts in the Lord. 21 The wise of heart is called discerning, and sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness. 22 Good sense is a fountain of life to him who has it, but the instruction of fools is folly. 23 The heart of the wise makes his speech judicious and adds persuasiveness to his lips. 24 Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body. 25 There is a **way** that seems right to a man, but its end is the **way** to death. 26 A worker's appetite works for him; his mouth urges him on. 27 A worthless man plots evil, and his speech is like a scorching fire. 28 A dishonest man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends. 29 A man of violence entices his neighbor and leads him in a **way** that is not good. 30 Whoever winks his eyes plans dishonest things; he who purses his lips brings evil to pass. 31 Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life. 32 Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city. 33 The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord."

-v.2 How do humans often view our own ways? _____

-How does God decide whether they are good or bad? _____

-v.3 What must be committed to God? _____

-v.5 What does God detest? _____

- v.8 What is better than unjust gain? _____
- v.9 Who determines man's steps? _____
- v.17 What do the upright avoid? _____
- v.25 What leads to death? _____
- v.28 What do gossips do? _____
- v.29 Where does a violent man entice his neighbor to go? _____

Something to Think About: Pride is an unpleasant thing. That is, the kind of pride mentioned here—basically thinking we are smart, capable, clever, and “right” in our own opinion. Acting foolishly and pride may well be tied closely together too. Have you noticed that? Have you suffered as a result of your own pride? I sure have! Many times! I don’t think I am willing to sit still and dredge up too many examples of my pride gone amuck right this second, but one that readily comes to my mind was an outing I was enjoying with my friend where we intended to go to a Hobby Lobby close to three hours south of North Conway. But because I didn’t turn on my GPS (certain I knew the way!), we eventually found ourselves passing a sign that said “Welcome to Vermont” - the opposite direction of where we were supposed to be heading! Yikes!

The proverbs have a lot to say about pride and going our own way. When we are full of pride, we are rejecting the authority and leadership of the One Who made us and sustains us. As proverb after proverb points out, this kind of thinking results in nothing but evil and misery. I pray that as I age—as my hair turns more and more gray—that my right living will be a testimony of God’s glory, that my thinking lines up with God’s Word.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Friday, September 9, 2022

-Pray before beginning to read Scripture to ask the Father to help you concentrate, understand His words, and apply them to your life to make you more and more like His Son.

-Read Proverbs 21:1-9 (v. 2, 8, 16, 29 ways/path)

“The king’s heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will. 2 Every **way** of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the heart. 3 To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice. 4 Haughty eyes and a proud heart, the lamp of the wicked, are sin. 5 The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty. 6 The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a fleeting vapor and a snare of death. 7 The violence of the wicked will sweep them away, because they refuse to do what is just. 8 The **way** of the guilty is crooked, but the conduct of the pure is upright. 9 It is better to live in a corner of the housetop than in a house shared with a quarrelsome wife.”

-v.1 Even _____ cannot do what they want when God has a plan in mind for them.

-v.2 Man’s plans are right in his own _____, but the Lord weighs the _____.

-v.3 What is more acceptable than sacrifice? _____

- v.4 _____ eyes and a _____ heart are sin.
 -v.5 Which plans will succeed? The diligent or the hasty? _____
 -v.8 The way of the guilty is _____ while the conduct of the pure is _____.
 -v.9 Who wants to live with a quarrelsome woman? _____

Something to Think About: The focus of our study this month is on verses that use the word way, path, etc. to help us in our understanding of Psalm 119:105 (God's Word is a light to our path) and Proverbs 21 has four verses in it that fit the bill. Like many Proverbs, the truths that are listed here seem somewhat random to me (there is no one connecting thought that carries throughout the chapter). That being said, there does seem to be a repeated reminder that the only right "way" is the one that is in line with how God thinks and is in keeping with what we know about Him as found in Scripture. No matter how clever we may think we can be, when our thoughts are not in line with God's, they are wrong.

I have to confess, though, that my attention kept returning to verse 9, the somewhat wry observation that most people would prefer living in an uncomfortable "corner" of the roof—rather than be INSIDE their comfortable house with a woman who is quarrelsome.

Hmmm . . . makes me question just how often my own husband, children, and friends wished that THEY were someplace else so they wouldn't have to listen to me! Why is it, do you think, that we even become quarrelsome? Oh, I have no doubts whatsoever that hormones do not help even one bit! But is it fair to blame them entirely? I also believe that dark, cloudy skies contribute to grumpiness and negative thinking—especially when it has been days since the sun came out. Lack of sleep doesn't help. Neither does poor diet. All that is true, but at the core, isn't it really because we CHOSE to gratify and pamper ourselves and to NOT consider the needs of others as more important than our own? That we decided to give a little "love" to self—and not so much to others?

I would contend that when any child of God chooses to think or act in a way that is contrary to God's Word, bad attitudes will follow. Perhaps if we, instead, committed to living the "way" God directs us, we might find no need to be quarrelsome, selfish, bad tempered, or otherwise unpleasant to be with. Perhaps our husbands, and children, and friends would WANT to be around us—inside, where it's nice and comfortable!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Saturday, September 10, 2022

-Pray before beginning to read Scripture to ask the Father to help you concentrate, understand His words, and apply them to your life to make you more and more like His Son.

-Read Proverbs 22:5-6; 24-25 (v.5, 6, 25 paths/way)

22:5-6

"Thorns and snares are in the way of the crooked; whoever guards his soul will keep far from them. Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it."

22:24-25

“Make no friendship with a man given to anger, nor go with a wrathful man, lest you learn his ways and entangle yourself in a snare.”

-v.5-6 Thorns and snares are the way of the _____.

-Guarding our _____ helps us keep far from them.

-Who needs to be trained? _____

-What do they need to learn? _____

-v.24-25 What kind of person should be avoided? _____

-Why? _____

Something to Think About: In the ministry, my husband and I have sat next to many a sad parent begging to know why Proverbs 22:6 didn’t work for them. They had, after all, brought their child to Sunday school when they were little. According to this proverb, they should be walking with God as an adult.

Well, a few things. First, if this is you, I am so incredibly sorry for your pain! Wanting our children to be faithful to God all their lives is the heart’s cry of all godly parents. The good news is that this is God’s desire as well—and if your child belongs to Him (if they trusted in Jesus as their Savior from their sin), He will never leave them or forsake them. He will keep putting things into their path to get them to return to a right relationship with Him. In the end, though they might not have lived a life that pleases God, they still have eternal life. That can never be taken away from anyone.

An important thing to remember is that proverbs are not promises. They are “generally true statements.” There is no guarantee that someone “raised in church” is going to live for Christ all their days (it would be nice if that were true!). God gives each of us a free will. We are given the choice to read our Bible and obey all it says—or not. Of course, the only right choice is to do so since all other choices lead to some of the ugly things mentioned in our other verses in today’s chapter (thorns, snares, crookedness, anger) - and limitless other unpleasant behaviors and consequences as found throughout Scripture.

Does that mean that we give up on our kids—or never bother teaching them about God’s way in the first place? Of course not! In fact, there are several Bible passages that talk about the necessity to teach our children about God, how to live a life that pleases Him, and what the results are of obedience and disobedience. Those of you with little ones, talk to them about God EVERY SINGLE DAY, bring them to church, read the Bible to them, play music that honors God and teaches Bible principles, show them videos that demonstrate what Christlike character is like, and most of all, LIVE THIS WAY yourself. Be sure to study YOUR Bible, pray without ceasing, speak words of Scripture, listen to God-honoring music, watch shows that are edifying, be in church when the doors are open, have a servant’s heart in the home and out of it. Proverbs 22:24-25 warns against hanging around with someone who has a horrible temper because you might become like them, but it’s equally true that when we hang out with God-honoring faithful Christians, we can become like them!

P.S. I don’t want to step on any toes, but simply bringing your kids to Sunday school when they are little may not be enough. It’s an excellent starting point, but we ALL need the teaching, preaching, and edifying of a Bible-centered church from infancy through death. There is no good age to step away from this and an individual of any age who does so will find himself/herself wandering away from God and away from His blessings. Let’s keep praying for one another! That each one of us stays faithful, that our unfaithful loved ones return to a right relationship with Christ, that we trust God with all our burdens, big and small, and that even if no one else does, we choose to always walk in God’s way ourselves!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Sunday, September 11, 2022

-Pray before beginning to read Scripture to ask the Father to help you concentrate, understand His words, and apply them to your life to make you more and more like His Son.

-Read Isaiah 8:11-17 (v.11 way)

"For the Lord spoke thus to me with his strong hand upon me, and warned me not to walk in the way of this people, saying: 12 "Do not call conspiracy all that this people calls conspiracy, and do not fear what they fear, nor be in dread. 13 But the Lord of hosts, him you shall honor as holy. Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. 14 And he will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 15 And many shall stumble on it. They shall fall and be broken; they shall be snared and taken." 16 Bind up the testimony; seal the teaching among my disciples. 17 I will wait for the Lord, who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob, and I will hope in him."

- v.11 How did God speak to Isaiah? _____
- What did He say to not do? _____
- v.13 The Lord of hosts is the One to honor as _____.
- v.14 What will God be for those who turn to Him? _____
- How about for those who don't? _____
- v.17 "I will _____ for the Lord... I will _____ in Him."

Something to Think About: Isaiah was chosen by God to confront his nation - which was steeped in wickedness and very, very far from God's path. Sound familiar? This could very well be describing the United States of America today. God warned Isaiah to not follow the ways of the people around him or listen to what they said. Instead, he—and we—must listen to what GOD says. We must put our trust in Him, knowing that in the end, He will right all wrongs and His righteousness and justice will rule.

Oh what a day that will be! In the meantime, never give up on doing what is good; on walking the light-filled path that pleases and honors the Father and is in keeping with the example of our Savior, Jesus Christ. And never forget the incredibly strong weapon we have been given of prayer*—prayer for ourselves, but prayer also for our loved ones, our church family, and believers all around the globe. I believe that when we get to heaven, God just might show us the INCREDIBLE ways He answered our humble little prayers—and how thankful we will be that we obeyed His command to pray for one another!

(*Our confidence isn't in prayer, per se, but the One we are praying to!)

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Monday, September 12, 2022

-Pray before beginning to read Scripture to ask the Father to help you concentrate, understand His words, and apply them to your life to make you more and more like His Son.

-Read Isaiah 26:1-9 (v.7, 8 path/way)

“In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: “We have a strong city; he sets up salvation as walls and bulwarks. 2 Open the gates, that the righteous nation that keeps faith may enter in. 3 You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. 4 Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock. 5 For he has humbled the inhabitants of the height, the lofty city. He lays it low, lays it low to the ground, casts it to the dust. 6 The foot tramples it, the feet of the poor, the steps of the needy.” 7 The **path** of the righteous is level; you make level the **way** of the righteous. 8 In the **path** of your judgments, O Lord, we wait for you; your name and remembrance are the desire of our soul. 9 My soul yearns for you in the night; my spirit within me earnestly seeks you. For when your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.”

-v.3 You keep him in _____ whose mind is stayed on _____, because he _____ in you.

-v.4 Trust in the Lord _____, for the Lord God is an _____.

-v.7 The **path** of the righteous is _____; you make level the _____ of the righteous.

-v.9 My soul yearns for you in the _____; my spirit within me earnestly seeks you. For when your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.”

Something to Think About: This beautiful passage of praise to God is written in the middle of the record of God’s judgment and punishment for the sins of Israel. Yet, Isaiah is able to look ahead hundreds—even thousands—of years to see (and believe) what things will be like when Jesus rules as King in the Millennial Kingdom. What things are like now and what God has planned to come, are two extremely different things. Is your world chaotic and troubled? Perfect peace is yours when you trust God and walk obediently before Him.

BONUS: Like a River Glorious was written with this passage (and other Scripture) in mind (words by Francis Ridley Havergal, music by James Mountain).

1. Like a river, glorious is God’s perfect peace, over all victorious in its bright increase; perfect, yet it floweth fuller every day, perfect, yet it groweth deeper all the way.

Stayed upon Jehovah, hearts are fully blest; finding, as He promised, perfect peace and rest.

2. Hidden in the hollow of His blessed hand, never foe can follow, never traitor stand; not a surge of worry, not a shade of care, not a blast of hurry touch the spirit there.

3. Every joy or trial falleth from above, traced upon our dial by the Son of Love. We may trust Him fully all for us to do; They who trust Him wholly find Him wholly true.

Listen here: https://youtu.be/bnIcKms_IUY

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, September 13, 2022

-Pray before beginning to read Scripture to ask the Father to help you concentrate, understand His words, and apply them to your life to make you more and more like His Son.

-Read Isaiah 40:1-31 (v.3, 14, 27 way)

"Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. 2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. 3 A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the **way** of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. 4 Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. 5 And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." The Word of God Stands Forever 6 A voice says, "Cry!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. 7 The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the Lord blows on it; surely the people are grass. 8 The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. The Greatness of God 9 Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" 10 Behold, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. 11 He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young. 12 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? 13 Who has measured the Spirit of the Lord, or what man shows him his counsel? 14 Whom did he consult, and who made him understand? Who taught him the **path** of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the **way** of understanding? 15 Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as the dust on the scales; behold, he takes up the coastlands like fine dust. 16 Lebanon would not suffice for fuel, nor are its beasts enough for a burnt offering. 17 All the nations are as nothing before him, they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness. 18 To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with him? 19 An idol! A craftsman casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and casts for it silver chains. 20 He who is too impoverished for an offering chooses wood that will not rot; he seeks out a skillful craftsman to set up an idol that will not move. 21 Do you not know? Do you not hear? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? 22 It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in; 23 who brings princes to nothing, and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness. 24 Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when he blows on them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble. 25 To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One. 26 Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name; by the greatness of his might and because he is strong in power, not one is missing. 27 Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, "My **way** is hidden from the Lord, and my right is disregarded by my God"? 28 Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. 29 He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. 30 Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; 31 but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

-Write out verses 28-31: _____

Something to Think About: Chapter 40 begins with the word, “comfort.” In fact, it is repeated so as to bring more emphasis. Why should we be comforted? Jesus IS coming. He WILL remove sin and wickedness and bring peace and joy. We WILL see His might and glory. How does this comfort us now? Well, because even today, in the midst of the ugly world we live in, we can hope (have utmost confidence) in the Lord. When we do, He renews our strength to the point that we are able to soar like the eagles!

BONUS: There are TONS of super wonderful truths in this chapter to revel over and thank God for. Why not take the time to re-read it slowly—and with great appreciation!

BONUS #2:

Here’s another awesome song to enjoy: Wings as Eagles by Ron Hamilton. <https://youtu.be/JfIUaS3sx28>

When the race still lies before me, and the wind is blowing strong, when the witnesses surround me, and my strength is almost gone; when the valley plunges deeper, and life shatters all my dreams, then I lift my voice to Jesus, and He gives my spirit wings.

God gives wings, God gives wings as eagles; God gives wings to fly and strength to rise above. God gives wings, God gives wings as eagles, when my feet begin to stumble, and my dreams begin to crumble, I mount up on eagles wings.

Let us run the race with patience, let us lay each weight aside, Looking only unto Jesus; He will be our faithful guide. He has run the race before us; He has won the victor's crown. And He calls to every Christian. Follow me to higher ground.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, September 14, 2022

-Pray before beginning to read Scripture to ask the Father to help you concentrate, understand His words, and apply them to your life to make you more and more like His Son.

-Read Haggai 1:1-9 (v.5,7, ways)

“In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and

to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest: 2 “Thus says the Lord of hosts: These people say the time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the Lord.” 3 Then the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai the prophet, 4 “Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins? 5 Now, therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider your **ways**. 6 You have sown much, and harvested little. You eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill. You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm. And he who earns wages does so to put them into a bag with holes. 7 “Thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider your **ways**. 8 Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified, says the Lord. 9 You looked for much, and behold, it came to little. And when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? declares the Lord of hosts. Because of my house that lies in ruins, while each of you busies himself with his own house.”

-Both of verse 5 and 7 say the same thing. What is it? _____

Something to Think About: Do you ever struggle with priorities? For example, say you have six people coming over for Sunday dinner and you need to get the roast in the oven before leaving for Sunday School. . . yet you find yourself cleaning out the junk drawer in the kitchen—something no one is going to see.

Or how about this? You have a hard and fast obligation (work???), but instead of getting ready to leave on time, you putter at making a birthday card—for someone whose birthday isn’t for three weeks.

So, while these examples may not be life and death (though an argument could be made that people REALLY like to have food to eat when invited to lunch and your employer REALLY wants you to start your shift on time), in today’s passage, God is pointing out to the Jews that they have left Him out of their hey-this-is-super-important to-do lists. You see, they had come back to Israel from Babylon after years and years of captivity, but instead of re-building the Temple so they could worship the very God Who graciously returned them from exile, they began building their own houses instead. And lest we think, “Well, they did need a house to live in!,” these verses indicate that this was more than building a basic structure. They had done that—and now were adding fancy schmancy “extras” WHILE GOD’S HOUSE WAS IN RUINS (for ten years).

Priorities are necessary. And while it’s necessary to figure out how best to order our days and weeks to be the best steward of them we can be, THE most essential priority any of us need to establish and maintain is our relationship to God. We need to be in our Bible every single day. We need to maintain a regular and meaningful prayer time. We need to find, join, and become an active member of a local Bible-believing and teaching church. We need to love God supremely and love others as self. We need to be becoming more like Jesus Christ.

As was pointed out to these Hebrews all those centuries ago, we all need frequent reminders to “consider our ways” and be sure that they are the ways that please God and obey His Word. In this is tremendous fulfillment, joy, and peace.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Thursday, September 15, 2022

-Pray before beginning to read Scripture to ask the Father to help you concentrate, understand His words, and apply them to your life to make you more and more like His Son.

-Read Mark 1:1-8 (v.3 path)

“The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. 2 As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, “Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your **way**, 3 the voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the **way** of the Lord, make his **paths** straight,’” 4 John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. 6 Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. 7 And he preached, saying, “After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. 8 I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

- v.1 Who is this Gospel written about? _____
- v.2 What Old Testament prophet is quoted? _____
- What is the job of the messenger? _____
- v.3 What kind of path was he to make? _____
- v.4 Who fulfilled this prophecy? _____
- What did he preach? _____
- v.5 Did he have an impact on people? _____
- v.8 What will the “One” baptize with? _____

Something to Think About: The quote is from Isaiah 40:3 (which we looked at just a few days ago) and it is repeated in each of the four Gospels. The Isaiah passage uses the exact same word for “path” found in Psalm 119:105.

John was going to be used by God to prepare a straight path to help the people get ready to meet the Messiah. He knew that their first and foremost need was to turn away from sin and to turn to God in repentance and humbleness of heart. Thousands of years have passed since John’s death and now it is our turn to tell people about the Savior Who came and died for their sin. Are you keeping a straight path by maintaining a God-honoring testimony? Are you pointing others to Christ when an opportunity arises?

FYI: Two important things to note here. One, the baptism that the Jews were undergoing with John was not one of spiritual salvation. We can know this simply because the Bible is super clear that the only thing needed for spiritual/eternal salvation is belief in Jesus Christ as the Savior from our sins (John 3:16, John 1:12, Eph. 2:8-9; Acts 16:31). John’s baptism was about repentance and getting their hearts right with God. The nation of Israel had been God’s special possession for CENTURIES, yet largely they had not lived like it. John knew that the Messiah was coming in person very soon and he wanted people to get rid of sin and return to living according to the Law as God commanded all the way back to the time of Moses.

Second, although our translation says (v.8) that Jesus will baptize “with” the Holy Spirit, the Greek (the language this was first written in) uses the word “in,” not “with.” John is foretelling (one of the jobs of the prophets of God) that on the day of Pentecost, some fifty days after Jesus’ resurrection (Acts 2), God would be giving all who trusted in Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection the incredible gift of the permanently indwelling Holy Spirit. That would be the point where Jesus baptized all believers of all time (you and me too!) “IN” the Holy Spirit: this is the official inauguration of a new entity: the Church. The baptism by Jesus Christ of all believers in the Holy Spirit marked the beginning of the Church Age. It was a one-time event that does not get repeated on an individual, experiential level.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Friday, September 16, 2022

-Pray before beginning to read Scripture to ask the Father to help you concentrate, understand His words, and apply them to your life to make you more and more like His Son.

-Read Matthew 7:13-14 (way)

"Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the **way** is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the **way** is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few."

- Which gate should we enter? _____
- What is the matter with the wide gate? _____
- Which gate is more popular? _____
- Where does the narrow gate lead? _____

Something to Think About: This passage is often thought of as referring to salvation, but since the entire sermon-on-the-mount (chapters 5-7) is addressed to Christians, it makes more sense that this portion of Scripture is not necessarily focused on salvation, but rather it is primarily about how our lives please or displease God as His children.

Certainly, by this time in our daily Bible studies, we are all aware that living a life that pleases God is not easy in the least. We may have even noted that not as many believers are eager to try to consistently stay on the path of faithfulness to God as we would wish. God's way, the small, narrow gate and road, is the way to truly living. Our own way, and the way of the world, is the easy path and wide gate, but it leads to sorrow, trouble and "destruction."

I want to be among the "few"! How about you?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Saturday, September 17, 2022

-Pray before beginning to read Scripture to ask the Father to help you concentrate, understand His words, and apply them to your life to make you more and more like His Son.

-Read Matthew 21:28-32 (v.32 way)

“What do you think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ 29 And he answered, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he changed his mind and went. 30 And he went to the other son and said the same. And he answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but did not go. 31 Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you. 32 For John came to you in the **way** of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterward change your minds and believe him.”

-v.28 What did the man ask his sons to do? _____

-v.29,30 What were their responses? _____

-v.32 John came to the Jews in the _____ of righteousness. Did everyone believe him and listen? _____

Something to Think About: This is another passage that is not dealing with salvation and instead is teaching about living right before God (righteously). It would seem that in this specific passage, Jesus is pointing out to the Religious leaders that they were more like the son who SAID he would obey the father’s command, but didn’t do it. They were fond of being extremely “religious,” but not actually doing what God wanted as far as their hearts were concerned. Jesus, in fact, called them hypocrites more than once.

Dictionary.com defines a hypocrite as

1. a person who pretends to have virtues, moral or religious beliefs, principles, etc., that he or she does not actually possess, especially a person whose actions belie stated beliefs.
2. a person who feigns some desirable or publicly approved attitude, especially one whose private life, opinions, or statements belie his or her public statements.

While it’s super easy to look at the Religious leaders in Jesus’ day and see (and judge!) their hypocrisy—and while it’s super easy to look at assorted people we’ve met during our lives and see where they have said one thing, but done another, as always, our focus needs to be on our own hearts. How have WE said that we loved someone, but then acted in an unloving way? How often have we said we would do something for someone, but never gotten around to it (because we never really wanted to do it in the first place)? More horrifying, how many times have we made some promise or commitment to God, then never followed through?

God wants us to turn away from our sin and prove we love Him by living a life of obedience. THANKFULLY, He is ready, willing, and able to help us say what we mean and mean what we say. He is ready, willing, and able to help us walk the path of obedience to His Word (and THEN, after giving us the strength and wisdom to do right, He blesses us abundantly!!!).

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Sunday, September 18, 2022

-Pray before beginning to read Scripture to ask the Father to help you concentrate, understand His words, and apply them to your life to make you more and more like His Son.

-Read Matthew 22:15-22 (v.16 way)

"Then the Pharisees went and plotted how to entangle him in his words. 16 And they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are true and teach the **way** of God truthfully, and you do not care about anyone's opinion, for you are not swayed by appearances. 17 Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" 18 But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why put me to the test, you hypocrites? 19 Show me the coin for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. 20 And Jesus said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" 21 They said, "Caesar's." Then he said to them, "Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." 22 When they heard it, they marveled. And they left him and went away."

-v.15-16 What two groups wanted to trap Jesus? _____

-v.16 What did they say about Jesus' character? _____

-v.18 What did Jesus know? _____

-v.22 What was their reaction to Jesus' answers? _____

Something to Think About: These two groups of men hated each other, yet they banded together to try to get Jesus arrested and put away. It's scary what lengths people will go to in order to get what they want!

That aside, it's interesting to me what they said about Jesus. They noted that He had integrity, that He taught God's way accurately, and that He refused to play favorites. They were right! In fact, Jesus proved their point when He instantly recognized their motives in speaking with Him as having evil intent. God knows OUR heart and intent as well. My prayer is that my heart and intent is always pure and right in His eyes!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Monday, September 19, 2022

-Pray before beginning to read Scripture to ask the Father to help you concentrate, understand His words, and apply them to your life to make you more and more like His Son.

-Read John 14:1-7 (v.4, 5, 6 way)

"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place

for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. 4 And you know the **way** to where I am going.” 5 Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the **way**?” 6 Jesus said to him, “I am the **way**, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

- v.1 What is God’s antidote for a troubled heart? _____
- v.2 What task Jesus is working on even as we speak? _____
- v.3 Why? _____
- v.6 “Jesus said to him, “I am the _____ and the _____ and the _____.
- No man comes to the Father _____ through Me.”
- v.7 How can we know what God is like? _____

Something to Think About: There are so many treasures in these seven short verses! The bottom line? Because Jesus Christ, the One Who died for us and rose again is THE WAY (the ONLY way to God the Father), THE TRUTH (everything He said was/is 100% accurate and right), and THE LIFE (the reason any of us can get saved and then live in a God-honoring way), we can trust Him to do what is right.

Many years ago, when my children were still pretty little, I began to be concerned about what would happen to them if the Rapture occurred while they were still young and unsaved. If my husband and I were raptured away, would they be left all alone in the house? The Bible teaches that children under the age of accountability will go to heaven if they die, but I’m not sure we can have that same comfort in regards to the Rapture (since those left behind will have 7 years to trust in Christ—as long as they don’t die first). Because my husband is a pastor who has 3 brothers who are pastors and a father who was a pastor—and lots of friends and acquaintances who were pastors or missionaries, I had plenty of opportunities to quiz a bunch of men of God about what they thought would happen to young children at the Rapture. None seemed to have a really good answer (or at least one that gave me the comfort that I was looking for). Finally, the topic came up with a fellow church member as we were leaving the building after an evening service. Her answer is the one that has helped me and given me hope for some thirty plus years (and in more areas of concern than just this one example). What was it? It was this, “we can trust God to do what is right.” That simple, that profound.

And dear one, we CAN ALWAYS trust God to do what is right. Whatever our concern, whatever our struggle, He has got it in hand and He will help us know how to deal with it in a God-honoring way.

Let not your heart be troubled. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life.

P.S. This is one of the seven great “I AM’s of Jesus in the gospel of John.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, September 20, 2022

-Pray before beginning to read Scripture to ask the Father to help you concentrate, understand His words, and

apply them to your life to make you more and more like His Son.

-As a direct result of Jesus' proclamation in John 14:6 ("I AM the Way. . ."), the men and women who believed in Jesus as Savior after the church was begun on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), called Jesus' teaching something. Read the following passages in the Book of Acts to identify what it was: _____

-Acts 9:1-2

"But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem."

-Acts 19:6-9

"And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. There were about twelve men in all. And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus."

-Acts 22:3-5

"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day. I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, as the high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness."

-Acts 24:14-15

"But this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets, having a hope in God, which these men themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust."

Something to Think About: "The Way." What a good way to think about salvation, right living, and our future in heaven! Notice it wasn't "a" way or one way among many. THE only path in life that pleases God is the way Jesus lived and taught.

EXTRA CREDIT: Read Acts 9 in its entirety! Paul's salvation story is truly incredible. We can read more about Paul's personal testimony in the other passages listed. Give them a try!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, September 21, 2022

-Pray before beginning to read Scripture to ask the Father to help you concentrate, understand His words, and

apply them to your life to make you more and more like His Son.

-Read Acts 13:4-12 (v.10 ways)

“So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. 5 When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John to assist them. 6 When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they came upon a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus. 7 He was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence, who summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. 8 But Elymas the magician (for that is the meaning of his name) opposed them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. 9 But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him 10 and said, “You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight **paths** of the Lord? 11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and unable to see the sun for a time.” Immediately mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand. 12 Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had occurred, for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord.”

- v.5 What did Paul and Barnabas do when they entered a city? _____
- v.7 Who sent for them? _____
- v.8 What did Elymas try to do? _____
- v.9 Who gave Paul the words to say? _____
- v.10 What was Elymas making crooked? _____
- v.11 What was his punishment? _____
- v.12 How did the proconsul respond? _____

Something to Think About: This interesting account is one of the examples of Acts 1:8 being played out, the spread of the Gospel to the uttermost parts of the world. Please note that it was the Holy Spirit who chose the men He wanted to spread the Gospel (see Acts 13:1-3 to observe the role of the local church) and Who led them to the places and people of His choice.

The (logical and smart) habit was for these men to first find the local synagogue to teach about The Way (the saving work of Jesus Christ and life as His follower) because the people there already believed in God and this was a good place to start. However, this account brings about a few changes. One is that Saul became more permanently known as Paul (his Roman name, while Saul was his Hebrew one) - and - God began introducing these Jewish preachers to the fact that He intended to bring Gentiles into His family through trust in Jesus as their Savior. Before this time, the idea of Gentiles getting saved was ludicrous and impossible (and unwanted!) by the Jews, but God slowly, but surely showed to them that this was His perfect plan (aren't we thankful it was!!).

Also evident from this account is that there will always be those who are opposed to God and who try to trick people into NOT believing in Jesus Christ. Elymas is accused of “making crooked the straight paths of the Lord,” and this obviously is an extremely serious offense. In fact, Elymas is punished with blindness and the inability to see the sun (which ties in strongly with Psalm 119:105!). God's will for the proconsul wasn't thwarted since God's will CANNOT be thwarted, and he got saved, praise the LORD!

God takes people standing in the way of others' faith pretty seriously! This happens when someone teaches God's way falsely, but it could also happen when our testimony as a child of God isn't consistent with what the Bible says it should be. We need to be sure what we're saying and living is God's Way all the way.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Thursday, September 22, 2022

-Pray before beginning to read Scripture to ask the Father to help you concentrate, understand His words, and apply them to your life to make you more and more like His Son.

-Read Acts 14:8-20 (v.16 way)

"Now at Lystra there was a man sitting who could not use his feet. He was crippled from birth and had never walked. 9 He listened to Paul speaking. And Paul, looking intently at him and seeing that he had faith to be made well, 10 said in a loud voice, "Stand upright on your feet." And he sprang up and began walking. 11 And when the crowds saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in Lycaonian, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!" 12 Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. 13 And the priest of Zeus, whose temple was at the entrance to the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates and wanted to offer sacrifice with the crowds. 14 But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their garments and rushed out into the crowd, crying out, 15 "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. 16 In past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. 17 Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness." 18 Even with these words they scarcely restrained the people from offering sacrifice to them. 19 But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having persuaded the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. 20 But when the disciples gathered about him, he rose up and entered the city, and on the next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe."

-v.9 What healed the lame man? _____

-v.11-12 What conclusion did the crowd reach? _____

-v.14 Did the apostles want to be worshiped? _____

-v.15 Who did Paul and Barnabas want the people to turn to? _____

-v.16 What did God allow in the past? _____

Something to Think About: Wow! We get upset when someone pokes fun at us because we go to church and refuse to party, but Paul got STONED for telling the people that he and Barnabas weren't gods—and pointing them to the only actual God!

Persecution isn't fun for ANYONE, but there are most definitely varied "levels" of persecution. However, whether we face sneers or execution, our joy, privilege, and duty is to talk to other people about our loving Father and how Christ Jesus came to earth to die so that they could have their sins forgiven and live with Him throughout eternity.

I'm confident that very few believers LOOK FORWARD to persecution (major—or minor), but the Bible does give us fair warning that the more we resemble Jesus Christ in our attitude and action and the more obedient we are to God in what we do and why, the more likely we are to have "disagreements" with others. This will always be true when interacting with unbelievers, but we need to prepare ourselves that this could also sometimes happen with believers. Oh, it shouldn't! The Bible teaches that our interactions with one another ought to be anchored first and foremost in love (showing consideration, grace, and patience for each other), but experience points out that this doesn't always happen. We all still have a sin nature—and though it has no true power over us (because Jesus defeated it on our behalf) - we often ALLOW it to direct our thinking and actions. THANKFULLY, we can pray often for God's help to think and act in a way that honors Him, and we can return to Scripture over and over to be reminded how to live life in the image of God.

Back to today's Bible passage, our words should be pointing people away from us and toward the Living God. After all, He made the heaven, earth and sea –and everything in them. He created us, He made a way for our

spiritual salvation, He has shown us kindness, He keeps us provided with food and the necessities of life, He fills our hearts with joy, He has made a home for us in heaven—and literally millions and millions of other blessings. Thank Him! Talk about Him often and repeatedly!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Friday, September 23, 2022

-Pray before beginning to read Scripture to ask the Father to help you concentrate, understand His words, and apply them to your life to make you more and more like His Son.

-Read Acts 18:18-28 (v.25, 26 way)

"After this, Paul stayed many days longer and then took leave of the brothers and set sail for Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila. At Cenchreae he had cut his hair, for he was under a vow. 19 And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there, but he himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. 20 When they asked him to stay for a longer period, he declined. 21 But on taking leave of them he said, "I will return to you if God wills," and he set sail from Ephesus. 22 When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, and then went down to Antioch. 23 After spending some time there, he departed and went from one place to the next through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples. 24 Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures. 25 He had been instructed in the **way** of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. 26 He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the **way** of God more accurately. 27 And when he wished to cross to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed, 28 for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus."

-v.24 Describe Apollos _____

-v.25 What had he been instructed in? _____

-How and what did he teach? _____

-v.26 Who took him aside? _____

-Why? _____

-v.27-28 Did he grow in his ministry? _____

Something to Think About: Apollos has a great testimony. He apparently had heard about John the Baptist (or, less likely, he had personally heard John the Baptist preach) that the Messiah (Savior) was coming soon and that every Jew needed to stop sinning and get their hearts right with God. He was passionate about this essential and took it upon himself to preach the message to other Jews. Unfortunately, Apollos didn't know the whole story. He was teaching God's way, just not with completely up to date information.

There are probably thousands of men and women who teach others about the Lord, just not entirely accurately

according to the Bible. Most are probably very sincere with a deep desire to let people know that they need to turn to God. However, in order to truly teach “God’s way,” we need to be accurate biblically. In Apollos’ case, he didn’t know that Jesus had come—and died and was resurrected after three days—then returned to heaven. How gracious of God to send Aquila and Priscilla to gently, kindly, and lovingly tell him the truth! I applaud Aquila and Priscilla for stepping up and talking to Apollos when it was probably a bit awkward—and I applaud them for doing it privately and with kindness. I applaud Apollos for listening, then not letting pride get in the way of him going right back out there and preaching and teaching all around Asia Minor.

Apollos, Aquila, and Priscilla all served God to the best of their abilities and God used them in wonderful ways. God gives us all different talents, different abilities, and different strengths. Use what God gave YOU to serve Him to the best of your abilities. Praise God for the people in your life who are already doing just that.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Saturday, September 24, 2022

-Pray before beginning to read Scripture to ask the Father to help you concentrate, understand His words, and apply them to your life to make you more and more like His Son.

-Read Romans 11:33-36 (v.33 paths)

“Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his **ways**! “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?” “Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?” For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.” (ESV)

“O how deep are God’s riches, and wisdom, and knowledge! How unfathomable are his decisions and unexplainable are his **ways**! Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become his advisor? Or who has given him something only to have him pay it back?” For all things are from him, by him, and for him. Glory belongs to him forever! Amen.” (ISV)

“Oh, how great are God’s riches and wisdom and knowledge! How impossible it is for us to understand his decisions and his **ways**! For who can know the Lord’s thoughts? Who knows enough to give him advice? And who has given him so much that he needs to pay it back? For everything comes from him and exists by his power and is intended for his glory. All glory to him forever! Amen.” (NLT)

-Choose your favorite version of this marvelous doxology of praise and write it out below:

Something to Think About: Paul took ELEVEN chapters to explain the incredible and gracious plan of salvation that God made for Jew and Gentile alike, then just EXPLODED in a prayer of praise to God. He does this from time to time in his letters to the churches. Have you ever noticed how he is teaching something, then just starts praying and praising God for something that just completely blessed and overwhelmed him? Look through the Epistles and see if you can find some!

Say, do you ever take the time to read Scripture with your heart open and excited to hear what it has to say to you, then pause to praise God for the riches found there? If Scripture never moves you to joy or to tears or to a conviction that “something” needs to change in your life, perhaps you’re not reading it from your heart. Have you prayed before starting to ask God for help to understand it and have it impact your heart and life? Have you made sure that there isn’t any unconfessed sin in your life? Is there something between you and another believer that needs to be made right? Are you, perhaps, reading an English translation that is hard to understand?

I would be remiss to point out that if someone has never been convicted or deeply blessed by Scripture, it might be time to be certain that you are a child of God. How can someone know?

- Do you know that all humans are born with sin that automatically makes us enemies of God?
- Do you know that the sin you were born with has created a gulf between you and God that nothing YOU do can repair?
- Do you know that God loves you and created a plan so that you can not only be free from your sin, but become adopted into His family right away and for all of eternity?
- Do you know that you simply need to believe that Jesus Christ, God’s Son, came to earth as a baby, then grew up and died on the cross in order to take upon Himself YOUR penalty for sin? Because He is God, He is the only One Who could have paid the price for sin that God set—the death of a person with absolutely no sin whatsoever—and He did that when He died for you.
- Did you know that Jesus Christ didn’t stay dead? He rose to life again after three days. This won the victory over sin and death—and all who trust in Him as their Savior also have victory because of what Jesus did. Because of His death, burial, and resurrection, our sin debt is paid and God sees us as righteous (free from sin).
- Simple faith in Jesus Christ as the Substitute for your guilt before God is all that is needed to be saved. Nothing you do can earn salvation or “help” to get you saved. Just faith (belief; trust). Everyone who believes in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ receives God’s gift of eternal life.

Read these Bible verses for more information and be sure to talk to your Pastor, another trusted Christian, or me to be absolutely certain of your salvation. Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23; John 1:12; John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9; Acts 16:31

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Sunday, September 25, 2022

-Pray before beginning to read Scripture to ask the Father to help you concentrate, understand His words, and apply them to your life to make you more and more like His Son.

-Read I Corinthians 4:14-21 (v.17 way)

"I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. 15 For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. 16 I urge you, then, be imitators of me. 17 That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my **ways** in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church. 18 Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. 19 But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power. 20 For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power. 21 What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?"

- v.15 What relationship did Paul have with the Corinthian believers? _____
- v.16 What did he urge them to do? _____
- v.17 How is Timothy described? _____
- What was he to do? _____

Something to Think About: We've read a lot about the importance of following God's "way" completely and wholeheartedly, but this is one of the many passages that point out that faithful believers ALSO live in a "way" that is a great example for other believers to follow. As children of God, we want to first and foremost be imitators of Christ. However, when children of God are accurate reflections of Christ, we can safely imitate them too.

We all know people who "talk the talk," but don't "walk the walk." Paul walked the walk. He lived a life pleasing to God and wanted these troubled believers to imitate him. He also sent Timothy to them. Timothy, too, walked the walk and would be able to explain to them the right way to live in Christ Jesus. My prayer is that our actions support our words and that each of us are not only imitating Christ, but being excellent examples for others to follow.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Monday, September 26, 0222

-Pray before beginning to read Scripture to ask the Father to help you concentrate, understand His words, and

apply them to your life to make you more and more like His Son.

-Read Hebrews 10:19-25 (v.20 way)

“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, 20 by the new and living **way** that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”

-Because of the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross for us, we have access to the Father. What five things are we exhorted to do?

-v. 22 Let us _____

-v.23 Let us _____

-v.24 Let us _____

-v.25 (Let us not) _____

-v.25 (Let us) _____

Something to Think About: My gardening experience is almost zero. I have a decent idea how the whole thing works, I have just never had personal experience prepping soil, planting seed, weeding, and harvesting the crop. I have had, just for the record, LOTS of experience EATING garden produce! =)

The author of Hebrews is talking about a whole different kind of produce. It is the riches of a life well-spent for God. How do we get to the end product, the “well done good and faithful servant!”? We confess all sins the second we realize we have committed them, we trust God about every single thing every single moment of our lives, we stay faithful to God in public—and in private, we encourage brothers and sisters in Christ in their walk with the Lord, taking every opportunity we are given to not only speak love, but act it out in helpful deeds. We also refuse to miss our church’s services and encourage others in their attendance—all while eagerly anticipating the day when we can all live in the presence of God the Father and God the Son FOREVER.

The brand of “lettuce” in Hebrews 10:19-25 will help us stay on the path God wants us to take in our garden of life.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, September 27, 2022

-Pray before beginning to read Scripture to ask the Father to help you concentrate, understand His words, and apply them to your life to make you more and more like His Son.

-Read James 1:2-8 (v.8 ways)

“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his **ways**.”

-v.2 What should we have a positive outlook of? _____
-v.3-4 Why? _____

-v.5 Where is wisdom found? _____
-v.8 What is the person who doesn't trust God's answers like? _____

Something to Think About: The challenges and hardships we come across can be “considered” a huge burden or they can be APPRECIATED because of the blessings they will result in when we act on the wisdom God offers. The danger here is to be “double-minded” (doubting). This happens when we know what God wants us to do, but decide not to do it because of whatever excuse we make for ourselves. God does not appreciate this and will not bless us with Christian maturity.

So, how should it work? It all begins with trust in God. God is good and can only give what is good, so when something happens that isn't what we wanted or is unpleasant in some way, we can CHOOSE to see it as an opportunity to learn steadfastness, that is, the ability to endure and be patient (to see what God is going to do in us, through us, and concerning the trial). When we practice the art of trusting God and continuing to do right even in challenging circumstances, God will be growing us spiritually. God GIVES US these opportunities to grow spiritually - and grow closer to Him—and when our outlook is right, this can be an exciting time.

Note, too, that if we want to know HOW to think right and act right, we only have to ask God for help! He will use His Word and the godly counsel of mature and obedient Christians to help us know what to do and not do. Don't miss the caution, though. What God says is the final authority. It's not our place to question Him or to act as if we can choose His way—or something contrary.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, September 28, 2022

-Pray before beginning to read Scripture to ask the Father to help you concentrate, understand His words, and apply them to your life to make you more and more like His Son.

-Read James 5:19-20 (v.20 way)

“My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his **wandering** will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.” (ESV)

“My brothers and sisters, if anyone among you strays from the truth and someone turns him back, let him know that the one who has turned a sinner from the error of his **way** will save his soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.” (NASB)

-v.19 Who is James addressing? _____

-If a believer “wanders from the truth,” what should we try to do? _____

-v.20 Why? _____

Something to Think About: First, I included both the ESV and the NASB translations because the ESV translated “way” as “wandering” and I didn’t want to confuse you (or me!) too much. =)

Second, it’s important to know that this passage is directed to believers (James is writing to “brothers”), so the death mentioned cannot be the loss of salvation. It may very well be, however, physical death. God will not allow us to sin indefinitely without consequences. Sometimes He may even decide to take a disobedient believer home early.

Do you know someone who has wandered from the truth? Pray for them. Talk to them in love (and humility) with the goal of restoring their walk with God.

Has someone ever taken the time to talk to YOU about some area you have “strayed” in? Thank God for them—and if possible, thank them for caring enough to help you!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Thursday, September 29, 2022

-Pray before beginning to read Scripture to ask the Father to help you concentrate, understand His words, and apply them to your life to make you more and more like His Son.

-Read Revelation 15:1-4 (v.3 ways)

“Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and amazing, seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is finished. 2 And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire—and also those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands. 3 And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, “Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your **ways**, O King of the nations! 4 Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All

nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.”

- v.1 What would be finished after the seven plagues? _____
- v.2 Who was standing beside the sea? _____
- v.3 Whose song did they sing? _____
- v.3 “_____ and _____ are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your _____, O King of the nations!
- v.4 Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For _____ are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been _____.”

Something to Think About:

In the middle of the horror, plagues, and judgment for sin during the Tribulation Period, we find this quote from Psalm 145 sung by the redeemed of that time period. They are giving great glory to God. They are acknowledging that His ways are just and true. They know that He alone is holy and worthy of all worship.

What a wonderful prayer for all those who belong to Jesus to pray today and every day! What’s the song in YOUR heart today? Tell God! Tell others!

BONUS: Here’s a Patch the Pirate song from Majesty Music that is written based on Revelation 15, “Great and Marvelous” (words and music by Ron Hamilton):

1. All the nations shall come and bow the knee before Thee. Every tribe, every tongue shall then at last adore Thee. Great and marvelous are Thy ways. Grand and glorious all Thy days.

Refrain:

Great and marvelous are Thy ways, Lord God Almighty. Grand and glorious all Thy days, King of the Ages. Who shall not fear Thee and bring glory to Thy name? Thou alone art holy; Thou alone art worthy. Great and marvelous, Grand and glorious, Great and marvelous art Thou, Lord.

2. True and just are Thy judgments. Thy ways cannot be questioned. Wisdom guideth Thy hand in blessing and destruction.

Great and marvelous are Thy ways. Grand glorious all Thy days. Refrain

Listen here: https://youtu.be/TvPWE2_dVdI

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Friday, September 30, 2022

-Pray before beginning to read Scripture to ask the Father to help you concentrate, understand His words, and apply them to your life to make you more and more like His Son.

-Review Time!

-Look back on your work on the word “path/way” this month.

-What have you learned that you didn’t know before?

-How have you been challenged in your current walk with God?

-What are you going to do about it?

-Are there any questions you have that need to be pursued?

-What words, concepts, truths do you feel the need to do more research on?

Something to Think About: Once we have believed in Jesus Christ as our Savior from sin, we begin a journey. This journey last all the years of our physical life. For some it may only be a few years, others are granted decades on earth. Compared to eternity, even decades isn’t really a very long time, though. Therefore, what we do with TODAY really matters. Yesterday is long gone, tomorrow may never come. God wants us to be faithful today. That is the idea of “path.” God WANTS us to have victory, so He gave us His directions, tips, and advice in His Holy Word. Why would we try to wing it on our own? What folly! O, dear loved one in the Lord, open your “lamp” and allow it to shine light on your feet as you walk the path of life!

-Your thoughts and conclusions:

Saturday, October 1, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Word.

-We have previously studied how God created light and gave it a job to do. Let’s now look at how and why He created darkness.

-Read Genesis 1 (our word is found in v.2, 4, 5, 18)

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form and void, and **darkness** was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

3 And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. 4 And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the **darkness**. 5 God called the light Day, and the **darkness** he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. 6 And God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” 7 And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. 8 And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day. 9 And God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. 10 God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. 11 And God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth.” And it was so. 12 The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 13 And there was evening and there was morning, the third

day. 14 And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the **night**. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, 15 and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. 16 And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the **night**—and the stars. 17 And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, 18 to rule over the day and over the **night**, and to separate the light from the **darkness**. And God saw that it was good. 19 And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day. 20 And God said, “Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.” 21 So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 22 And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” 23 And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day. 24 And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.” And it was so. 25 And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 26 Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” 29 And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. 30 And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. 31 And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.”

- v.2 Who was over the surface of the deep in the newly-formed earth? _____
- v.5 What did God name the darkness that He separated from the light? _____
- v.16-18 What did God create to further separate light from dark? _____
- v.31 What was God’s response to all He had made? _____

Something to Think About: God created darkness. He gave it a job. It, along with every single thing God made, was declared “good” by God. Darkness was not originally associated with evil or scary things. Sin is what caused this distortion in creation. God didn’t create us to sin or be associated with evil in any way either! Our job was (is) to glorify the Creator, just as darkness will one day do again.

Say, have you ever given thought to the manner in which God will restore the earth, sky, and heavens once sin is done away with forever? It’s a pretty heady thought—and perhaps a bit hard to even imagine what that would be like. Genesis 1 gives us a picture of the perfection that God created our world to be. This will one day be returned to us, but with a change that will make it all far better (which ALSO seems hard to imagine!). What’s the difference between the perfection of the Garden of Eden and the new heavens and earth that will God will create at the start of eternity? God Himself will dwell with man. Permanently. This will be a “first” in. . . EVER. This has never happened before. But Revelation 21:1-4 tells us that “*God’s dwelling is with humanity, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and will be their God.*” WOW! How I long for that day to be a reality! How I long for all of creation to bring great glory to God—including every single human!

That this day is coming is a sure thing, a 100% certainty. What thrills! Have you considered, though, that you and I don’t need to wait until that day to live the way God intended us to live from day one? That we can choose RIGHT NOW to bring Him great glory by making the choice from moment to moment to walk in His light and stay far away from the darkness of sin? It is only the redeemed who CAN do this, in fact. Let’s all be on our knees every single morning seeking God’s help to be light-filled children of God!

FYI Did you know that the Hebrew people consider the evening the start of their new day? That’s why the days of creation are worded as they are (“*and there was evening and morning. . .*”) and that’s why their Sabbath day begins at dusk.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Sunday, October 2, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Word.

-God gives us a bit more information about His amazing care and keeping of His creation in **Job 38**. Read it.
(Our word is in v.9, 17, 19)

"Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said: 2 "Who is this that **darkens** counsel by words without knowledge? 3 Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me. 4 "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. 5 Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? 6 On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, 7 when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? 8 "Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb, 9 when I made clouds its garment and thick **darkness** its swaddling band, 10 and prescribed limits for it and set bars and doors, 11 and said, 'Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stayed'? 12 "Have you commanded the morning since your days began, and caused the dawn to know its place, 13 that it might take hold of the skirts of the earth, and the wicked be shaken out of it? 14 It is changed like clay under the seal, and its features stand out like a garment. 15 From the wicked their light is withheld, and their uplifted arm is broken. 16 "Have you entered into the springs of the sea, or walked in the recesses of the deep? 17 Have the gates of death been revealed to you, or have you seen the gates of deep **darkness**? 18 Have you comprehended the expanse of the earth? Declare, if you know all this. 19 "Where is the way to the dwelling of light, and where is the place of **darkness**, 20 that you may take it to its territory and that you may discern the paths to its home?

21 You know, for you were born then, and the number of your days is great! 22 "Have you entered the storehouses of the snow, or have you seen the storehouses of the hail, 23 which I have reserved for the time of trouble, for the day of battle and war? 24 What is the way to the place where the light is distributed, or where the east wind is scattered upon the earth? 25 "Who has cleft a channel for the torrents of rain and a way for the thunderbolt, 26 to bring rain on a land where no man is, on the desert in which there is no man, 27 to satisfy the waste and desolate land, and to make the ground sprout with grass? 28 "Has the rain a father, or who has begotten the drops of dew? 29 From whose womb did the ice come forth, and who has given birth to the frost of heaven? 30 The waters become hard like stone, and the face of the deep is frozen. 31 "Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades or loose the cords of Orion? 32 Can you lead forth the Mazzaroth in their season, or can you guide the Bear with its children? 33 Do you know the ordinances of the heavens? Can you establish their rule on the earth? 34 "Can you lift up your voice to the clouds, that a flood of waters may cover you? 35 Can you send forth lightnings, that they may go and say to you, 'Here we are'? 36 Who has put wisdom in the inward parts or given understanding to the mind? 37 Who can number the clouds by wisdom? Or who can tilt the waterskins of the heavens, 38 when the dust runs into a mass and the clods stick fast together? 39 "Can you hunt the prey for the lion, or satisfy the appetite of the young lions, 40 when they crouch in their dens or lie in wait in their thicket? 41 Who provides for the raven its prey, when its young ones cry to God for help, and wander about for lack of food?"

-v.1 Who answered Job? _____

- v.2 What does speaking before you know what you're talking about do? _____
- v.9 What did God wrap clouds in? _____
- v.17 What gates are described? _____
- v.19,20 What two things have a place where they reside? _____

Something to Think About: God answered Job in an audible voice! I'm pretty sure at one time or other we all have prayed without really expecting an answer. We go through the motions, but don't really think God is listening. Job reminds us that God DOES listen and He DOES answer. Always. Oh, those of us in the Church Age do not hear God in an audible way, but He still reveals Himself through His Word (the actual written words found in our Bible) and through faithful believers who are repeating what God has taught them from His Word.

If we "feel" like God isn't listening to us, there are a few things to consider:

- One, we may be basing this conclusion on our feeling, emotions, hormones, or false information. If God says He hears our prayers (and He DOES say this), then He does. That simple.
- Two, it might be that something in our life has come between us and God. That is, some sin of commission or omission (what we have done that we shouldn't have or not done that we should have). In fact, it's always wise to start each day (and even each prayer) with a request for forgiveness for any and all sins we might have committed. That's not to say that we necessarily HAVE sinned since our last prayer, but it seems wise to keep checking. If we're not sure, we can always ask God to point out any areas where we have strayed from Him so that we can make that right.
- Three, perhaps our prayers are actually not biblical and we are asking God for something He will not give (something that isn't pleasing to Him). A good way to know what constitutes a "good" request is to pray Scripture—simply use God's own words in the Bible to pray back to Him. This is ALWAYS a good (and fun!) strategy for prayer (and for how we speak to other people, too!).

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Monday, October 3, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Word.

-Enjoy the psalmist's delight in God's creation by reading **Psalm 104**. (Our word *darkness* is in v.20)

"O Lord my God, you are very great! You are clothed with splendor and majesty, 2 covering yourself with light as with a garment, stretching out the heavens like a tent. 3 He lays the beams of his chambers on the waters; he makes the clouds his chariot; he rides on the wings of the wind; 4 he makes his messengers winds, his ministers a flaming fire. 5 He set the earth on its foundations, so that it should never be moved. 6 You covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. 7 At your rebuke they fled; at the sound of your thunder they took to flight. 8 The mountains rose, the valleys sank down to the place that you appointed for them. 9 You set a boundary that they may not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth. 10 You make springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills; 11 they give drink to

every beast of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst. 12 Beside them the birds of the heavens dwell; they sing among the branches. 13 From your lofty abode you water the mountains; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work. 14 You cause the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth 15 and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine and bread to strengthen man's heart. 16 The trees of the Lord are watered abundantly, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted. 17 In them the birds build their nests; the stork has her home in the fir trees. 18 The high mountains are for the wild goats; the rocks are a refuge for the rock badgers. 19 He made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun knows its time for setting. 20 You make **darkness**, and it is **night**, when all the beasts of the forest creep about. 21 The young lions roar for their prey, seeking their food from God. 22 When the sun rises, they steal away and lie down in their dens. 23 Man goes out to his work and to his labor until the evening. 24 O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. 25 Here is the sea, great and wide, which teems with creatures innumerable, living things both small and great. 26 There go the ships, and Leviathan, which you formed to play in it. 27 These all look to you, to give them their food in due season. 28 When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things. 29 When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. 30 When you send forth your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground. 31 May the glory of the Lord endure forever; may the Lord rejoice in his works, 32 who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke! 33 I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being. 34 May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the Lord. 35 Let sinners be consumed from the earth, and let the wicked be no more! Bless the Lord, O my soul! Praise the Lord!"

- v.1-2 How is God clothed? _____
 -v.5 Can anything besides God move the foundation of the earth? _____
 -v.13 What is earth satisfied with? _____
 -v.20 What does God do daily? _____
 -v.27 When does God feed His creatures? _____
 -v.33 What should our response to all this be? _____

Something to Think About: My husband and I just got back from spending a few days in a remote location in northern New Hampshire. We were staying in a friend's lovely vacation home—which is my idea of what camping should look like (inside—with a working bathroom, electricity, a comfy bed, and a well-stocked fridge!). The house is surrounded by trees, yet it sits on a hill that overlooks a large and beautiful valley (all of which is actually Canada!). We enjoy so much studying the trees and wildlife that shows itself to us and simply enjoying the mystery of a foggy morning, the glories of a warm sunny afternoon, and the invigorating chilliness of dusk. It's a teeny tiny glimpse of the incredible world that God made to bring Himself glory and to bless and benefit us.

Say, have you ever taken the time to learn a little bit more about the creation around your home and in your home state? What kinds of trees grow there? What makes them unique? What flowers do well there? What weeds are the prettiest? Does a particular butterfly love to wander in your yard? Any unique and nifty birds? Do you see wild animals such as raccoons, skunks, beavers, foxes, bear, deer, or moose? Have you ever taken the time to examine closely the fine details of a blade of grass or the tiny bits and pieces that make up a stone?

It's a SUPER INCREDIBLE world that God has given us. We would do well to pause from our busy little schedules as often as possible to simply enjoy it. To breathe it in—and thank God. To tell Him what a wonderful job He did. To share some precious little detail we noticed by way of a testimony to others. To, perhaps, follow the psalmist's example and sing a song of praise to our Creator, Father, and God.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, October 4, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Word.

-Psalm 139 is a well known and much loved Psalm. Read it to find out what God says about darkness by reading verses 1-12. (Our word is in v.11, 12)

"O Lord, you have searched me and known me! 2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. 3 You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. 4 Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether. 5 You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it. 7 Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? 8 If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! 9 If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, 10 even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. 11 If I say, "Surely the **darkness** shall cover me, and the light about me be **night**," 12 even the **darkness** is not **dark** to you; the night is bright as the day, for **darkness** is as light with you."

-v.11 What do people commonly believe will hide them from God? _____

-v.12 Does it? _____

-Why not? _____

Something to Think About: There is a good news/bad news truth here. The bad news is, we cannot hide from God. He knows everything about us down to our smallest thought! We can never "get away" with anything! The good news is, we cannot hide from God. He is not hindered in His sovereign knowledge or actions by darkness or night. He cares for us. He cares about us. He wants to weed out every last offensive way in us.

Have you tried to fool yourself into thinking God doesn't see some "small" thing in your life? We only fool ourselves when we think this way—and we rob ourselves of God's full blessing because we cannot fully serve Him when we have something hidden in a dark place of our heart.

As a child of God, we can be equally comforted and at peace in a sunny place and throughout the darkest of nights because GOD is our place of refuge and Source of strength.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, October 5, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Word.

-Psalm 18 and II Samuel 22 have much material in common. They are both written by David to thank God for saving him from his enemies. **Read Psalm 18:1-28**, focusing on what God has to say about darkness. (Our word v.9, 11, 28)

“I love you, O Lord, my strength. 2 The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. 3 I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies. 4 The cords of death encompassed me; the torrents of destruction assailed me; 5 the cords of Sheol entangled me; the snares of death confronted me. 6 In my distress I called upon the Lord; to my God I cried for help. From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears. 7 Then the earth reeled and rocked; the foundations also of the mountains trembled and quaked, because he was angry. 8 Smoke went up from his nostrils, and devouring fire from his mouth; glowing coals flamed forth from him. 9 He bowed the heavens and came down; thick **darkness** was under his feet. 10 He rode on a cherub and flew; he came swiftly on the wings of the wind. 11 He made **darkness** his covering, his canopy around him, thick clouds dark with water. 12 Out of the brightness before him hailstones and coals of fire broke through his clouds. 13 The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Most High uttered his voice, hailstones and coals of fire. 14 And he sent out his arrows and scattered them; he flashed forth lightnings and routed them. 15 Then the channels of the sea were seen, and the foundations of the world were laid bare at your rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of your nostrils. 16 He sent from on high, he took me; he drew me out of many waters. 17 He rescued me from my strong enemy and from those who hated me, for they were too mighty for me. 18 They confronted me in the day of my calamity, but the Lord was my support. 19 He brought me out into a broad place; he rescued me, because he delighted in me. 20 The Lord dealt with me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands he rewarded me. 21 For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God. 22 For all his rules were before me, and his statutes I did not put away from me. 23 I was blameless before him, and I kept myself from my guilt. 24 So the Lord has rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight. 25 With the merciful you show yourself merciful; with the blameless man you show yourself blameless; 26 with the purified you show yourself pure; and with the crooked you make yourself seem tortuous. 27 For you save a humble people, but the haughty eyes you bring down. 28 For it is you who light my lamp; the Lord my God lightens my **darkness**.

-v.1 What is one reason David declares his love for God? _____

-v.2 What other adjectives support this? _____

-v.3 What is God worthy of? _____

-How is the word “dark” used in verse 9 & 11? _____

-v.19 Why did God rescue David? _____

-v.28 What does David credit God for doing? _____

Something to Think About: Are you facing a “darkness” today? A frightening financial situation? Lack of security in your current job? A friend who has turned on you and is making your life miserable? A serious medical issue—or harder yet—a serious medical issue in a loved one? A loss that is impossible to fill? Or simply the doubts, discouragements, and struggles that we all face day to day wondering how we will manage the day, let alone the week or year?

David lays it all before the Lord. He acknowledges that it is God alone Who is able to “light his lamp” and lighten his darkness. God is so gracious—and He gives us all sorts of evidences of His love: our closest family members, our most precious church members, our pastor and deacons, dearly-appreciated friends. . . But in the end (and the beginning and every moment in between), all that truly matters is us and our Lord. It is He Who created us to be exactly who we are (and in the time and place of His perfect choosing), it is He Who chose to save us and adopt us into His family even before He set the foundations of the world into place. It is He Who fashioned the exquisite and perfect plan of salvation—the ONLY WAY possible for you and me to

have our sins forgiven and become a new creation IN CHRIST. It is He Who provides our every breath, our every beat of our heart. It is the GOD ALMIGHTY Who loves YOU with a love that is, frankly, beyond our capability of even beginning to comprehend.

This is our Father and our Savior, the One we can (and must) trust with every bit of our struggles. He is leaning toward you, yearning to lighten that load you carry. Are you going to give it to Him? Trust Him to deal with it as only He can—perfectly?

Oh, how thankful we should be to have our Father in heaven! How we should be praising Him with every breath. How we should be enjoying the refuge He provides constantly and without fail.

“I love you, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved . . . In my distress I called upon the Lord; to my God I cried for help. From His temple He heard my voice, and my cry to him reached His ears. . . the Lord was my support. He brought me out into a broad place; He rescued me, because He delighted in me. . . the Lord my God lightens my darkness.”

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Thursday, October 6, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Word.

-Darkness is frequently used as a punishment for the wicked. Summarize the following passages:

Exodus 10:21-22

“Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be **darkness** over the land of Egypt, a **darkness** to be felt.” So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was pitch **darkness** in all the land of Egypt three days.”

Psalms 35:4-6

“Let them be put to shame and dishonor who seek after my life! Let them be turned back and disappointed who devise evil against me! Let them be like chaff before the wind, with the angel of the Lord driving them away! Let their way be **dark** and slippery, with the angel of the Lord pursuing them!”

Proverbs 20:20

“If one curses his father or his mother, his lamp will be put out in utter **darkness**.”

Isaiah 13:9-10

“Behold, the day of the Lord comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the land a desolation and to destroy its sinners from it. For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be **dark** at its rising, and the moon will not shed its light.”

Something to Think About: I think there is a very good reason why so many children (and adults!) are afraid of the dark. It is where evil does its best work. It is also one way God judges sin! Throughout Scripture, the solution is very clear—walk WITH God. He is light and in Him there is no darkness at all (I John 1:5). Do you have trouble with being afraid at night? Don’t count sheep, talk with the Shepherd.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Friday, October 7, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Word.

-Other Scripture provides a contrast between rewards for the righteous and discipline for the wicked. Summarize the following passages:

Deuteronomy 28:1-2,15,29

“And if you faithfully obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the Lord your God. . . But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord your God or be careful to do all his commandments and his statutes that I command you today, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you. . . and you shall grope at noonday, as the blind grope in **darkness**, and you shall not prosper in your ways. And you shall be only oppressed and robbed continually, and there shall be no one to help you.”

I Samuel 2:9

“He will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in **darkness**, for not by might shall a man prevail.”

Psalms 107:10-14

“Some sat in **darkness** and in the shadow of death, prisoners in affliction and in irons, for they had rebelled

against the words of God, and spurned the counsel of the Most High. So he bowed their hearts down with hard labor; they fell down, with none to help. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. He brought them out of **darkness** and the shadow of death, and burst their bonds apart.”

Something to Think About: Even worldly counselors know the value of both negative consequences and positive reinforcement when trying to help someone change their behavior. For example, a grade school teacher may have a demerit system in place for bad behavior, but a prize box full of stickers, fun erasers, and other treats to reward the children who are following the rules and choosing to do their best. Where do you think humans got this valuable and effective idea??? (hint: the Bible has ALL the answers we need in life!)

There is a big difference, though, between human incentives and God’s. God’s rewards and punishments are a huge deal—affecting both now and all of eternity. How much better to not only choose to obey God and please Him, but to DELIGHT in doing so. His “prize box” is out of this world!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Saturday, October 8, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Word.

-Summarize what the following passages have to say about how God rewards those who live obedient lives before Him:

Psalms 91:1-6

“He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, “My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.” For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler. You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in **darkness**, nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.”

Psalms 112:1-4

“Praise the LORD! Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who greatly delights in his commandments!

His offspring will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed. Wealth and riches are in his house, and his righteousness endures forever. Light dawns in the **darkness** for the upright; he is gracious, merciful, and righteous.”

Isaiah 9:1-7

“But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in **darkness** have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep **darkness**, on them has light shone. You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.”

Something to Think About: When we dwell in the shelter of the Most High and rest in the shadow of the Almighty, God will help us not be afraid of the terrors of the dark. When we fear the Lord and delight in His commands, He will light our darkness. But, the greatest blessing of all is that Jesus, the “Great Light,” came to pay the price for our sin on our behalf—and is coming again to forever dispel evil and darkness. Keep yearning toward that blessed day!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Sunday, October 9, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Word.

-The New Testament teaches us how the coming of Jesus, THE Light, dispels darkness.

-Read John 1:1-18 (v.5)

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the **darkness**, and the **darkness** has not overcome it. 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. 8 He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. 9 The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. 11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. 12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. 15 (John bore witness about him, and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.’”) 16 For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. 17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and

truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known."

- v.1 What three things are taught about the Word? _____
- v.2 How long has the Word been with God? _____
- v.3 What did the Word do? _____
- v.4 What was in the Word? _____
- v.5 Where does His light shine? _____

Something to Think About: To dispel darkness look no further than Jesus Christ, the Word. Our Bible, the written Word of God (and the record of the character and actions of Jesus Christ), has the answers. We need to both search it as if for valuable treasures and obey it wholeheartedly and completely. No other Book ever written can even begin to compare with it. Why? This is the only one God wrote—and He wrote it to us!

BONUS: I love the end of verse 18: Jesus Christ has made God the Father "known." Have you considered lately that you, as His child, also make God known? The sobering reality is that we don't necessarily (unlike Jesus) make God known accurately. It is only when we speak and act in keeping with God's character that we are reflecting His glorious light in this dark world. Let's commit to praying for each other every day so that our light reflects Christ's light—and all who see us give God the glory!

-You and the Lord:

- Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

- What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

- What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

- Today's top few prayer requests:

Monday, October 10, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Word.

-Read John 3:1-21 (v.19)

"Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him." 3 Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." 4 Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" 5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' 8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." 9 Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" 10 Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? 11 Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. 12 If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? 13 No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. 14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. 16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his

only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. 19 And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the **darkness** rather than the light because their works were evil. 20 For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. 21 But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”

- v.19 What do people love? _____
- Why? _____
- v.20 Who hates light? _____
- What are they afraid of? _____
- v.21 What do people who live by God’s truth come into? _____
- What is plainly seen? _____

Something to Think About: As a parent, if we come across our young child sitting in a dark corner, doing “something” in their closet, or otherwise clearly hiding from us, we tend to get suspicious. This is, of course, only after they are old enough to recognize that what they are doing is wrong. Many a toddler has committed some grave infraction in full view of their parents without concern for repercussions whatsoever. They have to learn that bad behavior brings about unpleasant results. This is, in fact, a tremendously valuable lesson—because these sorts of life lessons carry tremendous spiritual application, too. A huge reason why it’s so important to teach our children to obey is so that as they grow they will also learn to obey God. But, I digress. . .

Once children are old enough to recognize that what they want to do will be punished if caught, they may try to sneak and do what they want out of sight so as to not get caught. They quickly learn, however, that disobedience coupled with deceit carries a more harsh judgment! Sadly, we sometimes try to “pull one over” on God even as adults.

Unlike human parents, God ALWAYS knows what we are doing (He even knows the motivation of our hearts!). He knows when we have disobeyed (sinned!) and He knows that left unconfessed, sin births a whole lot of ugliness, sorrow, and heartache. He wants us to “come to the light,” confess sin, and make it right with Him. He wants us, in fact, to LIVE in the light, choosing to NOT sin in the first place. But, like the kind of parent who loves their child deeply, God always forgives us, always returns us to sweet fellowship with Himself, and always encourages us to do right.

BONUS: If we have known sin in our life—and we refuse to confess it and repent from it—we are living in darkness. We will not have peace. We may worry that another godly person will expose it, making us unsettled and grumpy. Joy, blessing, peace—and light – come to those who are right with God. Make it a habit to pray often and ask God to show to you even the smallest thing that isn’t right with Him so that you can bring it to the light by confessing it right away and asking His forgiveness. When we do, we are immediately right with Him and all is GOOD.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, October 11, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Word.

-Read John 8:12-19 (v.12 has our word)

“Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in **darkness**, but will have the light of life.” 13 So the Pharisees said to him, “You are bearing witness about yourself; your testimony is not true.” 14 Jesus answered, “Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. 15 You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. 16 Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. 17 In your Law it is written that the testimony of two people is true. 18 I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me.” 19 They said to him therefore, “Where is your Father?” Jesus answered, “You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also.”

-8:12 What did Jesus call Himself? _____

-What is true for all who follow Him? _____

Something to Think About: Are you dissatisfied with how your life is going? Do you feel “thirsty” for something more or something different? Are you walking around in darkness? The key to your satisfaction lies with Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He shows us Who God is and how to please Him. Jesus provides access to the Holy Spirit. He brings guidance and direction to the dark world we live in. Pray and thank God for all He provides through His Son. Then pour yourself into deep study of Scripture followed by living out what you learn. Thirst and darkness will fall away.

Here's a special song that addresses this topic: "Nothing More Than Him"

<https://youtu.be/KEEpAlmCoSI>

(type this address into your search bar or go to YouTube and type in the search bar “choir sings nothing more than him”)

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, October 12, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Word.

-Read John 12:35-50 (v.35, 46)

“So Jesus said to them, “The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest **darkness** overtake you. The one who walks in the **darkness** does not know where he is going. 36 While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.” When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them. 37 Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not be-

lieve in him, 38 so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: “Lord, who has believed what he heard from us, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?” 39 Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said, 40 “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them.” 41 Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him. 42 Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; 43 for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God. 44 And Jesus cried out and said, “Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. 45 And whoever sees me sees him who sent me. 46 I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in **darkness**. 47 If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. 48 The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. 49 For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. 50 And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me.”

- v.35 What did Jesus warn could overtake them? _____
- Who doesn't know where he is going? _____
- v.36 How can we become sons of light? _____
- v.43 What tragic truth is mentioned here? _____
- v.46 Why did Jesus come into the world as a light? _____
- v.50 Jesus spoke as the _____ told Him to.

Something to Think About: The obvious lesson here has to do with obeying God in order to not walk (live in) darkness. But I love verse 50, too. Jesus states His 100% confidence in God the Father as well as His commitment to speak only what the Father has told Him to say. What a marvelous model for us! Not sure what to say to a hurting sister in Christ? Repeat God's words. Not sure what to say during testimony time? Quote Scripture. Not sure how to effectively pray? Pray God's words right back to Him. They are truth and they are light.

P.S. Don't miss the clear message here that in order to have a relationship to God—to light—we need to trust in Jesus Christ as the Savior from the sin all humans are born with. All humans are born condemned by their sin to an eternity apart from God in the Lake of Fire, but because of God's great love for us, He sent His sinless Son, Jesus Christ, to become a Man so that He could die on our behalf, taking upon Himself the punishment for our sin (though, He Himself was completely innocent). Jesus Christ became the Substitute for us so that we can become children of God simply by believing we are sinners, Jesus died to pay for our sin, and Jesus rose again to life after three days, forever defeating sin and death. Check out John 3:16, Ephesians 2:8-9, John 1:12, Romans 3:23, and Romans 6:23. If you are not 100% certain of your salvation, be sure to BE SURE today!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Thursday, October 13, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Word.

-Read Mark 1:35-39 (v.35)

“And rising very early in the morning, while it was still **dark**, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. 36 And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, 37 and they found him and said to him, “Everyone is looking for you.” 38 And he said to them, “Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.” 39 And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.”

- v.35 When did Jesus get up and go out? _____
- Why did He go to a solitary place? _____
- v.38 Why did Jesus want to go to a village? _____
- v.39 Did He take a break after that? _____

Something to Think About: Apparently, Jesus felt the need to pray was so important that He both got up very early (though He was almost certainly exhausted) and put in the effort to find a quiet place where He could talk with His Father one-on-one.

Have you remembered that Jesus’ Father is our Father too? We need to often remind ourselves of this astounding truth. We also need to push ourselves a bit more to have quality time in prayer with God. How else can we properly thank Him for His constant care and ask for His direction in every detail of the day?

BONUS: Here are some precious verses about prayer to prayerfully contemplate:

“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6-7

“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.” 1 John 5:14

“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.” Colossians 4:2

“Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.” Jeremiah 29:12

“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.” Romans 12:12

“The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.” Psalm 145:18

“Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.” Jeremiah 33:3

“Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” Hebrews 4:16

“In my distress I called to the Lord; I cried to my God for help. From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came before him, into his ears.” Psalm 18:6

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Friday, October 14, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Word.

-Read John 6:16-24 (v.17)

"When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, 17 got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now **dark**, and Jesus had not yet come to them. 18 The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. 19 When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were frightened. 20 But he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." 21 Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going. 22 On the next day the crowd that remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. 23 Other boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. 24 So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus."

-v.16 Who went to the lake? _____

-v.16,17 What time of the day did they get into the boat? _____

-v.18 What happened? _____

-v.19 What miraculous thing did they see? _____

-What was their response? _____

-v.20 What did Jesus say? _____

-v.21 What happened immediately after Jesus got in the boat? _____

Something to Think About: I love verse 20. Jesus said, "It is I." Because of Who He is, they had no reason to fear. The same is true for us. God—the Keeper and Sustainer of all —is watching over us constantly in a way that we cannot even fully understand because it is so far superior to even the most tender loving care one human being can give another.

When you are afraid, remember Who your heavenly Father is, the Great I AM.

BONUS: Bible verses about fear:

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." Isaiah 41:10

"When I am afraid, I put my trust in you." Psalm 56:3

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6-7

"For I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you." Isaiah 41:13

“The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?” Psalm 118:6

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Saturday, October 15, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Word.

-There are three occasions when Jesus taught a parable where the punishment would be to be cast into outer darkness. These are extremely difficult passages to understand, but there are some truths in these passages we should know.

-Read Matthew 8:5-13 (v.12)

“When he had entered Capernaum, a centurion came forward to him, appealing to him, 6 “Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly.” 7 And he said to him, “I will come and heal him.” 8 But the centurion replied, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. 9 For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes, and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.” 10 When Jesus heard this, he marveled and said to those who followed him, “Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith. 11 I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, 12 while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer **darkness**. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” 13 And to the centurion Jesus said, “Go; let it be done for you as you have believed.” And the servant was healed at that very moment.”

-v.5 Who came to Jesus for help? _____

-v.7 Was Jesus willing to help? _____

-v.8-9 What did the Centurion ask Jesus to do instead of coming? _____

-v.10 What was Jesus’ reaction to his faith? _____

-v.12 Some people who try to eat at the feast in the kingdom of heaven will find themselves somewhere else. Where? _____

Something to Think About: I am certainly not going to pretend that I understand everything this passage is teaching—especially not where and what this awful darkness is. What I do see, however, is that Jesus considers how much faith we place in Him a huge deal. So, what about you? How much do you really trust Him? Does what you say you believe show itself in how you behave? How quickly do you panic when “things go wrong?” When you have a question about life, who or where do you turn to for answers? When the budget is tight, do you trust God by giving Him your tithe or do you “skip” that week? When someone mistreats you, do you get even or do you trust God to make things right in His timing and manner? When someone asks you to serve in church in some capacity, do you shrink and hide or jump in, trusting God to help you do a good job? God takes our faith—or lack of it—very seriously and we should too.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Sunday, October 16, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Word.

-Read Matthew 22:1-14 (v.13)

"And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, 2 "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, 3 and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. 4 Again he sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast."' 5 But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, 6 while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. 7 The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. 8 Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. 9 Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.' 10 And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests. 11 "But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. 12 And he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. 13 Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer **darkness**. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' 14 For many are called, but few are chosen."

-v.2 What did the king prepare? _____

-v.3 What happened when the servant issued invitations? _____

-v.6 How were some servants treated? _____

-v.7 How did the king respond? _____

-v.8-10 How was the wedding hall filled with guests? _____

-v.11-13 Why was one guest thrown into outer darkness? _____

Something to Think About: This passage is the hardest one of the three "outer darkness" passages to figure out. It may well have to do with the Hebrew people rejecting God after He chose them as His special people, so God chose to include the Gentiles as well.

Clearly, no one rejects God without severe consequences. In addition, God cares for His servants and will punish those who mistreat them. Next, God is gracious and extends mercy to the undeserving. Lastly, God cannot be fooled. He knows who belongs to Him and who doesn't. He knows if what is seen on the outside does not match what is on the inside. We need to thank God that He invited US to the wedding feast for Jesus, our Bridegroom. What an incredible day that will be—and sooner than we think!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Monday, October 17, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Word.

-Read Matthew 25:14-30 (v.30)

"For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. 15 To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. 16 He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. 17 So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. 18 But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. 19 Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. 20 And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.' 21 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' 22 And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.' 23 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' 24 He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, 25 so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.' 26 But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? 27 Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. 28 So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. 29 For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. 30 And cast the worthless servant into the outer **darkness**. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"

-v.14 What did the man trust his servants with? _____

-v.18 What was different about this servant? _____

-v.21,23 What was the master's response to the two men who multiplied their talents? _____

-v.26 What was the third man called? _____

-v.28, 30 What punishments was he given? _____

Something to Think About: This third "darkness" passage is clearly addressing believers. What we do—or don't do—for God in this life matters in an enormous way. We know heaven is full of God's light, and there is no sadness there, and yet, this servant is punished by being thrown into the outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. I don't have the answers, but even I can see that we must serve God wholeheartedly today in order to one day hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things. Come and share your Master's happiness!"

Prayerfully consider if there are areas in your life where you are holding back or not giving your all. How might you change this so that you and your Father are able to enjoy an even closer, sweeter relationship?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, October 18, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Word.

-Read Luke 22:47-53 (v.53)

"While he was still speaking, there came a crowd, and the man called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He drew near to Jesus to kiss him, 48 but Jesus said to him, "Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" 49 And when those who were around him saw what would follow, they said, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" 50 And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. 51 But Jesus said, "No more of this!" And he touched his ear and healed him. 52 Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders, who had come out against him, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs? 53 When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of **darkness.**"

-v.47 How did Judas betray Jesus? _____

-Were there witnesses? _____

-v.50-51 Did Jesus want to fight His arresters? _____

-v.52 What did Jesus think was unnecessary? _____

-v.53 How did He describe the hour at hand? _____

Something to Think About: I wonder sometimes if satan was happy that night– when "darkness reigned." On one hand, he must have been. Jesus was on His way to the cross. On the other hand, satan is extremely intelligent and he knew exactly what Jesus would accomplish with His death, burial, and resurrection—salvation for you and me.

Satan knows he is on the losing side, yet he never gives up. By way of contrast, we are on the winning side, but often throw in the towel when life seems too hard. Does that make sense to you? Never, ever give up on doing right. Never, for even one second, stop trusting in God for help, strength, and wisdom. And NEVER doubt His love!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, October 19, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Word.

-Read Matthew 27:32-54 (v.45)

"As they went out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. They compelled this man to carry his cross. 33 And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), 34 they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. 35 And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots. 36 Then they sat down and kept watch over him there. 37 And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." 38 Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. 39 And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads 40 and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." 41 So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, 42 "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. 43 He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" 44 And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way. 45 Now from the sixth hour there was **darkness** over all the land until the ninth hour. 46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" 47 And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, "This man is calling Elijah." 48 And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. 49 But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." 50 And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. 51 And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. 52 The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, 53 and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. 54 When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

-v.45 How long did darkness come over the land? _____

-v.46 What did Jesus ask the Father? _____

-v.50 How do we know from this verse that Jesus allowed Himself to die? _____

-v.51 What else happened in the natural world besides darkness? _____

-v.54 What did the soldiers conclude? _____

Something to Think About: There are several occasions where nature itself yielded to God's anguish or joy. In this instance, Jesus' suffering was so great, the sun couldn't even shine! Why was He suffering? For you and me. Our sin, which He bore on the cross, forced God the Father to turn away from Him, creating a first-ever rift in the perfect unity of the Trinity. Wow. Have you thanked Jesus lately for His sacrifice? Have you thanked the Father for His loving plan? Perhaps the next time we experience a dark, stormy day we will remember what Jesus sacrificed on our behalf. Maybe we could even use it as a witnessing opportunity! The next time someone comments on a dark, stormy day, take it as an opening to tell them about the day Jesus sacrificed Himself on their behalf!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Thursday, October 20, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Word.

-Read John 20:1-18 (v.1)

"Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still **dark**, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. 2 So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." 3 So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. 4 Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, 7 and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. 8 Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; 9 for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. 10 Then the disciples went back to their homes. 11 But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. 12 And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. 13 They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." 14 Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. 15 Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." 16 Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). 17 Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" 18 Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"—and that he had said these things to her."

-v.1 Who came to the tomb while it was still dark? _____

-What did she see? _____

-v.2 Who did she tell? _____

-v.3 What did they do? _____

-v.5-7 What did they find? _____

-v.16 Who is the first person Jesus spoke to after He was resurrected? _____

-v.17 What did He tell Mary to do? _____

-v.18 What did she tell them? _____

Something to Think About: It is interesting that the first person to go to Jesus' tomb while it was still dark was the one who saw Him first after His resurrection. I have no idea if that is especially significant, but I do know that God richly rewards our labor and sacrifice for Him. This makes me want to get up a bit earlier, work a bit harder, and live a lot more faithfully.

FYI

-It is supposed that Peter was the oldest of the disciples and John ("the other disciple whom Jesus loved") was the youngest, so it makes sense that John would outrun Peter. As the youngest, however, he showed respect and waited for Peter to enter the tomb first.

-The first day of the week is Sunday (which, as you might recall from a past lesson, begins at dusk Saturday night as far as the Hebrews were concerned). Because Jesus was resurrected on a Sunday, we in the Church Age, have Sunday as our day to meet together for preaching, worship, and fellowship.

-The way the burial cloth and face covering were placed indicated that the grave was NOT robbed—and that something special occurred here.

-John's belief wasn't in Jesus for salvation. All the disciples had placed their faith in Jesus as Savior very early in Jesus' ministry. This was belief in the bodily resurrection.

-Mary was given tremendous gifts that resurrection morning—even though at first she was completely over-

whelmed with grief. She was the first to discover the empty tomb, she met two angels face to face, and most importantly, she was the first to see and speak with the resurrected Lord.

-We're not sure why Mary was unable to recognize Jesus right away. There could be many reasons—including that our resurrected bodies may appear a tad different than our pre-resurrection bodies. We don't know. What's precious here, though, is how Jesus speaking Mary's name is all it took for her to recognize Him. He, of course, knew exactly who she was. Such precious truths to consider!

-What did YOU notice here that was a special blessing to you?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Friday, October 21, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Word.

-Read Acts 26:1-23 (v.18)

"So Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself." Then Paul stretched out his hand and made his defense: 2 "I consider myself fortunate that it is before you, King Agrippa, I am going to make my defense today against all the accusations of the Jews, 3 especially because you are familiar with all the customs and controversies of the Jews. Therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently. 4 "My manner of life from my youth, spent from the beginning among my own nation and in Jerusalem, is known by all the Jews. 5 They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest party of our religion I have lived as a Pharisee. 6 And now I stand here on trial because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers, 7 to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly worship night and day. And for this hope I am accused by Jews, O king! 8 Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead? 9 "I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 And I did so in Jerusalem. I not only locked up many of the saints in prison after receiving authority from the chief priests, but when they were put to death I cast my vote against them. 11 And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme, and in raging fury against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities. 12 "In this connection I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. 13 At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, that shone around me and those who journeyed with me. 14 And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' 15 And I said, 'Who are you, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. 16 But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, 17 delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you 18 to open their eyes, so that they may turn from **darkness** to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.' 19 "Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, 20 but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance. 21 For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. 22 To this day I have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: 23 that the Christ must suffer and that, by

being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles.”

- v.6 Why did Paul say he was on trial? _____
- v.9 What had Paul been convinced of at one time? _____
- v.10-11 What was Paul’s habit? _____
- v.13 Describe the light Paul saw. _____
- v.15 Who did he hear call him by name? _____
- v.16 What was Paul appointed to be and do? _____
- v.18 What was Paul to turn the Gentiles away from? _____
- Why? _____
- v.19-20 Did Paul obey God? _____

Something to Think About: I love Paul’s whole-hearted devotion to what he was convinced was the right thing. He later learned he was wrong to condemn followers of Jesus, but when he thought it was the right thing to do, he gave it his all. More importantly, when Jesus confronted him with his sin, he immediately turned away from it and pursued righteousness with every last ounce of his strength. Furthermore, he was willing to proclaim Christ’s light to the humblest servant and the mightiest king. We definitely can learn something from Paul’s testimony. We, too, must tell others what Jesus did for us so that they can also be rescued from darkness. We should do this wholeheartedly.

Who is God laying on YOUR heart to talk to first?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Saturday, October 22, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Word.

-Read Romans 13:8-14 (v.12)

“Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. 9 For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” 10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. 11 Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. 12 The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of **darkness** and put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.”

- v.8 What is one “debt” that should remain? _____
- v.9 How can the commandments be summed up? _____
- v.10 What does love not do? _____

- v.12 What must be put aside? _____
- What must be put on? _____
- v.13 How are we to behave? _____
- v.14 What must we not think about? _____
- How do we do that (by clothing ourselves with what)? _____

Something to Think About: The New Living Translation says, “*The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. So remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes, and put on the shining armor of right living. Because we belong to the day, we must live decent lives for all to see. Don’t participate in the darkness of wild parties and drunkenness, or in sexual promiscuity. Instead, clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And don’t let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires.*” (v.12-14)

What are you “wearing” today? Dirty clothes of dark deeds or the shining armor of right living?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Sunday, October 23, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Word.

-Read II Corinthians 6:14-18 (v.14)

“Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with **darkness**? 15 What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? 16 What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, 18 and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty.”

-v.14 Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with _____?

-v.15 What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an _____?

-v.16 What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For _____ the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

-v.17 Therefore go out from their midst, and be _____ from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you,

-v.18 and I will be a _____ to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty.”

Something to Think About: Believers aren’t to isolate ourselves from unbelievers, but neither are we to team up or form partnerships with them either. We must do everything in our power to avoid anything or anyone

that might cause us to divide our loyalty to Christ. Why? We are the temple of the Living God! The Spirit of God resides within us. Our behavior represents Who and what God is to the people who see us. Separation from the world involves staying close to God—and it also means keeping ourselves from sinful practices and those who do them.

I normally try to list some examples of right behavior and/or wrong behavior based on a Bible passage in these devotions, but how about you do this for me today? What behaviors/actions/attitudes do you think fit a partnership with the world and which ones demonstrate we are sons and daughters of God Almighty? (Be as specific as possible with your illustrations.)

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Monday, October 24, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Word.

-Read Ephesians 4:17-32 (v.18)

“Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. 18 They are **darkened** in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. 19 They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. 20 But that is not the way you learned Christ!— 21 assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, 22 to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. 25 Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. 26 Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and give no opportunity to the devil. 28 Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. 29 Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”

-v.18 The Gentiles are darkened _____ and alienated from the _____
_____ because of ignorance due to hardening their hearts.

- v.19 Their hardness of heart has caused them to become greedy to practice every kind of _____.
- v.22 We, however, must put off _____
- v.23 What must be made new? _____
- v.24 What must we put on? _____
- What is the new self like? _____
- v.30 What happens when we sin with word, deed, or attitude? _____

Something to Think About: God has a definite plan for how a believer should think and act. He/she is to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. He must never grieve the Holy Spirit Who resides in him.

Can people see God's light in you? Do you need to "put off" anything?

Here is a concrete list of areas to work on as a new creature in Christ based on this passage:

- No longer "walk" with the same futile outlook that you did before your salvation. Instead, put effort into being like Jesus Christ, in true righteousness and holiness.
- Forever set aside the way you lived and thought before salvation, replacing it with the new life that God gifted to you as His child. This is going to start with what we allow (and don't allow!) into our minds.
- Make it your policy to only speak truth, but do so in LOVE.
- Decide to not lower yourself by feeling anger that is self-centered or born from arrogance or self-pity. It's okay, though, to hate sin and the effect sin has on people.
- Commit to being a hard worker every day, all day—regardless of whether others in your life are slacking or not. Use your strength and resources to be a help and blessing to others.
- Ask God for help to only always ever use your words to build others up in the things of the Lord and never to tear them down or "put them in their place."
- Choose kindness. Choose to have a tender heart. Choose to forgive in the same selfless sacrificial way God forgives you when you fail.

Becoming like Christ is a process—a wonderful life-long, day-by-day attempt to change bit by bit. The rewards, well, let's just say they are heavenly!

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Tuesday, October 25, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Word.

-Read Ephesians 5:1-21 (v.8, 11)

"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. 3 But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. 4 Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. 5 For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these

things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. 7 Therefore do not become partners with them; 8 for at one time you were **darkness**, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), 10 and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. 11 Take no part in the unfruitful works of **darkness**, but instead expose them. 12 For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. 13 But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, 14 for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, “Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” 15 Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, 19 addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, 20 giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21 submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

- v.1 Who are we to imitate? _____
- In what way? _____
- v.8 What were we? _____
- What are we now? _____
- How are we to live? _____
- v.9 Where is the fruit of the light found? _____
- v.10 What should we try to discern? _____
- v.11 What are we to do about the fruitless deeds of darkness? _____
- v.14 What/Who makes everything visible? _____

Something to Think About: Children love to imitate their parents and it can be pretty cute to see a mannerism from a dad or mom displayed in a small child. God wants us as His children to imitate Him. This passage gives a whole bunch of examples of good (light) and a whole bunch of examples of things to avoid (darkness). Study them well! We must display mannerisms of righteousness and not of wickedness—that would be like your tiny child imitating a drunk! How ugly! How awful! A small innocent child should never look or sound like that. Neither should we, daughters of the King of kings, display anything other than love, purity, selflessness, holiness, thankfulness, goodness, truth—always giving thanks to God the Father for EVERYTHING in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Wednesday, October 26, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Word.

-Read Ephesians 6:10-18 (v.12)

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present **darkness**, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. 14 Stand therefore, having fastened on the

belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. 16 In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; 17 and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, 18 praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints.”

- v.10 Where is strength found? _____
- v.11 What has God given us so we can stand against satan’s schemes? _____
- v. 12 What is our struggle against? _____
- v.13 Can we stand against all that? _____
- v.14 In fact, in what manner do we stand? _____
- v.18 What must we do while standing? _____

Something to Think About: We CAN stand firmly against the powers of this dark world! How thrilling! How? In the Lord. In His mighty power. With the full armor of God. And, through prayer, on all occasions.

Can you see how critical it is to remain in a close walk with Jesus Christ? Are you standing? Are you standing firm? You can—in Christ’s awesome power.

-You and the Lord:

- Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture: _____
- _____
- _____
- What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it? _____
- _____
- _____
- What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture? _____
- _____
- _____
- Today’s top few prayer requests: _____
- _____
- _____

Thursday, October 27, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Word.

-Read I John 1:5—2:11 (1:5,6; 2:8, 9, 11)

“This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no **darkness** at all. 6 If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in **darkness**, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. . . My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 2 He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. 3 And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. 4 Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, 5 but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: 6 whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked. 7 Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old com-

mandment is the word that you have heard. 8 At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the **darkness** is passing away and the true light is already shining. 9 Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in **darkness**. 10 Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. 11 But whoever hates his brother is in the **darkness** and walks in the **darkness**, and does not know where he is going, because the **darkness** has blinded his eyes.”

-Summarize what these verses say about darkness:

-1:5 _____
-1:6 _____
-2:8 _____
-2:9 _____
-2:11 _____

Something to Think About: Christ represents what is good, true, and holy. Darkness represents what is evil and false. Walking in the light is characterized by holiness and truth. Walking in the darkness is characterized by wickedness and error.

What does your life indicate about your walk? Evaluate it in several areas: words, attitudes, relationships, responses to trials, faithfulness in church attendance, thinking of others before self—and any other category that God brings to your mind.

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today’s Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today’s Scripture?

-Today’s top few prayer requests:

Friday, October 28, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Word.

-Read II Corinthians 4:1-6 (v.6)

“Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. 2 But we have re-nounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God’s word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone’s conscience in the sight of God. 3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5 For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. 6 For God, who said, “Let light shine out of **darkness**,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

-v.1 Who is the one Who blesses us with ministries to do for Him? _____

- v.3 Who is the gospel veiled to? _____
- v.4 Who is to blame for this? _____
- v.5 Christians aren't here to point others to themselves, but to Who? _____
- v.6 God said, "Let _____ shine out of _____." He has also shone this light in our _____, giving us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God as seen in the face of _____.

Something to Think About: As I was studying this passage to try to figure out what was going on, I was reminded of a chorus our church used to sing when I was a child. It was a happy tune—a tune of victory based on II Corinthians 5:17 (look it up!). This is it:

New Life in Christ by John W. Peterson:

New Life in Christ! Abundant and free!
 What glories shine, what joys are mine,
 What wondrous blessings I see!
 My past with its sin,
 The searching and strife,
 Forever gone, there's a bright new dawn!
 For in Christ I have found New Life!

You see, in much the same way that God spoke light into existence in our dark and formless world in Genesis 1, He ALSO created spiritual light in our empty, sin-darkened souls through the work of His Son, Jesus Christ, on the cross of Calvary. Also mentioned in verse 6 of today's text is the awesome truth that when Jesus became a human and walked this earth some 33 years, He ALSO displayed to us the glory of God. He demonstrated to us by His words, action, attitudes—everything, just WHO God is, what is important to Him, how to have our sin paid for, and how to live as His child in a way that honors Him, glorifies Him, pleases Him, and makes Him smile in pleasure watching us. Isn't that just too marvelous for words?

Even as we thank and praise God for this blessed gift, we mustn't forget those around us who are still blinded by satan's lies and deceit. He does NOT want any to come to salvation, so he uses media, misinformation, and outright lies to keep people from seeing the light of the gospel. Pray for their salvation! Pray for satan's defeat! Tell them how Jesus has brought light out of the darkness!

BONUS: Here are some other Bible verses that speak to some of the important topics Paul mentions in I Corinthians 4:1-6.

- Ephesians 4:17-24
- I Corinthians 2:14
- John 1:18
- Colossians 1:15

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Saturday, October 29, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Word.

-Read: I Thessalonians 5:1-11 (v.4,5)

“Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. 2 For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 While people are saying, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 4 But you are not in **darkness**, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. 5 For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the **darkness**. 6 So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. 8 But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.”

- v.2 What is like the coming of a thief in the night? _____
- v.4 Christians are not in _____, so this day cannot surprise us in the same way.
- v.5 Christians are children of _____ and of the _____.
- v.6 Therefore, keep _____ and _____.
- v.9 We are not destined for God’s wrath, but _____ through our Lord Jesus Christ.
- v.11 When we realize and appreciate the salvation Jesus Christ provided for us that also results in not having to undergo God’s wrath, what should we do with this truth? _____

Something to Think About: Today’s Scripture is an important contrast to what those who have trusted in Christ have to look forward to and what those who have not trusted in Christ have to dread. It is also an important reminder that Christians must not grow slack in our task to live wholeheartedly for God, to witness to the lost, and to encourage other believers and build each other up in the wonderful truths and promises of Scripture.

Perhaps it would be helpful to read what Paul wrote to these believers just prior to our passage today:

“But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words.” (I Thess. 4:13-18)

Scripture clearly teaches that Christians will not have to live through the Tribulation and the wrath of God. We will be taken from earth and brought to heaven (the Rapture) - which will be the mind-blowing beginning of a world that will never, ever be the same again. At this point, the Church Age is over and all the ugliness that we see around us will be magnified incredibly. We do NOT want our friends and loved ones to have to go through that! Don’t grow weary in telling what wonderful things Jesus did for them!

While the unsaved will be completely surprised by the sudden departure of Christians (surprise—like a thief showing up in the night in your house), the saved (children of light) need not fear because He Who promised is faithful and the promise of eternal life is a sure thing. We do, however, have important things to do “while it is still day.” Much of the New Testament, in fact, lists all sorts of ways we can show our love for God through obedience to what we read. The next paragraph of I Thessalonian 5, in fact, lists several things for us to be aware of. Read it prayerfully, asking God to show you how you can excel still more in your love for Him and for others of His children.

“We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for

you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil. Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it. Brothers, pray for us. Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss."

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Sunday, October 30, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Word.

-Read: I Peter 1:16-21

"For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," 18 we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. 19 And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a **dark place**, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, 20 knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. 21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

-v.16 Peter makes clear that what he is teaching them about Jesus Christ is not a cleverly devised _____.

-v.17 Who spoke about Jesus on the day Peter is referring to (Jesus' transfiguration)? _____

-What did God the Father say about Jesus? _____

-v.19 The prophetic word is like a lamp shining in a _____.

-v.20-21 Where does genuine prophecy come from and NOT come from? _____

Something to Think About: There are some pretty cool things in this passage, but let's begin by addressing the awesome reference to Psalm 119:105, "a lamp shining in a dark place." God's Word is that lamp—and everything we have to deal with in this dark world (and within ourselves in our battle against our sin nature) is the dark place. As we've seen time and time again in Bible verse after Bible verse, God's Word illumines, directs, imparts understanding, and gives direction to those who read it and obey it. It helps us navigate our way through the narrow road and gate to the place of God's blessing—where His light is shining and making everything beautiful, fulfilling, and full of hope. What an incredibly precious gift God gave us when He gave us His word in written form, the Bible!

Here are some fun facts and precious truths from these verses:

-Peter has been warning his readers about false teachers who were trying to mislead them about what was true and what wasn't (II Peter 2:3). He wanted them to know (v.16) that not only were they not "making up" the account of Jesus' transfiguration (Matthew 17, Mark 9, Luke 9), they were EYE WITNESSES to the event and saw it all (Peter, James, and John).

-BUT, says Peter, even though he was able to give his listeners his personal account of what happened on that mountain, he points out (v.19) that God's Word is an even more SURE source of truth—and all God wanted us to know in this current Age.

-Peter could never, ever, EVER forget God the Father saying audibly from the sky, "This is My Beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." You might recall that He also commanded them to "listen to Him" (that is, listen to all that Jesus had to say). See also Mark 1:11 and Luke 3:22.

-Did you wonder about the day dawning and the morning star rising? Peter is speaking of Jesus' return to rapture up all who have trusted in Him as their Savior and His return to earth 7 years later to begin His righteous rule over the entire world. What a day—and it's coming soon!!! Here are some Scripture passages that talk about this: Luke 1:78; Ephesians 5:14; Revelation 2:28; Revelation 22:16; Numbers 24:17; Isaiah 13:9; Joel 1:15; II Corinthians 4:6.

-Last, Peter reminds us that Scripture isn't a human construct. That being 100% true, it's ALSO true that God used humans to write it. The Holy Spirit used men of God's choosing (Moses, David, Samuel, Matthew, Luke, Peter, Paul—to name a few), making use of these individuals' personalities and experiences, but always only saying EXACTLY what He wanted them to say. It's a pretty amazing thing! See also II Timothy 3:16

-From The Expository Notes of Dr. Thomas Constable: *2 Peter 1:19 The morning star is the star (really a planet, usually Venus) that appears late at night just before dawn and announces the arrival of a new day. Just so, Jesus Christ's return at the Rapture will signal the beginning of a new day, the day of the Lord. "The day of the Lord," as the Old Testament prophets used it in reference to a far distant day in which God will act dramatically in history, includes the Tribulation and the Millennium.*

How about you? What blessed you in this passage? What caused you to sit up and take notice?

-You and the Lord:

-Name at least one thing you learned or were reminded about from today's Scripture:

-What about this blessed you, challenged you, or piqued your interest to maybe learn more about it?

-What would you like to thank God for or praise Him about based on today's Scripture?

-Today's top few prayer requests:

Monday, October 31, 2022

-Pray and ask God to help you understand His Word.

-Review Time! Look back on your work on the word "dark" and "darkness" that you have done this month.

-What have you learned that you didn't know before?

-How have you been challenged in your current walk with God?

-What are you going to do about it?

Are there any questions you have that need to be pursued?

-What words, concepts, truths do you feel the need to do more research on?

Things to pray about today:

Something to Think About: When sin came into the world it affected everything—including darkness. If we think about it, we can still think of many blessings associated with darkness, maybe especially a good night of sleep. How we appreciate our beds at night!

I love, too, the peaceful sounds of nighttime in the country, the blessings of sharing your heart with someone you love in a darkened room, and the incredible beauty of a nighttime sky full of stars.

But darkness is associated with scary things and bad things, too. One important truth to take from our study would have to be the fact that we do not belong to the dark in any way, shape, or form. Once we have believed in Jesus Christ as our Savior, we are now children of light. Our simple goal for every new day we are given here on earth is to live like it. To act like Jesus, the Light of the World, to think like Jesus, to pray like Jesus, to trust the Father like Jesus. When we do, darkness doesn't stand a chance!

Dear Student of the Word,

Thank you for joining me this year on an in-depth look at the words found in Psalm 119:105, "*Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.*" We have been looking at the five main words in this verse to find out how else the Bible uses them to help us to better understand not only each word, but the big picture of Psalm 119:105—a cherished verse to countless believers over the millennia.

It's time to begin wrapping up our study. Here's what we can look forward to: this month's work will focus first on what the Bible says that "children of light" (that is, all Christians) look like and act like, then we will study Scripture in order to summarize our 2022 words: "word," "lamp," "feet," "light," and "path." We then plan to do something a little unconventional for December by providing a devotional to read during the month that takes the concepts we've been learning, pulling it all back together again so that our understanding of Psalm 119:105 is more complete, more applicable to our daily lives, and even MORE beloved than it already was before this study was begun. At least, that's the prayer!

Speaking of prayer, thank you for praying for this ministry - the writing of it, the reading of it, and mostly, the spiritual growth that results when God's children understand God's Word in a deeper way and obey it more fully and with more joy.

The ladies of the First Baptist Church, North Conway, New Hampshire, will be meeting Monday, November 14th to review the first several lessons of this study. If you're in the area, you are welcome to join us. Whether you can or not, consider meeting up with a friend or two and reviewing your work together. It will be a blessing! I promise!

By His Grace,
Lorie

Scripture is taken from the ESV courtesy of BibleGateway.com.

Tuesday, November 1, 2022

-Take the time to ask God to bless your time in His Word. Ask for understanding, stick-to-it-ness to not rush through it, and strength and wisdom to apply it to your day and life.

-We will be focusing the first half of this month on what the Bible has to say about God’s children being “children of light.”

-Read Ephesians 5:8

“For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light”

-What were all Christians at one time? _____

-What are we now? _____

-How are we to walk? _____

Something to Think About:

We’re going to spend some time this month looking at passages that specifically address Christians as “children of light,” but, really, the entire Bible is the Guidebook for Christian living. It’s true that the Old Testament is mostly about the Hebrew nation of Israel, but there are also thousands of pieces of information about Who God is, what’s important to Him, and how He expects His special children to think and act. We, in the Church Age, are not Jews, nor do we need to follow the Law. However, there are tons and tons of principles, truths, actions, and attitudes found in the Old Testament that are essential to our growth and spiritual well-being TODAY. Be sure to not neglect Old Testament study when doing your devotions and when you are looking for more ways to please God as His adopted child.

That all being perfectly true, the New Testament is LOADED with verses, passages, and entire books that help us to know exactly what God’s child should look like. We spent all of last year focusing on what it looks like to be imitators of God, so those old studies are a good place to start. Another huge help is what I like to call the “list” passages. These are the ones that have a group of do-this-and-don’t-do-that commands. You just can’t get any more pointed than that!

For today, though, simply pausing to THANK GOD that you are no longer part of darkness, but are now light in the Lord, is a great place to start. And once you are done praising God for this blessed truth, be sure to ask His help to not only understand how to walk as a child of light, but to be excited and delighted to give it your ALL. He loves to answer “Yes!” to these kinds of requests. He LOVES to help us grow and mature and be becoming more and more like His Son. What a God we serve!

You and the Lord:

(Things you want to remember, things that blessed you, things that challenged you, and reminders to add to this week’s prayer list.)

Wednesday, November 2, 2022

-Take the time to ask God to bless your time in His Word. Ask for understanding, stick-to-it-ness to not rush through it, and strength and wisdom to apply it to your day and life.

-We will be focusing the first half of this month on what the Bible has to say about God’s children being “children of light.”

-Read Ephesians 5:9

“(for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true),”

- According to Ephesians 5:9, fruit is _____.
- The fruit of light is found in _____ that is _____ and _____ and _____.

Something to Think About:

Light does something. Have you noticed that? Think back to one of the first science experiments many of us did as a child in grade school: exposing one plant to sun while keeping another in the dark. The sun helped the plant to grow, be healthy, and do what it was supposed to do. The plant in the darkness became weak, sickly, and eventually died without fulfilling its purpose.

What a profound spiritual truth for us! WE are the plants who are dwelling in the glorious light of the love of our Father in heaven (due to the sacrificial death of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ). Because of this, we can be strong, healthy, and do what God created us to do: bear fruit for Him. The Bible has other things to say about our fruit (see Ephesians 2:10 and Galatians 5:22-23 to start!), but today’s passage gives us some description of the good fruit we can bear as children of light too. We can display what is good, right, and true.

We can live out what is “good” (Greek: ἀγαθωσύνη agathōsynē), “uprightness of heart, goodness, kindness.” (The same word is used in Romans 15:14, II Thessalonians 1:11, and Galatians 5:22.)

We can live out what is “right” (Greek: δικαιοσύνη dikaiosynē). “righteousness; the character or quality of being right or just; what is in keeping with God’s character.” (There are dozens of Bible verses using this word. A few great ones to check out include I Corinthians 1:30, II Corinthians 5:21, Ephesians 4:24, and I Timothy 6:11.)

We can live out what is “true” (Greek: ἀλήθεια alētheia). “what is true/truth (what God says as opposed to perversions of what He has said). (The same word is also found in dozens of passages. A few to check out include Matthew 22:16, John 1:14, I Corinthians 13:6, Ephesians 4:24-25; and II John 1:4.)

Part of what we become and what we do as children of light is that which is good, right, and true—that which honors God and reflects His values with excellence. How are you doing with that? Spend some time in prayerful evaluation considering what you SAY about how you are living as compared to some actual examples in the last day, days, or week.

You and the Lord:

(Things you want to remember, things that blessed you, things that challenged you, and reminders to add to this week’s prayer list.)

Thursday, November 3, 2022

-Take the time to ask God to bless your time in His Word. Ask for understanding, stick-to-it-ness to not rush through it, and strength and wisdom to apply it to your day and life.

-We are focusing on what the Bible has to say about God’s children being “children of light” (Ephesians 5:8-14).

-Read Ephesians 5:10

“And try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.”

-Write out Ephesians 5:10. _____

Something to Think About:

Can you look back on your life and remember times when you had NO IDEA what was going on or what something that happened meant? I don't mean simply forgetting why you walked into a room or what someone's name is at church. I mean some deep concept or important happening when you were clueless until someone either explained it to you slowly and carefully—or time and distance opened your eyes to a truth that you hadn't realized before? Personally, I have never figured out why a necklace put on in the morning with the opening on the right side always opens on the left when you take it off at night. What's with that!

The word “discern” found in today's verse has the idea of “to test, examine, prove, scrutinize (to see whether a thing is genuine or not), to recognize as genuine after examination, to approve, deem worthy” (according to Strong's Dictionary). It has also been translated as *interpret, examine, approve, discern, test, and prove*.

This same word is found in Luke 12:56, Luke 14:19, Romans 2:18, I Corinthians 3:13, and I Corinthians 11:28. But, here are four passages that may help us better understand how the word is used in Ephesians 5:10.

Romans 12:2 “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may **discern** what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

Philippians 1:10 “So that you may **approve** what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ,

I Thessalonians 5:21 “But **test** everything; hold fast what is good.”

I Peter 1:17 “And if you call on him as Father who **judges** impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile.”

God doesn't want us to walk through this life in a daze or without knowing what is pleasing to Him and displeasing. He exhorts us to find out what His will is in various matters and learn what are the things that are good, acceptable, and perfect (mature/grown-up). He, in fact, wants us to pursue excellence and to remain pure and “stain-free” from ungodly influences. He wants us to “test” (examine, discern, interpret) what is “good” according to HIS standard of goodness—and cling tightly to it. He wants us to learn what pleases Him in order to avoid all that DOESN'T please Him.

Why? Well, first, for His glory, but also for our spiritual good—for our maturity and growth AND also for our eternal rewards and opportunities to serve God in bigger and better ways into the ages of the ages.

“*And try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord*” - what a TREMENDOUS verse to claim as a life-verse and goal to keep in the forefront of our minds every moment of every day!

You and the Lord:

(Things you want to remember, things that blessed you, things that challenged you, and reminders to add to this week's prayer list.)

Friday, November 4, 2022

- Take the time to ask God to bless your time in His Word. Ask for understanding, stick-to-it-ness to not rush through it, and strength and wisdom to apply it to your day and life.
- We are focusing on what the Bible has to say about God’s children being “children of light” (Ephesians 5:8-14).

-Read Ephesians 5:11-12

“Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret.”

- How are the works of darkness described? _____
- What is our connection to them? _____
- We are, in fact, commanded to _____ them.
- Why? _____

Something to Think About:

Some of our other English translations say things like “have no fellowship or connection” with the “useless or barren” acts/behaviors of darkness (blindness due to sin), and, in fact, rebuke them—expose them for that they really are (tell it like it truly is).

So. . . it makes sense to me that since we are to steer completely clear of the “dark” and ugly things other people do on their own time and in private, we should also be extra careful about what WE do in private and when we believe we are all alone (recognizing, of course, that God ALWAYS knows what we are seeing, thinking, saying and doing—and that the Holy Spirit Himself actually RESIDES in us every moment of every day and night)! Rather, our testimony should ALWAYS be good in the way that God defines good; that is, in keeping with His character of light, truth, and holiness.

I’ve been convicted over the years about sometimes having one tone of voice or demeanor for visitors or strangers that is patient, kind, and upbeat, BUT using a tone that is impatient, unkind, and negative with those I live in the same house with or who I love the best. This shouldn’t be. Who we are as children of light (what is good, right, and true) should be evident at all times and in every way. Of course, we aren’t going to be perfect and we’re unlikely to never say or do things that don’t reflect Christ accurately, but we can seek forgiveness, then get up and try yet again to honor God in this area. Faithfulness isn’t in being perfect, rather, it is not giving up on TRYING, trusting that God will help us grow slowly, but steadily, more and more like His righteous Son.

The passage in Ephesians 5:8-14 has given us some do’s and some don’t in the area of living as a child of light. First, it is a decision to behave as what we are: children of light, bearing fruit that is good, right, and true. It involves constant assessments of what pleases the Lord (so we can do it) and what displeases Him (so we can avoid it). It involves NOT having any part in the works of darkness—all that is opposed to God’s holiness and righteousness.

You and the Lord:

(Things you want to remember, things that blessed you, things that challenged you, and reminders to add to this week’s prayer list.)

Saturday, November 5, 2022

- Take the time to ask God to bless your time in His Word. Ask for understanding, stick-to-it-ness to not rush

through it, and strength and wisdom to apply it to your day and life.

-We are focusing on what the Bible has to say about God's children being "children of light."

-Read Ephesians 5:13-14

"But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

-That which is exposed by the light becomes _____ and what becomes visible is _____.

-Who is told to wake up? _____

-Why? _____

Something to Think About:

Verse 14 seems to be an early Christian hymn, perhaps based on Isaiah 60:1, 9:2, and 26:19

Isaiah 60:1-3 "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising."

Isaiah 9:2 "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone."

Isaiah 26:19 "Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a dew of light, and the earth will give birth to the dead."

These verses all look forward to the day when the Messiah, the Savior, comes to earth to save mankind from sin. His presence removes the darkness and brings healing light. We, of course, know that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, DID come and He did defeat sin, allowing all who trust in Him as Savior to be rescued from the domain of darkness they were stuck in and to forever belong to the kingdom of light.

What is the solution to defeating darkness in the world and in our own lives? Turn to Christ! Trust in Him as your Savior from your sin—then LIVE LIKE YOU BELONG TO THE KINGDOM OF LIGHT. Stay away from anything that is dark, or questionable in any way whatsoever. If in doubt, DON'T. Instead, embrace the holy, righteous light that is God's way. Choose to think and act as the child of light that you ARE. Much joy and peace come to those who not only yield to God's way, but embrace it with delight and conviction.

You and the Lord:

(Things you want to remember, things that blessed you, things that challenged you, and reminders to add to this week's prayer list.)

Sunday, November 6, 2022

-Take the time to ask God to bless your time in His Word. Ask for understanding, stick-to-it-ness to not rush through it, and strength and wisdom to apply it to your day and life.

-We are focusing on what the Bible has to say about God's children being "children of light."

-Read Matthew 5:14-16

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it

under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

- v.14 Christians are the _____ of the world.
- v.15 A lamp’s purpose in a house is to give _____ to everyone in it.
- v.16 A Christian’s purpose is to shine _____ so that others may see and give _____ to God.

Something to Think About:

You know, one of the things that I think that our world is ESPECIALLY fond of these days is perverting the purpose of things. Items that are intended for one purpose are used for something entirely different—even our English language has been attacked and people no longer need to use full sentences! We can say, “Will you go with?,” completely omitting the “me” or “us”. What’s with that? We no longer have to assess a situation, we can simply “sess” it.

Hmmm. . . While an argument can be made that some of these switch-a-roos and redefining aren’t really important, a whole bunch of it IS. BIG TIME. For example, one super important purpose/goal for all children of light is using that light to bring glory to God. This cannot happen if we don’t use it or if we hide it. We need to not only be obeying what we know God wants us to do in the privacy of our homes and in the support of our churches, we need to be doing it at work, in the store, while driving our cars, when at the dentist—always and everywhere.

In fact, maybe we’ve spent too much time “waiting” for an opportunity to shine our light. Maybe we need to CHOOSE to display it by dressing modestly and neatly AND wearing an expression of kindness and approachability on our faces. Maybe we need to start giving God the credit for beautiful weather days, good health, and the strength we needed to do some task. Maybe we need to talk a whole lot more about our awesome Father in heaven and the Savior of our souls with EVERYBODY, not just other Christians.

Ever stood on the edge of your lawn on a dark summer’s evening and were surprised and delighted at the appearance of a lightning bug? We’re not as pleased with invisible mosquitoes! Be that lightning bug in the little corner of the world where God has placed YOU. Be the reason why people smile—and why their thoughts turn to praise of God!

You and the Lord:

(Things you want to remember, things that blessed you, things that challenged you, and reminders to add to this week’s prayer list.)

Monday, November 7, 2022

- Take the time to ask God to bless your time in His Word. Ask for understanding, stick-to-it-ness to not rush through it, and strength and wisdom to apply it to your day and life.
- We are focusing on what the Bible has to say about God’s children being “children of light.” I Thessalonians 5:5-11 is another such passage. (Here’s all six verses so you have context: *“For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. Therefore en-*

courage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.”)

-Read I Thessalonians 5:5

“For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness.”

-Christians _____ children of light.

-Children of light are also known as children of the _____.

-What do children of light NOT belong to? _____

Something to Think About:

Have you ever played a character in a play? I have, once or twice as a child, and although I admire people who can throw themselves into “being” a completely different person while they are acting, I have to confess that I always felt foolish and a bit of a cheat. I won’t say that I never thought it would be pretty neat to be a great actor, it just wasn’t ever my “thing.”

Having said that, who among us hasn’t pretended to be something that we didn’t actually feel? Some examples that come to mind include pretending to think a certain way or actually acting in a way that isn’t accurate in order to win friends in our childhood or youth. This can, of course, also happen in adulthood and I’m sure some people never really stop submitting to peer pressure in order to belong or feel liked.

Part of growing up and speaking truth and living truthfully is ALSO a big deal spiritually. I Thessalonians 5:5 addresses this (as do many verses in the Bible). Once we have trusted in Jesus Christ as the Savior from the sin we were born with, we ARE new creatures. We ARE adopted children of God. We ARE children of light and children of the day. We need to live like it. We need to recognize and change our thinking about what we are NOT. We are not part of the night or the darkness, so our thinking, our attitude, our actions, our goals, our appearance—all of it—should reflect light, what is holy, righteous, true, lovely, of good report, and so on. Is this easy for us? Not at all! Our old nature is more in keeping with darkness and what is of the night. However, God has gifted us with His Written Word, the Bible, to teach us what is right and what is wrong and to provide all sorts of help and instruction to choose light-filled thoughts and actions. God has also given us the too-amazing-to-even-define-properly gift of the Indwelling Holy Spirit, Who helps us understand the Bible, convicts us of sin, directs us in light-filled lives, and helps us slowly be becoming more like Jesus Christ.

Acting can be a lot of fun, but how much more fulfilling is embracing who we are in Christ: children of light!

You and the Lord:

(Things you want to remember, things that blessed you, things that challenged you, and reminders to add to this week’s prayer list.)

Tuesday, November 8, 2022

-Take the time to ask God to bless your time in His Word. Ask for understanding, stick-to-it-ness to not rush through it, and strength and wisdom to apply it to your day and life.

-We are focusing on what the Bible has to say about God’s children being “children of light.” I Thessalonians 5:5-11 is one such passage.

-Read I Thessalonians 5:6-7

“So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night,

and those who get drunk, are drunk at night.”

-Let us not _____ as others do.

-Let us keep _____ and _____.

-What happens at night? _____

Something to Think About:

I think that we, in the culture of our country, are programmed from a young age to fit in—to do as those around us do. Sometimes this is a good thing if the example of the people in our lives is one of living faithfully for God. I think, though, I Thessalonians 5:5-6 is a warning against the bad examples around us—those who are NOT living faithfully for God.

If you’re like me, your first thought about these “bad” examples, those living “at night,” is assuming we are talking about the unsaved and those who are wicked in their thoughts and actions. However, sad to say, there are many believers who are living just as poorly as the unsaved. They are living for self, they are indulging in inappropriate entertainment, they are reflecting the darkness of sin and satan—and not the light and holiness of Jesus Christ. As painful as it is, these are not the folks we should be hanging out with or following the example of. Iron sharpens iron (Proverbs 27:17), so if we desire to be more like Christ and come to honor and please God more and more, we need to choose Christian friends who are faithfully living for God moment by moment.

What do we do about the other people around us? Well, the phrase “people need the Lord” is a true one! Those who haven’t yet trusted in Jesus Christ as their Savior CANNOT please Him—even when they are nice and kind people. Every single man, woman, and child is born with sin in their heart and until they get saved, they cannot please God and they cannot do “good.” Therefore, our interactions with the unsaved must always be evangelistic. We need to tell them what Jesus did for them! Obviously, this won’t mean a hill of beans if our actions and attitudes don’t reflect Christ. There’s nothing compelling about a believer who is impatient, unkind, greedy, or rude.

What about Christians who are living in darkness (even though Christians belong to the light, they can choose to not act like it)? They need to be reminded kindly, lovingly, humbly, yet firmly, of Who it is they belong to and what God’s goals and expectations are for His children. They need prayer, encouragement, and love shown through action. They need us to live lives wholly faithful to God so that our example is clearly seen—along with the joy, peace, and confident trust that comes to all children of light who are living in keeping with God’s Word, who reflect well His character of light.

Who would God have YOU pray for today? What can you DO to show you care about them?

You and the Lord:

(Things you want to remember, things that blessed you, things that challenged you, and reminders to add to this week’s prayer list.)

Wednesday, November 9, 2022

-Take the time to ask God to bless your time in His Word. Ask for understanding, stick-to-it-ness to not rush through it, and strength and wisdom to apply it to your day and life.

-We are focusing on what the Bible has to say about God’s children being “children of light.” I Thessalonians 5:5-11 is one such passage.

-Read I Thessalonians 5:8

“But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.”

-Christians _____ to the day.

-Those who belong to the day should be _____. They should have on the breastplate of _____ and _____ and the helmet of the _____ of salvation.

Something to Think About:

Let’s define the words used in today’s verse.

“Sober” calm, collected in spirit; to be free from the influences of intoxicants. The word is also used in I Thessalonians 5:6; II Timothy 4:5, I Peter 1:13, and I Peter 4:7, and is translated “be sober-minded.”

“Faith” conviction of the truth of anything; belief; moral conviction. The word is used more than 200 times in the New Testament. A few to check out are: Matthew 8:10; Colossians 2:16,20; Ephesians 2:8, Philippians 3:9, and II Timothy 2:27.

“Love” is defined as seeking the well-being of another, even at the cost of personal sacrifice; it is another very common word in the Bible. Maybe the most important reminder about it is from I John 4:7-10 which says that God IS love. Other verses of note include: John 13:35; John 15:9-13; Romans 5:8; Romans 8:35-39, I Corinthians 13, and Galatians 5:22.

“Hope” to anticipate, usually with pleasure; expectation; confidence. Read more about it in Romans 5:4-5; Romans 12:12; Romans 15:4; Ephesians 1:18; Colossians 1:5,27; Titus 2:13, and Hebrews 10:23.

“Salvation” is defined as rescue; deliver (and isn’t always only about spiritual salvation—sometimes it’s speaking of a physical rescue or some other aspect of deliverance). The word is used many places, including Acts 4:12; Romans 1:16; II Timothy 3:15, I Peter 1:9, and Revelation 12:6.

Incidentally, Paul is fond of grouping faith, hope, and love together—and does so in the introduction to this letter to the Thessalonians. He says (1:2-3) “*We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

Christians are often referred to as soldiers in many places in the Bible (see Ephesians 6:11-17, II Corinthians 10:3-5, and II Timothy 2:3-4) and we are reminded here to keep our trust in God firmly in front of our minds while not neglecting our love for God (as seen in our obedience to Him and expressions of gratitude and praise) and our love for others (as seen, not just with our words, but by sacrificial actions). We can live this way because we are completely assured of the spiritual salvation God has promised—that our sins are forgiven, that we forever belong to God, that this world’s hardships and sin are very temporary, and that we will be in God’s holy presence for all of eternity.

The summary? Christians have EVERYTHING to live for in the here and now—and for all of eternity. Have you thanked God for this lately?

You and the Lord:

(Things you want to remember, things that blessed you, things that challenged you, and reminders to add to this week’s prayer list.)

Thursday, November 10, 2022

- Take the time to ask God to bless your time in His Word. Ask for understanding, stick-to-it-ness to not rush through it, and strength and wisdom to apply it to your day and life.
- We are focusing on what the Bible has to say about God’s children being “children of light.” I Thessalonians 5:5-11 is one such passage.

-Read I Thessalonians 5:9-10

“For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him.”

- Children of light are not destined for _____.
- They are destined to obtain _____ through our _____.
- What did Jesus do so we could have salvation? _____
- Whether alive or dead upon Christ’s return, _____ believers will live with God forever.

Something to Think About:

So, even though the Greek words that Paul used in I Thessalonians 5:8 explained what he is now saying in verses 9-10, he spelled it out even more clearly: all those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as the Savior from the sin they were born with will (are!) saved and will one day live with God the Father and God the Son’s for all of eternity (God the Holy Spirit continues to reside within believers for all of eternity). This is pretty astonishing and fantastic truth!

Did you note that Paul was also reassuring the believers in Thessalonica that this promise was true for both believers who died before the Rapture and for those who are alive when Jesus calls His Church up to the clouds before the start of the Tribulation? We sometimes view death as a defeat, but the opposite is true. Physical death for the child of God is the victory of LIFE, true life, life that is (finally!) without sin and in the presence of God the Father and God the Son.

Additionally, it is likely that Paul is using the word “wrath” in this context to refer to the Tribulation Period—that awful 7-year period of God’s judgment on the accumulated sin and rebellion of the human race. God does not intend for the Church—the bride of Christ, the Beloved Son—to go through the judgment intended for the unbelieving world. This is a great comfort!

Our response to this should, of course, be tremendous gratitude, constant praise to God, a determinedness to keep getting up every time we fall into sin, asking for forgiveness, and laboring once again to trust and obey—and—it should cause us to be certain that those who don’t yet belong to God hear what they are missing, what their future holds, and how they can also become a part of God’s forever-family.

You and the Lord:

(Things you want to remember, things that blessed you, things that challenged you, and reminders to add to this week’s prayer list.)

Friday, November 11, 2022

-Take the time to ask God to bless your time in His Word. Ask for understanding, stick-to-it-ness to not rush through it, and strength and wisdom to apply it to your day and life.

-We are focusing on what the Bible has to say about God's children being "children of light." I Thessalonians 5:5-11 is one such passage.

-Read I Thessalonians 5:11

(v.5-10: "For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him.) *Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.*

-v.11 What had the believers in the Thessalonian church been doing? _____

-What did Paul tell them to do? _____

Something to Think About:

Yesterday, we noted that Paul reminded his readers all that believers have to look forward to and how this blessed truth should encourage each of us to live wholeheartedly for God. Today's verse, though, takes it one step further. Christians aren't only to be "awake," sober-minded, relying on God, doing good works for God and for others, and confidently trusting God to fulfill all His promises, we should be encouraging other believers to do the same. We should be looking around us, aware of who God placed in our lives in a general sense—and very specifically from day to day—and talking about the exciting things we are learning in Scripture, how God has blessed us in big ways and little ways, sharing His goodness as seen all day long, every day, and simply living in such a way that God gets great honor and praise and fellow believers are encouraged as they face their own daily battles.

Encouragement is awesome, but Paul also reminds us to build one another up. This is the word "edify," and it is the idea of helping each other trust God more deeply, love Him more fully, obey Him even more accurately, and otherwise live as children of light (and NOT as if we were still imprisoned by darkness). Here are a few verses that talk about the joys of Christians edifying one another. Prayerfully contemplate what they are saying and how you might incorporate them in your life and in your interactions with brothers and sisters in Christ.

"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock." Matthew 7:24

"And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified." Acts 20:32

"Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear." Ephesians 4:29

"So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding." Romans 14:19

"We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up." Romans 15:1-2

"And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love." Ephesians 4:11-16

You and the Lord:

(Things you want to remember, things that blessed you, things that challenged you, and reminders to add to this week's prayer list.)

Saturday, November 12, 2022

-Take the time to ask God to bless your time in His Word. Ask for understanding, stick-to-it-ness to not rush through it, and strength and wisdom to apply it to your day and life.

-We are focusing on what the Bible has to say about God's children being "children of light." I John is a third—and wonderful—passage.

-Read I John 1:5

"This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."

- Who gave John the message about Who God is? _____
- John wants to _____ the message to everyone.
- The message God wants to proclaim is that God is _____.
- What percentage of darkness is God? _____

Something to Think About:

Christians are known as children of light because our Father, God, IS light. He is how light is defined, characterized, and understood. This is a pretty huge concept!

An important part of the definition of God as light is the fact that there is literally NO darkness whatsoever in God. This is, first, such a huge and wonderful truth! It is also a gauge—or guideline—against which children of God should be measuring themselves (and NOT as compared to each other!). God is completely free from sin—and this should be our goal too. We've established and repeated many times that we're not going to be perfect this side of glory, BUT we've also seen that this should be our goal nonetheless.

How? How do we learn to be light-filled? By being imitators of God and of Jesus Christ. Ephesians 5:1 says, "*Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.*" The next several verses give examples of what that looks like, eventually coming back to the passage we looked at the first day of this month, the reminder to live as children of light. Prayerfully and carefully read the following verses, underlining the do's and don'ts of what an imitator of God (Who is light) is and isn't.

"And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not become partners with them; for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise

but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

You and the Lord:

(Things you want to remember, things that blessed you, things that challenged you, and reminders to add to this week’s prayer list.)

Sunday, November 13, 2022

- Take the time to ask God to bless your time in His Word. Ask for understanding, stick-to-it-ness to not rush through it, and strength and wisdom to apply it to your day and life.
- We are focusing on what the Bible has to say about God’s children being “children of light.” I John is a third—and wonderful—passage.

-Read I John 1:6-7

“If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.”

- We can _____ we have fellowship with God, but walk in darkness. Doing so is a _____ and we are not practicing the _____.
- If we walk in the light _____ is in the light, we have _____ with one another.
- How is sin cleaned up in the life of a believer? _____

Something to Think About:

This is yet another reminder that God is not fooled when we say one thing, but do another. He wants our hearts to be completely right with Him—and when they are, our actions will follow. Turned around, if our actions are more in keeping with a child of darkness, then we are NOT living God’s way and we are out of fellowship with Him (note: being out of fellowship with God is never a loss of salvation. That is impossible. We can, far too easily, though, mar the intimate bond we are invited to have with God the Father through the reading of His Word and in prayer when we are keeping sin confessed and living obediently according to what we know He wants from the Bible).

Interestingly, there’s another level at stake here in so far as if we are walking as children of light or not. The sweet, amazing, tender, DELIGHTFUL fellowship that God’s children can have with one another can only happen when both parties are living obediently. Sin mars our sweet fellowship with God the Father, it grieves the Holy Spirit, it mocks the sacrifice Jesus Christ made on our behalf by sacrificing His life, and it can destroy the bond between brothers and sisters in Christ. On the other hand, when Christians are living as the children of light Jesus’ blood made them to be, then Oh, the fellowship, Oh, the joy divine, leaning on the everlasting arms!

THANKFULLY, getting right with God (and dealing with the root problem that puts up barriers between us and our Christian friends) is as simple as confessing to God that what you have done is sin and asking Him for forgiveness. The verse that follows today’s passage is the very famous I John 1:9,

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

BONUS: The wonder of I John 1:9 is that when we confess the sin we know about, God forgives us for the sins we DIDN'T know about—and for a few blessed minutes (until we sin again!), we are “cleansed from all sin”! Thank You, LORD!

You and the Lord:

(Things you want to remember, things that blessed you, things that challenged you, and reminders to add to this week’s prayer list.)

Monday, November 14, 2022

- Take the time to ask God to bless your time in His Word. Ask for understanding, stick-to-it-ness to not rush through it, and strength and wisdom to apply it to your day and life.
- We are focusing on what the Bible has to say about God’s children being “children of light.” I John is a third—and wonderful—passage.

-Read I John 2:7-8

“Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard. At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.”

- How does John address his readers? _____
- The commandment he is going to talk about isn’t _____, but an _____ one.
- In fact, how long had they had this commandment? _____
- Yet, the old commandment is also a _____ commandment that is true.
- The commandment is true because the darkness is _____ and the _____ light is already shining.

Something to Think About:

The “old” commandment given to the Old Testament Jews was to love your neighbor as yourself (Leviticus 19:18), but Jesus gave a new twist on it in John 13:34-35 when He commanded believers to love your neighbor AS He loved us! How did He love? With tremendous sacrifice. With grace, mercy, and kindness. With a servant’s heart (He said this just after washing His disciple’s feet!).

These verses should cause us to prayerfully contemplate to what degree we show love to fellow Christians, maybe most especially those in our own households and church family (have you ever noticed that it is easier to “love” strangers than the people you see day in and day out? That it’s easy to temporarily sacrifice of yourself versus to choose to love as Jesus loves you day after day, year after year?).

BONUS: John also addresses the fact that Jesus is the “true light” (see John 1:9 and 8:12) and because of His coming and sacrificially dying on our behalf, then rising to life again and defeating sin and death, the time period that is known for its darkness (right now!) only has a limited amount of time. Once Jesus returns and sets up His righteous rule during the Millennium, the countdown to darkness being dispelled for all of eternity has

begun. What a glorious day that will be! Count on it! Don't waste even one second of TODAY to shine as a child of light!

You and the Lord:

(Things you want to remember, things that blessed you, things that challenged you, and reminders to add to this week's prayer list.)

Tuesday, November 15, 2022

-Take the time to ask God to bless your time in His Word. Ask for understanding, stick-to-it-ness to not rush through it, and strength and wisdom to apply it to your day and life.

-We are focusing on what the Bible has to say about God's children being "children of light." I John is a third—and wonderful—passage.

-Read I John 2:9-11

"Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes."

- Whoever _____ he is in the light _____ hates his brother is still in _____.
- Who abides in the light? _____
- Who walks in the darkness? _____
- Why can't he tell where he's going? _____

Something to Think About:

Once again, John gives us practical examples of what he has been trying to point out. For one, we can SAY we are living as children of light all we want, but if we have a problem with a brother or sister in Christ, the Bible says that we are not acting as a child of light should. That simple.

Let me remind you again that there are many facts associated with our salvation that are true, even if we aren't able to fully realize them or see them in this lifetime. For example, the Bible says that God sees believers as completely righteous—because He sees us through the righteous blood of Jesus Christ. We still have a sin nature and we still sin, but positionally, we ARE righteous right now in God's eyes.

In a slightly different way, we can be factually certain things (like children of light) without acting even remotely like it (which is SO SAD!). We may be saved by the blood of the Lamb, yet living as an enemy of the cross in our attitudes, actions, and goals. We may be called Christians ("little Christs"), but resemble satan with our lies, deceit, arrogance, and pride.

There is always a price for disobedience, however. John says that the believer who hates his Christian brother (or sister) is "in darkness," they have no idea where they are going, they stumble, and in fact, walk with "blinded eyes." Christians cannot lose their salvation, but they can definitely stop being able to wisely discern God's Word if they choose to continue in a life of sin.

These things ought not to be!

God WANTS us to have victory. To enjoy peace. To experience genuine joy. To eagerly anticipate Jesus'

return and the beginning of our eternity. AND, He is ALWAYS ready to help us turn from sin and return to a right relationship with Him. We but need ask (I John 1:9).

BTW Have you ever wondered what hate is? If love isn't an emotion, but an action (something we do), doesn't it stand to reason that hate is the absence of love? The choice to NOT do something for someone when God shows us a need?

Secondly, I think that when Christians read their Bibles and find commandments about loving one another, having a servant's heart for one another, showing kindness, and being sacrificial, they assume that this is instruction in regard to the unsaved. Would you be surprised to hear that the lion's share of these kinds of passages are written to Christians ABOUT Christians? Of course, we need to maintain a good testimony to the unsaved—and, of course, we would be pretty foolish to try to tell someone about the love of God right after stealing their parking spot in front of Walmart, but the Bible is actually written primarily to believers. It is our Guidebook to godly living. It is designed to teach us Who God is, what He likes/dislikes, what pleases Him/displeases Him, and what brings Him glory (or shame). The relationship Christians have with one another is a HUGE deal in God's eyes. We are all His children and He wants us to love each other AS HE LOVES US.

You and the Lord:

(Things you want to remember, things that blessed you, things that challenged you, and reminders to add to this week's prayer list.)

Wednesday, November 16, 2022

-Take the time to ask God to bless your time in His Word. Ask for understanding, stick-to-it-ness to not rush through it, and strength and wisdom to apply it to your day and life.

-We are focusing on what the Bible has to say about God's children being "children of light."

-Read Philippians 2:15-16

"That you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain."

-God would have us be _____ and _____, children of God _____ blemish in the midst of a _____ and _____ generation.

-God would have us shine as _____ in the world, holding fast to the _____,

-So that in the day of Christ (Paul) might be _____ that he didn't run or labor in _____.

Something to Think About:

I read that light is a good illustration of something that does what it has to do by being what it ought to be (T. Constable). I like that! As children of light, the Bible is STUFFED FULL of ways we can shine the light of Christ to our family, friends, co-workers, and even strangers SO THAT God is glorified and so that we have opportunities to show love (sacrificial labors) and do the good works that God prepared ahead of time for us to do (Ephesian 2:10).

We cannot be the lights we were created to be if we allow sin to darken and mar our testimony. To be "blameless and innocent" isn't to never, ever sin, but it is choosing to stay right with God by obeying all we know to do and to keep confessing sin as often as we recognize we need to (which is usually several times a day!). This will not be easy! We live in a "crooked and twisted" world. BUT, if God tells us to shine as lights

and hold fast to the Word of life, you can bet we can do it! He ALWAYS enables us to do the things that He tells us to do.

BONUS: Did you notice the end—where Paul asked the believers to live faithfully for God so that HE would be proud (and wouldn’t feel like he had labored for the Lord with no return)? Living obediently and faithfully for God is most definitely first and foremost for God the Father and God the Son, BUT, there’s kind of a bonus blessing here for pastors, deacons, Sunday school teachers—and anyone who has invested in our lives. These faithful ones will get some of the credit for OUR faithful living! Isn’t that a pretty awesome thing! Live in such a way as to do Christ proud AND all your spiritual leaders and mentors.

You and the Lord:

(Things you want to remember, things that blessed you, things that challenged you, and reminders to add to this week’s prayer list.)

Thursday, November 17, 2022

- Take the time to ask God to bless your time in His Word. Ask for understanding, stick-to-it-ness to not rush through it, and strength and wisdom to apply it to your day and life.
- We are in the final weeks of looking at the five main words of Psalm 119:105 (word, lamp, feet, light, path).
- WORD, part 1: what the “word” is.**
- The following Scripture will help us define what “word” is (from Psalm 119:105). Read each verse/passage, then summarize what it is teaching.

Hebrews 4:12 “For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

Isaiah 40:8 “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.”

Psalms 18:30 “This God—his way is perfect; the word of the Lord proves true; he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him.”

Psalms 119:130 “The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.”

Psalms 119:160 “The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever.”

Something to Think About:

God’s Word is MORE than amazing. It is living, for one thing! It is able to “speak” to us and help us recognize areas where we need some pruning and refining, but it is also encouraging, full of hope, edifying, and entirely praise-worthy. Addressing directly the theme of our Bible study this year, it provides the light we need to understand Who God is, what’s important to Him, how we can please Him, and what living as children of light looks like in big-picture ways and minute-by-minute actions and attitudes.

If you’re up for more, some additional Scripture on the word includes II Timothy 3:16-17, Matthew 24:35, Psalm 33:4, and Proverbs 30:5—for a start. And, of course, don’t miss out on reading John 1 to be reminded of the glorious truth that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Savior, is THE WORD!

You and the Lord:

(Things you want to remember, things that blessed you, things that challenged you, and reminders to add to this week’s prayer list.)

Friday, November 18, 2022

- Take the time to ask God to bless your time in His Word. Ask for understanding, stick-to-it-ness to not rush through it, and strength and wisdom to apply it to your day and life.
- We are in the final weeks of looking at the five main words of Psalm 119:105 (word, lamp, feet, light, path).

-WORD, part 2: our responsibilities regarding the “word.”

- The following Scripture will help us define some areas about how children of light are to respond to Scripture. Read the verse/passage and summarize what it is saying.

Psalm 119:9 “How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word.”

Luke 11:28 “But he said, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”

I Peter 2:2 “Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation.”

John 8:31 “So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples.”

Psalm 119:11 ”I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.”

Something to Think About:

Have you ever observed a baby trying to figure out one of those puzzle boxes where there are several shapes on each side of the box with corresponding blocks to fit into each specific hole? Some babies are patient and willing to allow an adult to help them figure out how the game works and to slowly and patiently begin to

match the shapes with the holes. Other children aren't patient and refuse help, preferring to try to mash shapes into whatever hole they think is best. I'm not going to tell you what sort of learner I am, but there have been a lot of smashed fingers (literally and figuratively) in my life!

Studying God's Word SO THAT we can apply it to who we are and how we think and act is something that all Christians need to learn. If we will pause before making a decision, solving a problem or dealing with someone to seek God's help through prayer, perhaps not all the lessons need be frustrating and painful. God's Word has everything we need to know in order to live a godly and God-honoring life (II Peter 1:3). All we need to do, according to today's verses, is to long to know it better and better every year we are alive, to "store it up" in our heart—thinking about it, memorizing it—so that we can obey it and use it to help us in our battle against sin. Pretty simple, but incredibly powerful!

Here are a few more verses to check out on this topic: James 1:21; Psalm 119:114.

You and the Lord:

(Things you want to remember, things that blessed you, things that challenged you, and reminders to add to this week's prayer list.)

Saturday, November 19, 2022

- Take the time to ask God to bless your time in His Word. Ask for understanding, stick-to-it-ness to not rush through it, and strength and wisdom to apply it to your day and life.
- We are in the final weeks of looking at the five main words of Psalm 119:105 (word, lamp, feet, light, path).
- LAMP, part 1: what it is and does.**
- The following Scripture will help us define what "lamp" is (from Psalm 119:105). Read each verse/passage, then summarize what it is teaching.

Proverbs 6:23 "For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life."

II Samuel 22:29 "For you are my lamp, O Lord, and my God lightens my darkness."

II Peter 1:16-21 "For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

Revelation 21:22-23 “And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.”

Something to Think About:

I remember a day when lamps sort of went out of style and ceiling lights were the choice for providing light in our homes. I’m not sure how long that lasted (or if many homes still only use ceiling lights), but I don’t think you can deny that lamps add a lot to a room. For some rooms, lamps provide subtle and restful lighting, in other rooms, they provide good strong light so you can see what you are working on. Lamps are versatile and useful.

I think that the usefulness and versatility of lamps is at least a bit of what Scripture is teaching when it uses lamps as an illustration for God and His instruction and direction. Scripture also uses “lamp” to refer to us as children of light. The function of lamps is simply to provide light so that we can see things (a substitute for the sun when it’s not available or able to be utilized). God’s Word shows us things too. Things that are of eternal value. Things that are part of the spiritual world that is just as real as the physical one.

According to today’s verses, God IS a lamp for us (dispelling darkness) as are His commandments and direction. One day, literal lamps (and light such as the sun!) will no longer be needed because Jesus Christ, the Lamb, will be the only Lamp we need. I admit freely that I don’t fully understand all the ramifications of that, but I do trust God to do only, always what is completely right and good—and that’s enough.

A few other verses that use “lamp” include: Proverbs 13:9; Luke 11:34-36; John 5:30-35; Revelation 1:20.

You and the Lord:

(Things you want to remember, things that blessed you, things that challenged you, and reminders to add to this week’s prayer list.)

Sunday, November 20, 2022

- Take the time to ask God to bless your time in His Word. Ask for understanding, stick-to-it-ness to not rush through it, and strength and wisdom to apply it to your day and life.
- We are in the final weeks of looking at the five main words of Psalm 119:105 (word, lamp, feet, light, path).
- LAMP, part 2: our role.**
- The following Scripture will help us define what our responsibilities are as lamps. Read each verse/passage, then summarize what it is teaching.

Proverbs 13:9 “The light of the righteous rejoices, but the lamp of the wicked will be put out.”

Proverbs 31:18 “She perceives that her merchandise is profitable. Her lamp does not go out at night.”

Matthew 5:13-16 “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

Luke 12:35-40 “Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning, and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them. If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them awake, blessed are those servants! But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have left his house to be broken into. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

Something to Think About:

It looks to me that God gives us a choice about what sorts of lamps we would like to be. Lava lamps can be kind of cool, but are they truly useful or necessary? Nightlights are normally quite small, but when we find ourselves in a very dark room in the middle of the night, their light is useful and welcome! Flashlights with extremely dull lights or with dead batteries are not helpful or useful, but the light over the kitchen sink can be exactly what we need to do a good job with the dishes.

Different lamps have different purposes, but they are only of use when they do the job they were given to do WELL. This is true for children of light as well. For one, children of light ARE “righteous,” but may be acting more like the wicked. This should not be—and God will not use such a lamp as this. A lamp that is otherwise righteous, but is making no effort to give God glory by means of what they are and what they do, is of little use. On the other hand, we have two examples of lights of excellence. They don’t go out at night and they are always ready for action. God, of course, knows we need sleep and rest at night, this isn’t what is being taught at all. Rather, God is most honored when we are remaining faithful to Him morning, noon, and night—ever ready to obey Him, honor Him, praise Him, and thank Him—whether all alone or out and about among people. THIS kind of lamp will be rewarded by the Master when we kneel before Him in person one day soon. THIS kind of lamp is the one that feels useful and loved—because it IS useful and loved.

You and the Lord:

(Things you want to remember, things that blessed you, things that challenged you, and reminders to add to this week’s prayer list.)

Monday, November 21, 2022

-Take the time to ask God to bless your time in His Word. Ask for understanding, stick-to-it-ness to not rush through it, and strength and wisdom to apply it to your day and life.

-We are in the final weeks of looking at the five main words of Psalm 119:105 (word, lamp, feet, light, path).

-FEET, part 1: At God’s feet, a place of holiness.

- The following Scripture will help us learn what “feet,” as noted in Psalm 119:105, is all about. Read each verse/passage, then summarize what it is teaching.

Exodus 3:4-5 “ When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” Then he said, “Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.”

Joshua 5:15 “And the commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, “Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so.”

Isaiah 6:1-3 “In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!”

Something to Think About:

These three passages all tell us about God’s holiness and how important this is to God. First, we find Moses about to have a conversation with God by means of a burning bush. Just because he was near it, he needed to take his shoes off to show respect. Then Joshua upon meeting the Captain of the Lord’s army (the pre-incarnate Christ), was also commanded to take off his shoes because of God’s holiness. Next, an angelic being known as a seraphim—who never sinned—STILL stood in awe of God’s holiness and kept his face and feet covered.

What about those of us living in the Church Age? What does God want from us? I Peter 1:13-16 tells us:

“Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

You see, God is completely, totally, and forever holy (completely free from sin of any amount or kind) - and He wants us as His children to keep ourselves holy too. We cannot be imitators of Him while choosing to allow sin to remain in our lives or by having a high tolerance for worldliness. God wants us to develop a zero tolerance policy concerning anything that is remotely contrary to Who He is as LIGHT. He knows, of course, that we are still dealing with a sin nature, but He has given us the tools we need to say “no” to sin—and to confess it and make it right with Him if we do.

You and the Lord:

(Things you want to remember, things that blessed you, things that challenged you, and reminders to add to this week’s prayer list.)

Tuesday, November 22, 2022

-Take the time to ask God to bless your time in His Word. Ask for understanding, stick-to-it-ness to not rush through it, and strength and wisdom to apply it to your day and life.

-We are in the final weeks of looking at the five main words of Psalm 119:105 (word, lamp, feet, light, path).

-FEET, part 2: at Jesus' feet, a place of service.

- The following Scripture will help us learn what "feet," as noted in Psalm 119:105, is all about. Read each verse/passage, then summarize what it is teaching.

John 13:12-15 "When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you."

Luke 7:37-38 "And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment."

Luke 10:39 "And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching."

1 Timothy 5:9-10 "Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband, and having a reputation for good works: if she has brought up children, has shown hospitality, has washed the feet of the saints, has cared for the afflicted, and has devoted herself to every good work."

Something to Think About:

Taking care of someone's feet is kind of a humbling thing—especially if their feet are smelly, their toes are jagged and fungus-filled, or . . . if we don't like the person who needs the help. Maybe I'm the only one, but doesn't it seem harder to do menial tasks for people who have been mean to us in some way at some time—or who we simply don't click with? Put the other way, it's not really "hard" at all to show lovingkindness to someone we love a lot and who we have a close relationship with.

BUT, the Bible says things like "love your enemies," "do unto (all!) others as you would have them do unto you," and "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet." Not a lot of room for pride, harboring grudges, or "self-love" here, is there?

Perhaps some of the key is found in Mary's example of choosing to spend as much time as possible sitting at Jesus' feet simply listening. Perhaps some of the key is found in the sinful woman's action of sitting at Jesus' feet and showing deep love and deep gratitude for all He has done for her. Perhaps our deep love and gratitude for God will help us have a servant's heart and be only too happy to do whatever is a blessing and help to whomever God brings across our path.

First, we need to be paying attention to God's constant mercy and grace and the multitude of blessings every single day. We need to immerse ourselves in Scripture, we need to bathe our days in prayer. We need to be in God's House to sit under the teaching of the Word and to encourage and bless our brothers and sisters in Christ. And, then, when our head is screwed on straight and our heart is set on the course of godliness, we'll be delighted to find opportunities to serve one and all, knowing that, at the core, we are serving God Himself.

You and the Lord:

(Things you want to remember, things that blessed you, things that challenged you, and reminders to add to

this week’s prayer list.)

Wednesday, November 23, 2022

- Take the time to ask God to bless your time in His Word. Ask for understanding, stick-to-it-ness to not rush through it, and strength and wisdom to apply it to your day and life.
- We are in the final weeks of looking at the five main words of Psalm 119:105 (word, lamp, feet, light, path).
- FEET, part 3: at the Father’s feet, a place of confidence and help.**
- The following Scripture will help us learn what “feet,” as noted in Psalm 119:105, is all about. Read each verse/passage, then summarize what it is teaching.

Psalm 25:15 “My eyes are ever toward the Lord, for he will pluck my feet out of the net.”

Psalm 31:7-8 “I will rejoice and be glad in your steadfast love, because you have seen my affliction; you have known the distress of my soul, and you have not delivered me into the hand of the enemy; you have set my feet in a broad place.”

Psalm 40:1-2 “I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard my cry. He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure.”

Psalm 121:3 “He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber.”

Something to Think About:

I love the confidence the men who wrote these psalms showed in God. They were clearly in some bad situation! There is mention of being caught in a net, of affliction and being in the grasp of an enemy, of being in the “pit of destruction” and a miry bog! NOT NICE!

Now, you and I, living in the United States in the 21st century, don’t often have the literal dangers that Bible time Jews and Christians had, but that does not mean that we don’t find ourselves in some pretty hard places—something more along the line of the “net” of financial trouble, the “affliction” of someone who doesn’t like us and makes it known loud and long, and the boggy unpleasantness of emotional or physical trials. Life can be pretty difficult, as a matter of fact!

However, we have a solution just as trustworthy and guaranteed as the psalmist did. We, too, have a loving, wise, all-powerful Father in heaven Who plucks us out of our nets, delivers us from the hands of our enemies, and sets our feet upon a rock, making our steps secure. Furthermore, we can call on Him any time morning, noon, or night. He doesn’t sleep, slumber, or otherwise NOT answer the call of His beloved children!

We have much to be thankful for! We have much to praise God about!

You and the Lord:

(Things you want to remember, things that blessed you, things that challenged you, and reminders to add to this week’s prayer list.)

Thursday, November 24, 2022

-Take the time to ask God to bless your time in His Word. Ask for understanding, stick-to-it-ness to not rush through it, and strength and wisdom to apply it to your day and life.

-We are in the final weeks of looking at the five main words of Psalm 119:105 (word, lamp, feet, light, path).

-FEET, part 4: our feet, our responsibility.

- The following Scripture will help us learn what “feet,” as noted in Psalm 119:105, is all about. Read each verse/passage, then summarize what it is teaching.

Psalm 119:59 “When I think on my ways, I turn my feet to your testimonies.”

Psalm 119:101 “I hold back my feet from every evil way, in order to keep your word.”

Proverbs 1:15-16 “my son, do not walk in the way with them (sinners); hold back your foot from their paths, for their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed blood.”

Proverbs 4:26-27 “Ponder the path of your feet; then all your ways will be sure. Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your foot away from evil.”

Matthew 18:8-9 “And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire.”

Hebrews 12:13 “Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed.”

Something to Think About:

Are you old enough to remember watching *The Wizard of Oz* as a child and feeling the wonder and amazement when everything in the story went from black and white to glorious color? I’m not sure this pretty nifty little

trick can be properly appreciated by all the generations who have only ever known full color and the realist-looking graphics that television and movies employ nowadays. BUT, I bring up *The Wizard of Oz*, because of the whole “follow the yellow brick road” thing (can you still sing that song? I can! What about doing that awesome group skipping thing???) . There were many life lessons in that classic movie, but who can deny the wise counsel to stay on the road that will lead you directly to Oz—keeping you from the many dangers found OFF the road? Dorothy didn’t listen very well, I’m afraid, but then again, neither do we.

We have just read SIX Bible passages (and there are many more!) that all say the same thing: stay on the path of godliness as you continue on your journey to eternity. Stay away from sin of every kind (and things or people that influence us to sin). Use God’s Word to instruct you on how to best navigate the path. And, simply CHOOSE obedience to God day to day, moment to moment.

God has an incredible destination in mind for His Children, that’s for certain, but don’t miss the HUGE blessings He has in store TODAY for all His children who keep track of where their feet go!

You and the Lord:

(Things you want to remember, things that blessed you, things that challenged you, and reminders to add to this week’s prayer list.)

Friday, November 25, 2022

- Take the time to ask God to bless your time in His Word. Ask for understanding, stick-to-it-ness to not rush through it, and strength and wisdom to apply it to your day and life.
- We are in the final weeks of looking at the five main words of Psalm 119:105 (word, lamp, feet, light, path).
- FEET, part 5: victory under the feet of Jesus.**
- The following Scripture will help us learn what “feet,” as noted in Psalm 119:105, is all about. Read each verse/passage, then summarize what it is teaching.

1 Corinthians 15:20-28 “But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For “God has put all things in subjection under his feet.” But when it says, “all things are put in subjection,” it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.”

Hebrews 2:5-9 “For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. It has been testified somewhere, “What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him? You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor, putting everything in subjection under his feet.” Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.”

Hebrews 10:12-13 “But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet.”

Something to Think About:

Did you notice that these verses don't say "if" Jesus' enemies will be under His feet in defeat, they say WHEN. Actually, Jesus' victory has already been accomplished. He won. Sin, satan, and death LOST. The entirety of creation is simply waiting for God's timetable to be fulfilled for the rest of the story to play out.

Why tarry? Well, we may never know all of God's mind on that matter, but we do know a few things. One is that God wants all who are His to trust in Christ as Savior. We have no idea who that might be, how many of them there are, or how long it will be before everyone who has been chosen for salvation gets saved. God knows—and He will not let even one be lost.

There's another reason though, one that hits much closer to home. God is giving you and me time to confess sin, to grow in godliness, to be becoming more like His Son, and to accomplish the good works that He created for us to do before He even created us. The how, what, and when of all this is another mystery to us, but it is also a huge blessing and a huge opportunity. We would do well to wake up every morning praising God for a new day, making sure we have no unconfessed sin in our heart, and asking God to help us do His perfect will that day.

BONUS: One more thing to contemplate based on today's passages: we get scared pretty easily. We hear disturbing news and find ourselves in an increasingly troubled world—and this upsets us. We may wonder what went wrong and where it will all end. Well, beloved, we already know the answers! Sin is what went wrong—and the final end will be when Jesus returns to set up His righteous kingdom, resulting in the eventual permanent destruction of satan, his followers, and sin of every kind. JESUS WON THE VICTORY. We simply need to remember this and live as the children of the King of kings that we are, choosing to trust God and obey Him in every way and at all times.

You and the Lord:

(Things you want to remember, things that blessed you, things that challenged you, and reminders to add to this week's prayer list.)

Saturday, November 26, 2022

-Take the time to ask God to bless your time in His Word. Ask for understanding, stick-to-it-ness to not rush through it, and strength and wisdom to apply it to your day and life.

-We are in the final weeks of looking at the five main words of Psalm 119:105 (word, lamp, feet, light, path).

-Light, part 1: God's role.

- The following Scripture will help us learn what "light," as noted in Psalm 119:105, is all about. Read each verse/passage, then summarize what it is teaching.

Genesis 1:3-4 “And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness.”

Psalms 27:1 “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?”

Psalms 36:9 “For with you is the fountain of life; in your light do we see light.”

Proverbs 6:23 “For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life.”

John 1:1-5 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

John 8:12 “Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

II Corinthians 4:6 “For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

I Timothy 6:16 “...keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he will display at the proper time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.”

Something to Think About:

Aren't these great verses! God CREATED light, God IS light! Light is indisputably (by even the most carnal scientist) known to be absolutely essential to life on our planet. Equally true (whether or not anyone “agrees” with it) is that God is absolutely essential to not only our physical life, but our spiritual one. Why, then, would we EVER get the idea that we can “be our own boss” or otherwise call the shots? That we can choose our own destiny and only call on God when and if we choose to do so? How ludicrous!

As a matter of fact, rejecting utterly the lie that we don't need God for EVERYTHING, we can CHOOSE to have as the #1 goal of all our life to seek God's approval in every single thing we think, every single thing we say, and every single thing we do! Rather than fighting the fact of God's sovereignty, we can embrace it, DELIGHT in it, and live our lives so He is honored not only by us, but through us. That our lights reflect His light, bringing Him great glory and praise.

When we do? Oh, the joy! Oh, the peace! Oh, the confident expectation of what God has in store today, tomorrow –and for all of eternity!

(Additional Scripture: The rest of Genesis 1 and John 1; Isaiah 9:2; Isaiah 60:1,3,19,20; John 9:5; Revelation 21:24; Revelation 22:5)

You and the Lord:

(Things you want to remember, things that blessed you, things that challenged you, and reminders to add to this week’s prayer list.)

Sunday, November 27, 2022

-Take the time to ask God to bless your time in His Word. Ask for understanding, stick-to-it-ness to not rush through it, and strength and wisdom to apply it to your day and life.

-We are in the final weeks of looking at the five main words of Psalm 119:105 (word, lamp, feet, light, path).

-Light, part 2: Our response to God’s light.

- The following Scripture will help us learn what “light,” as noted in Psalm 119:105, is all about. Read each verse/passage, then summarize what it is teaching.

Psalm 89:15 “Blessed are the people who know the festal shout, who walk, O Lord, in the light of your face.”

Proverbs 4:18 “But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day.”

Proverbs 13:9 “The light of the righteous rejoices, but the lamp of the wicked will be put out.”

John 3:19-21 “And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”

Colossians 1:12-13 “Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son.”

I Peter 2:9-10 “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

Something to Think About:

Perhaps you didn't know that I love the sun. Oh, maybe not the hot, sweltering sun of July that makes you wilt in 4 minutes flat, but I yearn for the first warm sunny days of spring each and every year—and when they come, ahhh, BLISS.

Why do I love the sun so much? Well, it shouldn't be hard to understand if you also live in a part of the world where it's dark and cold for a full five months, but in case you don't, I appreciate its warmth, its comfort, its ability to make colors brighter and prettier, and the feeling of well-being that it produces.

I think there may be some spiritual corollaries here. Do you see any? Sin and being on the outs with God is a cold and dark place with no comfort or joy. Living a life of faithfulness is one of joy, brightness, optimism, assurance, and positivity. Psalm 89:15 said that those who walk in the light of God's face are blessed. Proverbs 4:18 says that the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn. Proverbs 13:9 says that the light of the righteous rejoices. Colossians 1:12-13 says that Christians have been forever removed from the domain of darkness and now forever belong to the Kingdom of the beloved Son. And, I Peter 2:9-10 says that Christ's light is marvelous - because, among other things, it reminds us that we are GOD'S PEOPLE, recipients of His marvelous mercy.

Oh, child of light, you have MUCH to rejoice over and live for!

Additional Scripture: Isaiah 2:5; John 12:36,46; Romans 13:12

You and the Lord:

(Things you want to remember, things that blessed you, things that challenged you, and reminders to add to this week's prayer list.)

Monday, November 28, 2022

-Take the time to ask God to bless your time in His Word. Ask for understanding, stick-to-it-ness to not rush through it, and strength and wisdom to apply it to your day and life.

-We are in the final weeks of looking at the five main words of Psalm 119:105 (word, lamp, feet, light, path).

-Path, part 1: The Right One.

- The following Scripture will help us learn what "path," as noted in Psalm 119:105, is all about. Read each verse/passage, then summarize what it is teaching.

Psalm 16:11 "You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

Psalm 25:10 "All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies."

Psalm 139:3 “You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways.”

Psalm 23:3 “He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.”

Proverbs 2:6-9 “For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding; he stores up sound wisdom for the upright; he is a shield to those who walk in integrity, guarding the paths of justice and watching over the way of his saints. Then you will understand righteousness and justice and equity, every good path.”

Proverbs 12:28 “In the path of righteousness is life, and in its pathway there is no death.”

Isaiah 42:16 “And I will lead the blind in a way that they do not know, in paths that they have not known I will guide them. I will turn the darkness before them into light, the rough places into level ground. These are the things I do, and I do not forsake them.”

Something to Think About:

There are right paths and wrong paths in the life of the child of God. The right ones are “the path of life.” They are paths of righteousness, security in the care of Almighty God, wisdom to handle the challenges of life, and chock full of the steadfast love and faithfulness of GOD. Wow! All these verses (and the ones we’ve been working on all month) make me wonder how any of us could EVER choose to stray off God’s path! It seems inconceivable.

And yet we do (for now, at least—not forever!). What a comfort and joy to remember that God will never give up on “making known” to us the path of life, that He will keep restoring our souls when we turn to Him in trust and obedience, that He is always aware of where we are and what we are doing (physically and spiritually) and brings us back to a right place, that He continues to provide wisdom for right living through His Word and through godly believers, that He guards our path and watches over us, leading us lovingly, yet firmly into the way of light.

Praise the LORD!

You and the Lord:

(Things you want to remember, things that blessed you, things that challenged you, and reminders to add to this week’s prayer list.)

Tuesday, November 29, 2022

-Take the time to ask God to bless your time in His Word. Ask for understanding, stick-to-it-ness to not rush through it, and strength and wisdom to apply it to your day and life.
-We are in the final weeks of looking at the five main words of Psalm 119:105 (word, lamp, feet, light, path).
-Path, part 2: Our Role.
- The following Scripture will help us learn what “path,” as noted in Psalm 119:105, is all about. Read each verse/passage, then summarize what it is teaching.

Psalm 25:4 “Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths.”

Psalm 119:35 “Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it.”

Proverbs 1:15 “My son, do not walk in the way with them (sinners); hold back your foot from their paths.”

Proverbs 4:27 “Ponder the path of your feet; then all your ways will be sure. Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your foot away from evil.”

Proverbs 8:20 “I walk in the way of righteousness, in the paths of justice.”

Something to Think About:

Trust and obey, for there’s no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

Pretty much sums up “paths,” wouldn’t you say? As in all of Christianity, there’s God’s part and our part. Oh, don’t misunderstand, we wouldn’t even HAVE a part without God. On our own, we are helpless and hopeless, not only unable to save ourselves or help ourselves in any way, but UNWILLING to. It is God Who saves us and it is God Who helps us be becoming more like Christ in the journey we call life, including the desire to WANT to be like the Son.

BUT, God also asks of us to CHOOSE to cooperate with Him by steering clear of sin and all temptations to sin and immersing ourselves in His Word and godly influences so that we can recognize the path of righteousness and stay on it. Did you read all the pleas in these verses? “Make me to know Your ways, O Lord, teach me Your paths!” “Lead me in the path of Your commandments!”

And the commitment? The choice? “FOR I DELIGHT IN IT!”

The reward? “Her (wisdom’s) ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.” (Proverbs 3:17)

Struggling with unpleasantness? Discord? Confusion? Spend some time in prayer seeking God’s direction back to His path, the one you were created to walk. He’s there waiting for you.

You and the Lord:

(Things you want to remember, things that blessed you, things that challenged you, and reminders to add to this week’s prayer list.)

Wednesday, November 30, 2022

-Take the time to ask God to bless your time in His Word. Ask for understanding, stick-to-it-ness to not rush through it, and strength and wisdom to apply it to your day and life.

-We are in the final weeks of looking at the five main words of Psalm 119:105 (word, lamp, feet, light, path).

-Conclusion & Summary Thoughts

-Read Romans 13:8-14

“Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. 9 For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” 10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. 11 Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. 12 The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.”

-v.9 What command sums up the entire group of commandments? _____

-v.10 Love does _____ to a neighbor.

-v.11 What is nearer than ever before? _____

-v.12 What is at hand? _____

-What do we need to put on? _____

-v.14 In order to do this, what do we need to put on first? _____

- This will automatically mean that we are making _____ provision for our flesh or gratifying its desires.

Something to Think About:

Did you notice verse 12 and how it pertains to Psalm 119:105? God has given His children the ability to put on the armor of light—to walk “properly” and not give in to selfish desires, goals, and behaviors! This is a pretty huge thing!

As someone who is well aware of the years FLYING BY, I appreciate the reminder that our salvation (v.11) is a whole bunch of days closer than it was the day we trusted in Christ as Savior. Whether we are ready or not, willing or not, each new day is one less day to honor God, please God, and prepare for eternity by living according to what the Bible shows us is the right path for us to walk. He has given us the light, we simply need to follow it.

Oh, how I thank God for His Word that is the personal, useful, helpful lamp for my feet and the huge, bright, focused light for my path!

You and the Lord:

(Things you want to remember, things that blessed you, things that challenged you, and reminders to add to this week’s prayer list.)

For quadruple BONUS POINTS, spend a few minutes reviewing this month’s work. Jot down things you want to remember below.

Dear Student of the Word,
We have come to the final month of our year studying Psalm 119:105, “*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.*” By way of conclusion and summary, I am providing the notes to a three part devotional I gave at the Cornerstone Baptist Church Ladies’ Advance in 2010 (Camden, Maine). This series is entitled, “God’s Light for the Storms of Life.” It is my earnest prayer that it is a blessing to you—and a challenge to greater godliness (as I believe all Bible study should be!).

By God’s Grace,
Lorie Brown
First Baptist Church, North Conway, New Hampshire

Thursday, December 1, 2022

-Before we jump into how God’s Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, let’s pause to pray and ask Him to quiet our hearts, open our minds, and make our heart’s soil ready for planting.
“*Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.*” *Psalm 119:105*

Session 1: God’s Word is a Lamp to My Feet

Introduction: Psalm 119, General Truths

Our theme for this entire study has been built on one verse from Psalm 119, so it makes sense to talk about this particular psalm for just a few minutes by way of an introduction. Psalm 119 is an alphabetic poem. This simply means that each new section in the psalm begins with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet in order. The Hebrews have 22 letters in their alphabet, which explains the 22 sections. Incidentally, each verse within each section also begins with the same letter of the alphabet.

Of course, since it was written in Hebrew, this technique does not come across in our English translations, but just knowing the author went to that much trouble gives us a clue as to how important he thought the subject matter was. What did the author want us to remember? The incredibly amazing, written Word of God.

The Word of God is the central theme of this psalm and it is mentioned in one form or another in almost all of its 176 verses. The author wanted to be certain that we understood that God’s words must be at the very center of every single thing that we do, think, or say. It must be the foundation upon everything our life is built upon.

That, ladies, is why we are here this weekend. Our purpose is to dig into Scripture and find out what God HAS told us so that we will be completely equipped to handle all the unknowns—the storms of life, if you will—that we may encounter.

What kinds of storms are you facing today? Is it a health issue? A frightening financial challenge? People who are hurting or disappointing you? Or is it as simple as dealing with a toilet bowl that has been emptied completely of water because your 2-year old has diligently added one sheet of toilet paper at a time until the water was sucked dry? God has the answers for our “little” storms, too.

We don’t always know what storms may be hanging just over the horizon, beyond our view. They may be major force 12 gales, or they might be small, annoying rain-squalls. Whatever they are, and however small or big they may be, if we walk in the light of God’s Word—understanding and obeying its truth—we will be

prepared for whatever may come our way. This will be a key theme of our work together this weekend.

I pray you will stick with me and hang in there until the end. I have designed the final session, especially, to address some very practical how-to's in dealing with the life God has called us to live as women living in the twenty-first century.

One gal I heard of tried to deal with her problems by vocalizing her frustration. It had been a rotten morning with her three kids wired and driving her crazy. Counting to ten wasn't cutting it, so she walked into her bedroom closet, shut the door and SCREAMED loud and long. It worked. Afterwards she felt better. Ready to face the rest of her day, she opened the door and was greeted by three terrified faces. "Mom," said her 5-year old. "I TOLD you there was a monster in there!"

Going the Extra Mile:

I know it takes a few minutes to do, but how about taking the time to read Psalm 119 today? You don't have to do it in just one sitting (though you can). However you do it, it will be an inspiration to you and a delightful reminder just how wonderful God and His Word is.

Friday, December 2, 2022

-Before we jump into how God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, let's pause to pray and ask Him to quiet our hearts, open our minds, and make our heart's soil ready for planting.

"Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Psalm 119:105

Of all the nifty verses in Psalm 119, verse 105 has to be one of the most well known and the most well loved. Will you recite it with me? *"Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."*

Over the years I have developed a passion for finding out what favorite verses in Scripture really say. It is easy for any of us to spout off a verse, but do we always fully understand what it means? I am definitely sure that God wants us to be able to understand these verses and truths.

So, how do we find out what a verse means? Well, first it is helpful to learn a little bit about the Book the verse is in. For example, the Holy Spirit used several men to write the Book of Psalms. David wrote about half of the psalms, but other authors include Asaph, Solomon, and the sons of Korah.

The Book of Psalms is a collection of 150 songs, many of which were set to the accompaniment of stringed instruments. It served as both the Temple hymnbook and as a devotional guide for the Jewish people. Many themes and topics are addressed in these psalms/songs, but praise to God is the prevalent theme by far.

The next thing to do when searching for the meaning of a verse is to read the context. This includes as many verses before your verse and as many verses after your verse as are necessary to understand what the author is talking about.

Psalm 119:105 is in the Hebrew alphabet section of "NUN" - our English "N." As we mentioned, the theme of Psalm 119 is devotion to God's Word and a deep desire to live by its precepts.

Then (and this is so much fun) we need to define the words that are in the verse we are studying. This is done by looking them up other places in Scripture where these words are also used to enhance our understanding. Finally, we put what we have learned back together to discover for ourselves the treasures our verse contains. That is exactly what we will be doing this weekend with Psalm 119:105!

Right now we are going to look at the first half of our verse, "Your Word is a lamp to my feet," and next we will explore the second phrase, "Your Word is a light to my path." Finally, we will "put it all back together again" to grasp that God has, indeed, given us everything we need to face any and all storms of life.

I hope you are excited. This is great stuff! We are going to explore and discover together how to have a more fulfilling and God-honoring life.

Going the Extra Mile:

Do you have a favorite verse? Look it up and list the words that are in it. Use an English dictionary to define the words. If you have a Bible dictionary, see what it has to say about each word. If your Bible has any cross-references listed for your verse, look them up to see how they help your understanding of the verse. If you have access to the internet, search for your verse to find out what you can about it (including how other English versions translate it).

Saturday, December 3, 2022

-Before we jump into how God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, let's pause to pray and ask Him to quiet our hearts, open our minds, and make our heart's soil ready for planting.

"Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Psalm 119:105

II God's Word

The fact that the "word" mentioned is God's word is the first thing we need to note. The words of Scripture are night and day superior to any other written or spoken words ever. Why? Because they are GOD'S words. Of all the books EVER written, this is the only one God wrote—and He wrote it to us! Wow!

The word translated here as "word" is the Hebrew word "*dabar*." You might also find it translated in Scripture as, "speech," "speak," "speaking," "God spoke," "God commanded," "God promised," or "God said."

It occurs roughly 2,500 times in the Old Testament in its noun and verb forms.

According to Psalm 119:105, God's Word is a lamp.

III A Lamp

Lamps in Old Testament times were nothing like our modern day lamps. Nor were they candles. They were small pots or dishes made of clay and filled with olive oil. By lighting a flax wick, they would provide light to the home. This would be a dim light in comparison to our lamps or flashlights today.

A poor household might have only one lamp, but it was kept burning day and night. This was for very practical reasons. Bible time homes were usually relatively small. They had a courtyard in the front for the animals and usually only a single room inside where the entire family slept. They often had only one small window high on the wall used for ventilation which might provide some light, but once the door was shut for the night, the room would have been very dark. Really, even in the middle of the day, little sunlight could enter the home, so the main source of illumination, however meager, was the family's oil lamp. As I mentioned, even the poorest families kept a lamp burning all the time, in fact, this was one of the ways others people knew there was someone inside—when they could see that a lamp was burning.

References to lamps in the Bible are certainly mentioned in the sense of a light-giving object, but they also have symbolic meanings. For example, a lamp might refer to a person's physical life. Proverbs 13:9 says that God snuffs the "lamp" of the wicked out. II Samuel 21 refers to King David as the lamp of the nation of Israel. And God Himself is referred to as a Lamp Who turns darkness into light in II Samuel 21. In fact, ultimately we will no longer need lamps for physical light when God becomes our only necessary light source throughout eternity as stated in Revelation 21 & 22.

Going the Extra Mile:

Take a few minutes to look up the Bible verses mentioned in this section. I personally find it interesting and helpful to look them up in at least a few different versions.

Sunday, December 4, 2022

-Before we jump into how God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, let's pause to pray and ask Him to quiet our hearts, open our minds, and make our heart's soil ready for planting.

"Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Psalm 119:105

The word "lamp" in Psalm 119:105 is also found in Exodus 25 to designate the Menorah. The Menorah was the special seven-branched olive oil lampstand used in the Holy Place of first, the Tabernacle, and then later, the Temple. We need to remember that there was no other source of light inside the Holy Place besides that lampstand. Without its illumination, the interior of that room would have been absolutely pitch-black under the many layers of skins and cloths. This makes Matthew 5:14-16 all the more significant.

"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

This is one of the passages of Scripture that teaches that Christians are a light to the world—a world

which is pitch-black in its sin. Our job as believers in Jesus Christ is to live our life in such a way that others see us and, in turn, glorify God the Father.

Do you think this can be done if we blend in with the world around us? Of course not. That would be “hiding our lamp under a basket.” So, how can we bring glory to God? By living as His daughter—as if we are a foreign ambassador’s child living in a strange land with the responsibility of demonstrating our home country to the people who see us and know us. This is, of course, exactly what we are and what we are supposed to do!

“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.” Philippians 3:20

“Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ...” II Corinthians 5:20

How should the ambassador's daughter look? Well, I can think of one young Mom whose children were a little confused about her looks one night. It had been a very long day, but bedtime for the children finally came. She read them a Bible story, prayed with them, and tucked them into bed with stern warnings to stay put. From there she went to the bathroom and showered. She wrapped her wet hair in an old towel, put on a shapeless terrycloth robe, and slathered her face with a green face mask goo that made unlikely promises of restoration of youth. Then she heard the kids giggling, laughing, and thumping on the floor—clearly not in their beds dreaming sweet dreams! She marched up the stairs in her husband’s slippers, threw open the door to their room, and spoke in a low, but stern growl to get back into bed and go to sleep NOW. As she left the room, she heard her 3-year old say with a trembling voice, “Who was that!”

What has God said about how His daughters should look and act? First and foremost, we need to remember that what is seen in our clothing, behavior, and conversation is actually a picture of what is in our hearts.

“Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.” Proverbs 4:23

When our heart is right with God and focused on pleasing Him, everything else will fall into its proper place too. Would the daughter of the King of kings wear tight clothing, short skirts, and blouses that are a teeny bit too low - or would her clothing be modest and feminine? In fact, wouldn't she want to “dress up a bit” when meeting with her Father in His House of worship? Would her conversation be centered on “woe is me” or would it more likely offer encouragement to others to trust her Father more? Would God’s daughters’ speech have tons of “I’s” and “me’s,” or more “God” and “Father” and “Savior” as the main focus? Would her face be tight with anger, anxiety, or discouragement, or would it be serene with confidence in her Father’s perfect timing and plan? Would she listen to music that makes her body wiggle and move in sensual pleasures or would her taste in music cause tears to spring to her eyes as she contemplates the love of God that is wider, longer, deeper, and higher than she could ever even imagine? (Eph. 3) Is her day filled with “self-improvement” projects and frantic attempts to make sure her personal agenda is fulfilled despite all obstacles, or has she committed her day to God to be used as He sees fit, desiring only to glorify Him in all she does with a heart of service and love towards others? (I Cor. 10:31) We, as Christian women, need to remember that we are lamps that need to shine the light of God’s Word into the world.

Going the Extra Mile:

Prayerfully and carefully take inventory of your light. That is, your personal testimony, based on how you dress, what your habit of speaking is, how you use your time—everything.

Monday, December 5, 2022

-Before we jump into how God’s Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, let’s pause to pray and ask Him to quiet our hearts, open our minds, and make our heart’s soil ready for planting.

“Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” Psalm 119:105

One last thing to note about lamps is that a Bible-time lamp, like today’s flashlight, is portable.

God's Word is portable, as well. We can take it with us wherever we go—on index cards in our purse, on our phone, in the form of a pocket New Testament—or, best yet, in our heart.

Even if you are convinced that you cannot memorize Scripture, you might be surprised at what you remember if you simply read something over and over. Besides, I think most of us can remember better than we give ourselves credit for. I mean, after all, aren't we pretty good at remembering the lyrics to songs we love? Can't we usually recite the plot of a favorite story? How many of us can still repeat the Big Mac jingle from the 70's?! If we can do all that, we can remember at least some of the living, breathing, active Word of God, too. I urge you to be in your Bible so often that its truths are in your heart wherever you go, lighting the place for your feet to be.

Going the Extra Mile:

Choose a Bible verse to begin to memorize. Write it out in at least one spot, carrying a copy in your pocket so that you can begin to work on memorizing it. While you are memorizing it, be sure to also meditate on it. That is, think about what it is saying and teaching and how it can help you love God more and obey Him even better.

Tuesday, December 6, 2022

-Before we jump into how God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, let's pause to pray and ask Him to quiet our hearts, open our minds, and make our heart's soil ready for planting.

"Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Psalm 119:105

IV Feet

Psalm 119:105 tells us that God's Word is a lamp to our feet. Feet, in Scripture, often have to do with the collection of bone, muscle, and skin located at the ends of our legs, but they also have spiritual significance.

Feet are the source of both locomotion and stability—physically and spiritually. In fact, Psalm 119:105 calls attention to the direction and activity of our life. That is, it teaches us about the course of action we should take and the progress of getting to where we are headed. This has been further expanded in the second half of this verse and we will talk about that more later.

In Bible times, few people could afford animals to provide transportation, so walking was the norm. Not everyone even wore shoes. Those that did wore sandals made primarily from leather. You may be interested to know that Mary and Joseph most likely walked from Nazareth to Bethlehem. There is no mention of a donkey in Scripture!

Our feet in both the New Testament and Old Testament are most often mentioned in relation to our lifestyle.

"I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called." Ephesians 4:1

One of the things I want to address more fully in our third session, is the fact that Psalm 119:105 points out our personal responsibility. It says, "Your Word is a lamp to MY feet." When it comes right down to it, we are the ones who put one foot in front of the other and choose where to go. Though we are really good at excusing ourselves or, better yet, blaming others for the messes we get into, we have the final responsibility for our feet—for the activities, behaviors, and lifestyles we are part of.

Going the Extra Mile:

Prayerfully evaluate where your feet have been this past week and whether or how that impacted you spiritually. Did it help you love God more? Did it provide opportunities to help and bless others? Did it turn your eyes away from what God calls "good" and "right"? Did it expose your sight or hearing to something that doesn't please God or edify a believer?

Wednesday, December 7, 2022

-Before we jump into how God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, let's pause to pray and ask Him to quiet our hearts, open our minds, and make our heart's soil ready for planting.

"Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Psalm 119:105

I've always been partial to Nike's slogan several years back, "Just do it." While that's great advice for getting things done which we might be procrastinating, I have tried to focus on its spiritual corollary, "Just do...right." We find this truth in multiple Bible passages:

"...abhor what is evil, cling to what is good." Romans 12:9

"Depart from evil and do good..." Psalm 34:14

"You who love the Lord, hate evil!" Psalm 97:10

The truth is this: if we will obey the Bible: simply, wholeheartedly, and faithfully, then we will be able to handle whatever obstacle our feet encounter in the path of life. The Bible is really all we need for our life! Furthermore, the time to get ready for problems and challenges is not when the storm cloud is hanging over our house, it is long before that. If we will search the Scriptures and put them into practice in the small things of life, we will be ready for the big storms, too.

One verse that I used to think was teaching on biblical submission has become special to me in recent years for another reason. It is I Peter 3:6

"As Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror."

Sarah had a lot to be afraid of! She was uprooted from her home and family when her husband was called to be a wanderer, she was willingly "loaned" into a harem, by her husband (twice!), and she had to stay home and watch when her husband took her precious son away with the plan to sacrifice him to Jehovah! Yet, this verse indicates that Sarah chose to do good and not give in to fear in her life. She had learned to trust God instead.

What is the outcome in our lives if we follow her example and keep our feet from evil so we can obey God despite the scary world around us? A few verses earlier in this chapter gives the answer. Verse 4 says that our insides—our hidden person of the heart—can have the *"...incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God."*

I know very few women who think of themselves as beautiful, but this is the kind of beauty we should all strive for. This beauty makes God smile. This beauty lasts throughout eternity. This beauty does good and refuses to be overcome by fear.

Going the Extra Mile:

Spend some time in prayer bringing to the Father the things that cause you to be afraid. Trust God to take care of each item in His perfect timing and manner. Thank Him!

Thursday, December 8, 2022

-Before we jump into how God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, let's pause to pray and ask Him to quiet our hearts, open our minds, and make our heart's soil ready for planting.

"Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Psalm 119:105

V Conclusion, part 1

Let's sum up what we have learned about God's Word being a lamp to our feet from Psalm 119:105.

Even if we are wheelchair bound or our physical feet never go anywhere at all, we ALL still make decisions every single day concerning our behavior and lifestyle. The real question is: are we pleasing God or

pleasing self? There is no middle ground. God sees black and white. Light and dark. Even if we were to try to create a grey area, God does not see it. We are commanded over and over to turn from evil and do good.

But how do we know what is evil and what is good? The old joke about asking advice is all too true. If you ask ten people for their opinion about a situation, you will get twelve answers. However, the only opinion that truly matters is the one from the Creator of all—God. And, blessing of blessings, He hasn't left us high and dry. In fact, He gave a priceless gift to us in the form of a Book full of His words for us to read over and over. Psalm 119 uses 176 verses to exhort us to read and obey. It tells us in verse 105 that the Bible, the Book we so often take for granted, is the lamp that can and does help us see the right thing to do.

Did you remember that the lamps in biblical times were portable—kind of like our flashlights of today? I tease my husband about his flashlight collection. He loves to find the brightest ones he can—and let me tell you, flashlight brightness has come a long way in the last several years. Some of them could blind you! But, here's the deal, if someone forced me into a nighttime walk in the forest (and, believe me, they would have to force me), I would definitely want my husband's brightest flashlight with me! I would want to know exactly where it was safe to walk and what else might be out there in the woods alongside me.

Ladies, do you want to know exactly where to walk and what dangers are near you? The Bible is the brightest lamp ever invented. It has *“everything we need for life and godliness”* according to II Peter 1:3. What value do you place on your lamp?

Going the Extra Mile:

Spend a few minutes with the Lord in prayer and with your “lamp” open to contemplate the value your current life shows you place on God's Word. Prayerfully seek help to excel still more in the days and years to come.

Friday, December 9, 2022

-Before we jump into how God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, let's pause to pray and ask Him to quiet our hearts, open our minds, and make our heart's soil ready for planting.

“Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” Psalm 119:105

When I was around 12, my family took a road trip that brought us to the Mammoth Caves in Kentucky and my father decided that it would be fun to go inside and see them. Once, the tour group we were part of was deep inside the cave and all huddled together under the protection of our guide, he decided to demonstrate to us just how dark a cave was to early spelunkers without a light. He turned off all of the built-in lights as well as his own high-powered spotlight. The darkness was immediate and it was absolute. There was nothing for our eyes to focus on and we wisely held very still. It wasn't safe to try to move. It was surprisingly frightening and it was quite a relief when he turned all the lights back on.

This is what our lives are like without God's Word to direct us. Without it, we are in darkness. With it, we can see the safe place for our feet—just as when the guide in the cave turned on the lights and we could see the cave floor again. I cannot imagine wanting to travel through this scary world in darkness without the glow of God's Word in my heart.

I wonder: What is God laying on YOUR heart to change? Have you allowed your love for His Word to fade? Has your attendance in God's House slipped on your list of priorities? Have you allowed the world to influence your dress? Words? Attitude? Music? Reading materials? When is the last time you had meaningful personal devotions? When is the last time your prayer was deep and heartfelt?

It might be a small thing - or a really big thing. But if you will commit it to the Lord and become faithful in it, then you will be prepared for both greater service for the Master and more challenging storms.

The first thing to do to get right with God is always confession. Confession is simply “saying the same thing as God.” In other words, agree with Him that sin is sin. Agree with him personally that your sin is sin. Then ask Him to show you clearly how to restore an active, alive, walk with Him. Ask Him to direct your steps to do whatever is necessary to make things right again. Today. Never put off what the Holy Spirit is prodding you to do.

Going the Extra Mile:

God is asking me to: _____

Steps I need to take to direct my feet according to Scripture: _____

Pray and thank God for loving you enough to care about the quality of your walk.

Saturday, December 10, 2022

-Before we jump into how God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, let's pause to pray and ask Him to quiet our hearts, open our minds, and make our heart's soil ready for planting.

"Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Psalm 119:105

I think it will be helpful to take a few minutes to review what we learned so far—ever since hitting 40, short-term memory troubles are definitely an issue. (Update for those reading this in 2022—these 20 years of additional age have NOT helped this issue!!!) =)

-Psalm 119 is an alphabetic poem which uses the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet to develop 22 sections designed to teach us to **delight in the Word of God**. The author prays earnestly to God to help him better understand His Word **and to obey it**. He also deeply desires for us to keep the Bible as the foundation for every decision we make, every word we utter, every action we take. The Bible must be the "why" behind everything.

We can have full assurance that what God HAS told us within the pages of the Bible is what we need to know to be completely equipped to handle all the unknowns that we may encounter. We are also beginning to see that being able to handle the storms of life in a godly manner is actually dependent upon our daily preparation ahead of time.

Sometimes the storms we encounter in life are simply the exhaustion that comes from being a Mom, as demonstrated in the following story:

One day a husband came home from work to find his three children outside, still in their pajamas, playing in the mud, with empty food boxes and wrappers strewn all around the front yard. Hurrying into the house through the wide open front door, he found an even bigger mess. A lamp had been knocked over, a throw rug was wadded up against the wall, the TV was blaring cartoons loudly, and the family room was unrecognizable because of toys, clothes, and food containers on every surface available.

He walked in a daze to the kitchen to find dirty dishes in the sink, food spills on the counter, floor and table, and a highway of muddy footprints from the door to the sink and back.

He quickly headed up the stairs, stumbling over toys and dirty clothes to look for his wife. He was worried that she might be ill or that something serious had happened. He was met with a trickle of water coming from the bathroom, so he peered inside to discover a stopped up toilet, wet towels on the floor, scummy soap sticking to the side of the vanity, and toothpaste smears on the mirror. He rushed into the bedroom and there was his wife, still in her pajamas and curled up in a comfy ball reading a novel. She looked up, smiled, and asked how his day went.

Confused, he looked at her in bewilderment and gasped, "What happened here today?" She again smiled and answered, "You know how every day when you come home from work and ask me what in the world I did all day?" "Yes," was his incredulous reply. "Well, today I didn't do it."

So far, we have looked at the first half of Psalm 119:105, "God's Word is a lamp to my feet." We discovered first and foremost that the Word the psalmist is passionately teaching about is GOD's Word, not just any ol' printed document giving us advice and opinion. The Creator and Sustainer of absolutely everything we know of—and much we don't—chose to bless us with His Word in a written, permanent form. He gave it to us so we can know Him (not just about Him) and so we could know exactly how to walk in a victorious, God-honoring way while here on earth. So what we are studying isn't merely one more opinion on how to survive in this chaotic world, it is THE authority on how to not only survive, but thrive.

What does God tell us about His Word? It is a lamp to our feet.

Lamps, you may remember, were clay dishes or pots filled with olive oil. They didn't exactly produce a lot of light, but they were essential to everyday life. Normally a lamp in a home was kept burning 24/7.

The purpose of any lamp, of course, is to give light even though nowadays, lamps are often chosen for how they support our decorating theme. Today we have many options in how to light our homes, but in Bible times, if the sun was down for the night, then the moon, stars, or lamps were the only way to provide illumination.

We learned too that if a lamp no longer gives light, it has no purpose. Scripture tells us that our testimony as Christians is like a lamp shining into the darkness. The question we must each personally answer every day is: is our lamp shining or is it hidden so that no one really sees it? God commands that we keep our lamps shining brightly so that others may see it and that He may be glorified.

The lamp in Psalm 119:105 shines onto our feet. The mention of feet here has to do with our habits and patterns of living. Either we are walking on God's path and pleasing Him or we have decided to go our own way and are, by default, walking on Satan's path, helping him in his battle against God. There is no middle path, no gray area, no fence to sit on. One of the reasons God gave us His written Word is to light the right path so we could easily stay on it.

As we head into new material, let me remind you of both the reassurance and responsibility of His Word providing light for our feet. God desires, and expects, a personal relationship with each one of us. The Bible says that He wants each and every one of us to walk closely by His side, relying on His Word to light the way.

Going the Extra Mile:

What has God impressed on your heart by way of praise or prayer request? Make a list!

Sunday, December 11, 2022

-Before we jump into how God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, let's pause to pray and ask Him to quiet our hearts, open our minds, and make our heart's soil ready for planting.

"Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Psalm 119:105

I Introduction: a Brief Look at Parallelism in Scripture

Psalm 119:105 uses the common Hebrew poetic technique of parallelism. There are three main types of parallelism. The first is called synonymous parallelism and it simply means that the second line has about the same meaning as the first line. A modern example might be, "The sun feels nice. Its rays are warm and comforting."

The second type is called antithetical parallelism. Here, the second line is the opposite of the first line and often starts with the word, "but." An example of this one might be, "Pizza tastes great, but liver tastes gross."

The third type of parallelism—the one found in our verse—is called synthetic parallelism. For this one, the second line expands on the teaching of the first line. It often starts with the word, "and." An example might be, "The Ladies' Advance is where we will learn about God and we will study His Word there."

Of course, if you have ever read the Book of Proverbs, you will have seen dozens and dozens of examples of Hebrew parallelism. One great example of the kind used in our verse is also found in Proverbs 3:6, *"In all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths."*

Why does that matter? Well, knowing that this verse contains synthetic parallelism leads us to realize that if we want God to direct our paths, we must acknowledge Him in all our ways. Psalm 119:105 gives us similar help and direction. It tells us in the first half that God's Word is a lamp to our feet. Then it adds, AND, it is a light to our path. You may well ask, "What's the difference between lamp and light and feet and path?" I'm so glad you asked! Let's talk about it.

Going the Extra Mile:

Open up your Bible to the Book of Proverbs. Look for some examples of parallelism. Don't stop at identifying what kind they are, though, be sure to pay attention to what it is teaching you spiritually!

Monday, December 12, 2022

-Before we jump into how God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, let's pause to pray and ask Him to quiet our hearts, open our minds, and make our heart's soil ready for planting.

"Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Psalm 119:105

II A Light

God's Word is a light.

The word "light" is a biggie! That is because light is a huge concept in Scripture. It describes the very character of God and stands for all that is right and good and true!

Is there one chance in a million that we can conquer this topic in this session—or even in our lifetime? No, but that is the beauty of it. God gives us the joy and privilege of being able to keep digging into Scripture to learn and grow more every new day we are given here on earth. It may well be that we really won't begin to fully understand light until we reach heaven. At that time we will SEE it, in God and in the Lamb. However, the vastness of the subject does not mean that we should give up on trying to learn about it right now. Giving up is not an option.

One grandmother didn't want to give up either on her granddaughter who hadn't yet mastered all her colors. She decided a little impromptu test would be in good order, and so, looking around the room, she began pointing out different objects in the room and then asked her granddaughter what color it was. The little girl was doing really well, so the grandmother kept going. At last the granddaughter had to go home, but just before leaving, she turned to her grandmother and gave this advice, "Grandma, I really think you should try to figure out some of these on your own."

Well, we cannot "figure out" light completely, but we can see some pretty important truths:

- Light describes God's Character.
- Light differentiates the darkness.
- Scripture is light.
- Jesus Christ is light.
- Believers are lights.

Going the Extra Mile:

See if you can find some Bible verses that teach one or more of the five different examples just given!

Tuesday, December 13, 2022

-Before we jump into how God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, let's pause to pray and ask Him to quiet our hearts, open our minds, and make our heart's soil ready for planting.

"Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Psalm 119:105

Here are Bible verses that explain five truths about light in Scripture (this list, by the way, is far from exhaustive. The Bible talks about light a lot!).

Light Describes God's Character:

"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" Proverbs 27:1

"This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light, in Him is no darkness at all." I John 1:5

Light Differentiates the Darkness:

"Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness." Genesis 1:3-4

Scripture is Light:

“For the commandment is a lamp, and the Law is a light...” Proverbs 6:2

“The entrance of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.” Psalm 119:130

Jesus Christ is Light:

“Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, ‘I am the Light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.’” John 8:12

Believers are Lights:

“You are the light of the world...” Matthew 5:14

“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.” Ephesians 5:8

So...what do we do with all this? At the least, we should see the deep need to pause and evaluate our own light. For example, is there one?

So far, all the talk about how God’s Word is the light to get us through the storms of life has been addressed to believers. Maybe some of you aren’t really sure what I’m talking about. Maybe some of you aren’t absolutely certain what will happen to you when you die. I’m here to tell you, by God’s grace you CAN know.

I suspect most of us have heard—and even used—the phrase, “by God’s grace.” but what does it really mean? “Grace” simply means being given something we don’t deserve.

Have you ever had a day or two (or a week or more!) when you have been an absolute beast to be around? You find yourself snapping at the kids and griping to your husband. You know that it cannot be very nice to be around you, and yet you keep snarling and snapping. And then, much to your shame, your husband brings you home a long-stemmed rose just because he loves you. You sure didn’t deserve it!

Well, God gave us something we didn’t deserve either. Salvation. What is salvation? The word itself just means to be rescued from something. It could be saved from some life-threatening situation (like a fire-fighter saving people in a burning building). It could be saved as in “Honey, if Matilda keeps me on the phone longer than three hours, please interrupt us!”

God’s salvation has to do with where we will spend eternity. Long ago, shortly after the creation of the world, mankind decided to turn against God by doing something that God said not to do. This is what is sin, by the way. Sin is choosing to do what God said not to do or not doing something He said to do. It is choosing to do what we want over what God wants. Sin is rebellion—in any form—against God’s holy character.

Why does it matter? Because God is our Creator and He makes the rules. As His creation, we need to do what He wants. The creature cannot defy his Maker without consequences. God is a God of holiness. Being holy isn’t only an absence of sin, though it is that, it is also the pursuit of doing right. God, though, isn’t merely holy because of the good things He does. His very character is the definition of what holy IS. He is THE standard by which what is right and wrong is determined. This is true in every area of life, for all people: past, present, and future—and this holy God hates sin with a hatred that I don’t think we will be able to fully understand until we stand in His presence.

And so His very character determines that He MUST punish sin. Therefore, when we (mankind) chose to go our own way, we chose to turn our backs on God in sin, God’s righteousness required punishment for sin in the form of Hell, a place of eternal suffering, pain, and blackness. Did you know that Hell has no light? Did you know that it is also a place where God’s presence is never felt?

You should definitely be wondering about now what could possibly improve this nightmarish scenario. Grace. God’s grace. You see, even though we hated God, He loved us and made a way for us to not only be reconciled to Him, but He took it a step further and granted us the legal position of becoming His very own children through adoption.

How? Through the substitution of His own perfect, holy Son, Jesus Christ, on our behalf. Jesus came to earth as a human, grew up, and then allowed Himself to die on the cross so that He could take the punishment OUR sin deserved for us. Because He was God, death could not defeat Him and He was raised to life again in three days. He is the only possible path to a personal relationship with God the Father.

How do we become His children? Simple belief in Jesus Christ as your Savior from our sin.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16

“But as many as received Him (Jesus), to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe on His name.” John 1:12

“...believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.” Acts 16:31

No other activity is needed besides simply believing. You don't have to go to church. You don't have to give money. You don't have to visit the elderly at the nursing home or support missionaries. You don't even have to pray, although you may want to thank God for what He has done on your behalf. You simply need to believe that Jesus paid the price for your sins.

If you have the slightest doubt that you are a child of God, please speak with your pastor or another mature Christian. They would be thrilled to show you from God's written Word, the Bible, what love God wants to give YOU.

Going the Extra Mile:

If you have not yet trusted in Christ as your Savior, don't let another day pass without doing so! If you are a Christian, who might God be laying on your heart to share this good news with today?

Wednesday, December 14, 2022

-Before we jump into how God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, let's pause to pray and ask Him to quiet our hearts, open our minds, and make our heart's soil ready for planting.

“Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” Psalm 119:105

III My Path

The word for path here has the root idea of a narrow, rough, foot-path. It carries the concept of a way that is traveled, but not without some difficulty. It could be translated “trail,” “road,” or even “way” in other places in Scripture.

It is very frequently used as an analogy for the course or direction of one's life. The particular word used in Psalm 119:105, suggests that even though traveling this path may be difficult, there is still forward movement and there is, as well, a definite direction of travel.

Speaking about needing directions, have you heard the story about the young pastor who had been asked by a funeral director to hold a graveside service for a homeless man with no family or friends? The funeral was to be at a cemetery way out in the country. This was a new cemetery and this man was the first to be laid to rest there. The pastor was not familiar with the area and became lost. Being a typical man, he did not ask for directions, but he finally found the cemetery about an hour late. The back hoe was there and the crew was eating their lunch. The hearse was nowhere to be seen. He apologized to the workers for being late and looking into the open grave, saw the vault lid already in place. He told the workers he would not keep them long, but that this was the proper thing to do. The workers, still eating their lunch, gathered around the opening. He was young and enthusiastic and poured out his heart and soul as he preached. The workers joined in with, "Praise the Lord," "Amen," and "Glory!" He got so into the service that he preached and preached and preached, from Genesis to Revelation. When the service was over, he said a prayer and walked to his car. As he opened the door to his car, he heard one of the workers say, "I never saw anything like that before and I've been putting in septic systems for twenty years."

As Christians, we are given directions in God's Word. The Bible is God's light that shows us where to go and how to get there. The path we walk as Christians begins at the point when we believed in Jesus Christ as the Savior from our sins, but where is the end? What is the goal? The goal of the Christian walk is Christ-likeness. Of course, we understand that we won't be like Christ until glory, but in the here and now we must have as our personal goal to be becoming more like Christ every day. This goal is attainable.

If we read, study, and obey the Word of God, we WILL see what Christ is like so we can mimic Him, act like Him, speak like Him, and conform every part of our being to His image. In fact, Romans 12:2 teaches

us that this will, by definition, demand that we turn our backs on anything having to do with the world.

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Romans 12:2

Going the Extra Mile:

Understanding that we cannot be “like” Jesus Christ in His deity, think for a moment about ways we CAN be like Him. Jot down examples of how you can speak, think, and act that would please Him and be “like” Him. (For example, Jesus used His word to talk about His Father and share from God’s Word. How could you imitate this?)

Thursday, December 15, 2022

-Before we jump into how God’s Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, let’s pause to pray and ask Him to quiet our hearts, open our minds, and make our heart’s soil ready for planting.

“Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” Psalm 119:105

God’s Word is a light to our path. It is the sun compared to any other light source. It is so vast, powerful, and great that it shows not only where to place our next footstep, but it lights up the whole road. It shows us where we are right now and it shows us where we need to go and how to get there.

Does that make the lamp of no value? No! Do you remember how portable and useful lamps are to everyday life? God’s Word is something we can use every day AND it is something that will guide us every step of the way from today into eternity. This beautiful truth is what the parallelism in Psalm 119:105 is teaching—God makes Himself available to us in His Word: it is a Lamp and He is THE Light .

Think for a second—the small portable lamp can expand into the sun—and, the huge, vast, all-mighty sun is able to be carried with us wherever we go. Our Bible is God’s truth in human language. It contains the wisdom of God, yet by meditating on it and hiding its principles in our heart, we can carry it everywhere we go.

IV Conclusion, part 2

Imagine that you are the wife of a lighthouse keeper in the mid-1800’s on the coast of Maine. Only a few miles out to sea, great schooners pass by the rocky shoreline bearing cargoes of tea or silk or timber.

Your small cozy cottage is built right next to the great 75-foot tower that houses the all-essential light. You are very well aware that the footpath that runs the 100 yards from your cottage to the lighthouse is very dangerous to walk on when storms hit, but because you have practiced walking that path many, many times day and night, if you had to get to the tower during a storm, you would be ready. Your familiarity with the path would have made all the difference in the world. And though it isn’t always easy to walk, knowing your beloved husband is on the other end of it makes it worth any amount of trouble there may be.

In a similar manner, if we walk in the Light of God’s Word on a daily basis, we’ll be ready for the storms of life when they hit, too. We may even discover the joy that awaits those who walk it out of faithful love to their Savior and Sustainer.

Going the Extra Mile:

I once again challenge you to do something about what God is laying on YOUR heart. For some of you, it may be that you need to make the most important decision you’ll ever make in this life. Will you place your faith in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior from sin - or will you reject Him and choose Hell as the place where you spend eternity?

For others of you, perhaps you are the kind of person who is always putting off the changes you know God wants you to make. The problem with that is two-fold. First, when storms hit your life—and they will—you won’t be ready. You will be scrambling to know how to react because you have never practiced simple faith in God during the everyday issues we all face. The other perhaps more serious problem with putting off trusting and obeying God is that what we do now for Christ is really, really important for how we will be able to serve Him throughout eternity. Those who have placed their faith and trust in Christ as Savior will not be judged for sin, but we will be judged for how faithfully we lived our lives for God based on Scripture.

There may be still yet another group of ladies here. These are the ones who have caught a glimpse of

the value of the light of God’s Word. You ARE faithfully living for God. You ARE trying to do the right thing according to God’s Word. I commend you for your heart for God and your desire to excel for Christ. But I also encourage you to work harder, trust more deeply, dig into Scripture on a new deeper level—learn what it means to please Christ a bit more each and every day. Just do –right.

God is asking me to: _____
Steps I need to take to direct my feet according to Scripture: _____

Pray and thank God for loving you enough to care about the quality of your walk.

Friday, December 16, 2022

-Before we jump into how God’s Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, let’s pause to pray and ask Him to quiet our hearts, open our minds, and make our heart’s soil ready for planting.

“Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” Psalm 119:105

Session 3: God’s Light for the Storms of Life

Several years ago when my husband and I lived in Waterville, New York, I was away from home one evening because I had been asked to speak at a Mother-Daughter banquet. I had my two oldest daughters with me, who would have been around 8 or 9 years old at the time. While we were at the banquet, a heavy thunder-storm came through, but I didn’t think much of it, other than maybe hoping the power wouldn’t go out in the middle of the event.

Later, when we were driving home, I was trying to puzzle out what was different as we entered the Waterville town limits, when I realized there were no lights anywhere. Evidently, the power had gone off. Still not thinking too much of it, I drove towards the street my house was on. Here I met another surprise, a fire truck blocking the end of the road.

I was concerned, but regrouped, and decided to simply drive the long way around town to get home. As the girls and I drove through the darkened streets, we could see some branches down, but not too much else. When I finally popped out at the other entrance to our street, I found another fire truck blocking that end, too.

This, of course, changed everything! Even though I could see my house—only yards from where I was—I could not get to it. This was before cell phones, so I had no way of letting my husband know we were out there or to make sure he and my other children were all okay.

I ended up driving back out of town again to go to a church member’s home, where I was finally able to call my husband. To make a long story short, a micro-burst had ripped through our tiny town. A micro-burst, believe it or not, is actually a type of inland hurricane. In a matter of just a few seconds, our town was severely damaged. Dozens of trees were uprooted, a telephone pole across the street from our house was sheared off at the ground, and our neighbor’s above ground pool was flattened. It wasn’t until daylight that the destruction could be clearly seen.

Now, THAT was quite a storm in my life. But, I know what you are probably thinking: bad weather isn’t the kind of storm you were contemplating when you heard the theme for this study.

You’re right. Me neither. But all too often the other kinds of storms hit our lives just as suddenly and leave just as much devastation.

For me, there was also the scare when my one-year-old daughter was diagnosed with Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis and watching her become more and more crippled without knowing if she would ever be able to walk. Then there was the fear of finding out my unborn son might be born with a life-threatening defect. There was the heartache of church members shouting ugly accusations at me and my husband and the agony of a church split. There was the unexpected phone call one sunny day telling my husband that his Dad had died unexpectedly in the night. And, there are the day-to-day storms of self-doubt, discouragement, disappointment, and fear because of all the what-if’s of life.

I know without question that every single one of us have storms in our lives. But I also know with absolute certainty that God has the answers. He provides strength to not only “get to the other side” of difficulties, but to live victoriously for Him IN the storms. I know because His Word is a lamp to our feet and a light

to our path—wherever that path may take us.

Going the Extra Mile:

Take a few minutes to jot down some of the storms in your life. Not to dwell on them, per se, but to remember how God helped you during the storm and after. Don't forget to thank Him for His excellent care!

Saturday, December 17, 2022

-Before we jump into how God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, let's pause to pray and ask Him to quiet our hearts, open our minds, and make our heart's soil ready for planting.

"Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Psalm 119:105

Let's look at the 5 main words found in this verse by way of a quick review.

Your Word.

God's Word, the Bible, is a completely unique Book. It is exactly what we need to not only learn ABOUT God, but more importantly, to KNOW Him in the sense of having a relationship with Him.

Once, when I was a young adult, my pastor (who later became my brother-in-law), challenged those of us who were listening to him preach, to make a list of what God likes and what God doesn't like as we were doing our devotions. It sounded like a great idea to me. I'm all about list-making and writing out my to-do list in great detail. I even add things to my to-do list that I did after the fact just so I can mark them off as done!

I don't remember how long I worked at adding to my list of things God likes and dislikes, but I have to say, it really helped me to focus better on what a God-honoring life really looks like. I highly recommend it!

Incidentally, I learned something else from that time as well. Weeks later, my then-fiancé and I were having a double-date with my pastor and wife, and I mentioned that my list of God's likes and dislikes had been a blessing to me and thanked him for the idea.

I have to tell you, his jaw literally dropped open. He was so surprised that someone was not only listening, but followed his suggestion. I learned that day that not enough people tell their pastors the blessings they are receiving from their preaching and teaching. If you have a man of God in your church who works hard at preaching God's Word, make sure you thank him. Make sure you tell him how God is using him in your life. Maybe you will see a jaw drop, too.

Going the Extra Mile:

You have the option between two assignments. The first is to pick a chapter from the New Testament and list things that it teaches that God likes or dislikes (or that pleases Him or displeases Him). The second is to write to your current pastor or a past one and thank them for faithfully teaching you God's Word.

Sunday, December 18, 2022

-Before we jump into how God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, let's pause to pray and ask Him to quiet our hearts, open our minds, and make our heart's soil ready for planting.

"Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Psalm 119:105

God's Word is a lamp.

The Word of God is a portable lamp—and it is a lamp that is useful. It goes with us in our heart and teaches us how to dress, how to raise our children, how to handle the death of a loved one, how to manage on a small budget, what to say on different occasions—and everything else that we come upon in this life.

God's Word is a lamp to my feet.

The light of God's Word shines on MY feet—helping me to see where I am and where I am going. We are all very different people with very different lives, but God has promised that He has exactly what each of us needs for every minute of each day.

God's Word is a lamp to my feet and a light.

God's Word is a light. In fact, God is THE light. He is the very definition of what is good. Everything about God is the exact opposite of darkness and, in fact, His light exposes it. We, as His children, must do the same. We are emissaries of His light in everything we do, say, and think.

Going the Extra Mile:

Do you have a life verse? A life verse is a verse that a Christian claims to help them focus on living and thinking the way God wants them to. It may be a verse that teaches to do something or be something. Other options are verses that talk about God, eternal rewards, or some other encouragement to keep on keeping on. If you don't have a life verse, have an awesome time picking one! Here are a few super popular ones: Colossians 1:10; Philippians 4:13, Proverbs 3:5-6; John 10:10; I Corinthians 10:31; Philippians 4:6; Colossians 3:12-13; I Thessalonians 5:13; Matthew 6:33; Matthew 5:16

Monday, December 19, 2022

-Before we jump into how God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, let's pause to pray and ask Him to quiet our hearts, open our minds, and make our heart's soil ready for planting.

"Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Psalm 119:105

God's Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

God wants to light MY path. The word "path" broadens the concept of "feet" from the first half of this verse. Feet are, quite obviously, close to us. They convey the idea of what God wants to show us right now; help that He wants to give at this moment. Path, however, is broader and addresses the help God wants to give us today AND the rest of our life!

So now what? It is my hope that you're sticking with me and have accepted the glorious truth that God's Word is where we must go for answers, comfort, and direction. But if you're like me, it is also sometimes hard to take a truth and apply it in a very practical way to my life and my situations. So let's take our last few minutes together and apply what we have learned by returning to the light-house keeper's wife. Let's use her life to help us think about how the Word of God can be—in practical, everyday life—a lamp and a light.

Applying God's Truth:

Mrs. Lighthouse Keeper will likely face many storms over the course of her life. Some may be small—the sudden squall that rains on all her laundry hung out to dry. Some may be tragic—the ship that ignores her husband's warnings and wrecks on the shore. Some may be filled with anxiety—their small daughter becoming seriously ill when help is unavailable due to bad weather. Some may be life-threatening—a gale that is so dangerous, the waves are breaking around the base of the light-tower. But the light of God's Word has the answers for all of these and every other kind of challenge she—and we—might face.

Going the Extra Mile:

Take a moment to list some of the "storms" that you or your loved ones are currently facing. Prayerfully consider what Bible verses and principles you can apply to them to help you see them as God does and to help you have a right view of them.

Tuesday, December 20, 2022

-Before we jump into how God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, let's pause to pray and ask Him to quiet our hearts, open our minds, and make our heart's soil ready for planting.

"Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Psalm 119:105

To put into practice the truths we have been studying, let's explore three different storms that we might face as Christians in this century.

Scenario #1. On what basis do we make decisions?

Pretend that someone at work invites you to attend a party where alcohol will be served, godless music will be played, and there may be compromising relationships in view. You are in some doubt as to whether attending this party is a good idea or not, but your co-workers assure you it will be alright. Furthermore, they tell you that going to this party will make your boss more likely to give you a raise and promote you. You ask your mother and mother-in-law their advice (they say if it will promote your career, you should go) You ask church friends their advice. Some say if there is alcohol, you shouldn't go; others say as long as you don't drink it's alright. The problem is that all the advice you are hearing contradicts other pieces of advice you are getting! In frustration, you turn to women's magazines and the internet.

Believe it or not, you are facing a storm in life - and it may not even be what you think. The storm is not whether or not you should attend a certain party; it is, what is your authority. There's nothing wrong with asking the opinion of others on issues. However, when we are relying on those opinions instead of the inerrant Word of God, we have a problem!

The apostle Paul wrote: *"For this reason we thank God without ceasing, because when you received the Word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe."* I Thessalonians 2:13

You see ladies, the issue is not how intelligently or diligently we can address the problems of our life; it is—are we willing to acknowledge that God, through His Word, is the sole authority of our life? Are we willing to set our will and our thinking aside and submit in obedience to Him? That settles the issue! Nobody else's opinions counts—not even our all time favorite pals or the experts on radio, tv, or published books!

The second part of this little storm scenario is actually pretty straightforward: if God's Word is the sole, single authority, then its truth applies here. It says,

"Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers." (II Corinthians 6:14).

It says,

"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful" (Psalm 1:1).

And it says that we should not be conformed to this age (Romans 12:2). Anything, including attendance at a party, which would compromise our testimony or draw us into a very close relationship with unbelievers, is off-limits to the child of God. That simple. God is honored and pleased when we obey His Word, no matter what we think the consequences might be.

Going the Extra Mile:

How might this be applied to your life and the challenges you are currently facing?

Wednesday, December 21, 2022

-Before we jump into how God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, let's pause to pray and ask Him to quiet our hearts, open our minds, and make our heart's soil ready for planting.

"Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Psalm 119:105

Scenario #2: How should I respond to tragedies?

Your precious child—your son, let's say—has just been diagnosed with a life-threatening disease. The storm of fear, doubt, anger, and confusion is a force 12 gale in your life. Why would God allow this to happen to you and your family? Is God really good after all? How could God's will possibly include the suffering of a child?

The real issue in the storm here is to seek to look beyond the challenge, beyond the heartache and suffering. What we usually do in this kind of challenge is say, “If God will just get me through this heartache and confusion, if He will just help my son, if He will just get us through this crisis, then I will praise and glorify Him.” But what light does the Word shed on trials and challenges? What does the Bible teach us about our chief goal and aim? Is it to survive the hour of grief, to get through the darkness of the tunnel so that when we step into peace and happiness on the other side of the trial we will thank the Lord? Actually, no. We are commanded to praise God, to seek to glorify Him, to praise Him—in the middle of the trials!

David, while he was in danger from the Philistine King Abimelech, wrote these words: *“I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth”* Psalm 34:1

This idea is repeated numerous times in David’s songs, as well as in the example of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, Stephen being stoned, and Paul and Silas in the Philippian jail. God expects us to glorify Him in the middle of our trials!

Combine this with another great principle, that of trusting the Lord. David in another situation of great tension and anxiety (hiding from Saul in the cave), said, *“Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me! For my soul trusts in You; and in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge, Until these calamities have passed by.”* Psalm 57:1

What God wants us to do is to trust in Him implicitly. He desires that we, like small children in the arms of their mother, rest quietly leaning on Him. By the way, if we have practiced on a day to day basis going down this path of simple faith and trust in the Lord over a long time, it will not seem so difficult to do when we hit the storm. We will have become prepared over a long time of experiencing God’s faithfulness by relying on Him.

How does the Bible shine light on the storms of fear and grief? It tells us exactly how to respond to those kinds of situations—with the clear goal of pleasing and glorifying God, whether by life or death in the trial, and with childlike trust in our good and sovereign heavenly Father, whether we fully understand what God is doing or not.

Going the Extra Mile:

How might this be applied to your life and the challenges you are currently facing?

Thursday, December 22, 2022

-Before we jump into how God’s Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, let’s pause to pray and ask Him to quiet our hearts, open our minds, and make our heart’s soil ready for planting.

“Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” Psalm 119:105

Scenario #3. What Does God think about compromise?

Your sister and brother-in-law and their three kids from out of state have come in for a week of vacation and they are staying with you. You enjoy their company and love spending time with them, but they are not saved. They have no comprehension of Christian priorities, goals, or relationships. You are delighted to be a witness to them (trying to not be “preachy”). They seem to really enjoy themselves. Then, on Saturday night, they say: “We have had such a great time with you guys! It has been way too long since we talked with you. We thought you had turned into some sort of extremist radicals—you know, fundamentalist church nuts! It’s great to see that you are normal. We want to take you out for a picnic to the state park tomorrow. We could swim at the lake in the morning, then have lunch, go hiking, then tomorrow night, we’ll take you out to your favorite steakhouse!”

This, too, is a storm. Maybe not one like your child being desperately ill, but a real one, nonetheless. There is enormous pressure brought to bear on us often, not in a mean way, but in a way to cause us to want to conform to someone’s expectations. So what do you decide? If you skip just one Sunday, what could it possibly hurt? After all, you might have an opportunity to witness to your sister and her husband; and if you don’t go, it will likely damage your relationship to them. You might lose other chances to witness to them.

But what does the Scripture say? How does God's Word shine light and truth on this issue? I Corinthians 12:27 says, "*Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.*"

In Ephesians, Paul writes that the church is the body of Christ (1:22-23), and that belonging to the body of Christ is part of the eternal plan of God (3:5-7). The great purpose of the body is to build itself up in love and edification, so that every part of it becomes like Jesus Christ, the Head (4:15-16). He lays out much the same truth in Colossians (1:25; 2:18-19).

The local church is a local manifestation of Christ's body. And you—if you have been baptized and joined it—are a member of it. Just how important is that fact?

Let's use the same logic that Paul used in I Corinthians 12. Suppose you get up one morning at six to start your daily responsibilities. But as you get ready to brush your teeth and shower, you realize that you really feel lousy! Not quite sure what is wrong with you, you stumble back into the bedroom, and there next to your alarm is your liver, still snuggled in the blankets, snoring happily (if livers can snore). Shocked and disappointed, you start in on your liver.

"What is the matter with you?" you ask. "How can you do this? How can you possibly let me down on a day when I have so much to get done?"

"Hey," says your liver from the warm bed. "I don't get much recognition. And I work all the time; I never get a break. Besides, I've got company coming today. You'll have to do without me."

"This is outrageous!" you declare. "You are a part of my body. You don't have the right to sleep in or go on strike. If you neglect your responsibility, my whole body will suffer."

I know, this is a pretty silly illustration. But you have to admit, it is biblical. The Bible does say that the church is the body of Christ. You may think that your presence at church services is optional. Maybe you're right – it's about as optional as your liver being a part of your body or not. The fact is, God says that genuine Christian growth is very much tied to being in church. Becoming more like Christ takes place in the context of the local church in Ephesians. Not only that, you may miss a crown in heaven someday because you bypassed the opportunity to serve the Lord and be a blessing to others.

So what's the light for the storm? You could tell your sister and brother-in-law that you'd love to go for a picnic and to a restaurant—as long as it doesn't interfere with church attendance. In fact, since you love them and have enjoyed spending time with them, you'd like to have them share a very important part of your life—come to church with us, and see what it is that we think is so special, and so significant about the local assembly of believers meeting to worship God and learn from His Word.

Going the Extra Mile:

How might this be applied to your life and the challenges you are currently facing?

Friday, December 23, 2022

-Before we jump into how God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, let's pause to pray and ask Him to quiet our hearts, open our minds, and make our heart's soil ready for planting.

"Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Psalm 119:105

Conclusion:

Ladies, we need to actually use the lamp of God's Word in our day-to-day decisions! The lamp doesn't do any good unless you ignite the wick. The brightest flashlight in the world doesn't help anything on a dark, rainy night unless you turn it on. The pure power and illumination of the Bible won't help you a bit, unless you obey it.

Starting right now, will you submit to God's authority as revealed in His written record? Will you acknowledge that He has the right to tell you what to do, and how to do it, and that His plan is always best?

As we close our time together, I want to leave you with one last illustration that I pray will help you take a huge step from merely obeying God's Word. That is our minimum requirement! I'm hoping you will

catch the thrill of what it means to not only bow before God's authority and thereby give Him glory, but take it a step further and to seek to bring Him pleasure.

Imagine for a moment that there is a great and mighty emperor, the sovereign of many lands and kingdoms. Each year on an appointed day the ambassadors and envoys of many great and powerful nations assemble before him to renew their pledges of loyalty and to present their tribute to him. Noble and august lords and vice-regents, along with subject kings, dukes, and barons are gathered in the gold-festooned throne room to bow before the king and do him homage. One after another, the noble representatives come before the throne, bow and speak words of humility, then offer their gifts: gold, rare gems, priceless wardrobes, objects of art of unspeakable beauty and value. They throw open caskets of silver coins, of gold jewelry, of diamond circlets, of goblets and manuscripts, and weapons of war. The proceedings last hours, as one after another the nobility and royalty of the empire bow before the great emperor. But lookers-on notice something: never – not even once – does the great lord ever smile. He merely lifts his hand to acknowledge each important nobleman with a stern, even grim, countenance.

As the last noble is showing off his presents, a small boy – whom the gathered nobility and royalty do not recognize – begins walking down the long red carpet towards the emperor's throne. He brings to his lips a wooden flute and begins to play a simple shepherd's tune. While all the nobles, ambassadors, and courtiers are frozen in astonishment, the emperor does what he has not done all the weary day: he smiles. The throne room is illuminated by the radiance of his face! When the boy reaches the throne, the old king laughs out loud, stoops down, and brings him up to sit with him on his lap on the throne. The rich gifts of appeasement could not make him do that, the bowing and scraping could not; but because the emperor was the boy's father, and the boy knew the emperor, the little lad had an ability that the great and mighty did not possess: he could please the king. He could make the king smile.

Ladies, if you have believed in Jesus Christ as Savior from your sins, you are God's child. You have the ability to make Him smile. How are you doing at that? Are you using His written word, the Bible, as a lamp to light the area in front of your feet as you make daily decisions? Are you using its brilliant light to show you the path and are headed where He wants and how He wants?

All of creation will have no choice but to glorify God when all is said and done. We have the joy of making Him smile by using His Word as a lamp to our feet and a light to our path today.

Going the Extra Mile:

What has God been impressing on YOUR heart as you read today's story? Tell Him! Share it with someone!

Saturday, December 24, 2022

-Spend a few minutes in prayer before opening God's Word. Thank Him for what amazing things He's going to show you!

Dear Student of the Word,

So as to not belabor the lessons from Psalm 119:105, let's take the last week or so of the year to enjoy a Christmas-themed devotional I wrote for the First Baptist Church Ladies' Christmas Tea in 2011. It's entitled, "Baking Up Joy." I pray it's a huge blessing to you and a kind of fun way to end the year.

*By His Grace,
Lorie*

Do you like to bake? I do. In fact, most things I make are from scratch. While there are a few things that are much easier to make from a mix, I don't think you can beat a good old fashioned home-baked goodie.

Even if you don't really bake yourself or are new to the art of baking, it is common knowledge that baking requires awareness of a few basic do's and don'ts. For example, if a recipe instructs you to bake cookies for 10-12 minutes at 350 degrees, it is a very, very bad idea to try to hurry them up by baking them for 5 minutes at 500 degrees. You will NOT get a happy ending—you may, instead get a nice visit from your local fire department!

Most baking begins with a recipe. Now, whether or not you choose to do everything the recipe card says is up to you, but usually we tend to follow the recipe, assuming whoever came up with it in the first place knew what they were talking about. In fact, some recipes would not be that particular recipe if you didn't use certain ingredients. Chocolate-chip cookies, for example, are no longer chocolate-chip cookies without the chocolate chips. My family would consider the loss of chocolate chips something of an extreme tragedy and mourn and wail accordingly.

I want to talk to you a few minutes about "Baking Up Joy." As Christians, we who have placed our faith and trust in Jesus Christ, God's Son, as our Savior from our sin, we ought to be growing and developing in our characters to become more and more like Jesus Christ all the time. One of the chief characteristics of someone who is becoming more like Christ is an attitude and reflection of joy.

We must first, though, point out the difference between joy and happiness. Happiness is totally dependent on circumstances. Perhaps we get up in the morning and the scale shows that we lost three pounds—that makes us happy. If we go into the kitchen and discover the coffee filter has collapsed and our coffee is more grounds than coffee—we are unhappy... you get the idea. Our happiness meter goes up and down all day long—and when our hormones are acting up—well, look out, because being near us could be volatile, to say the least.

Joy is not the same as happiness. Joy is not so much a feeling, although you do feel content when you have joy. Joy is actually a position. It is the knowledge that you are right with God and you know He is watching over you both now and throughout eternity. Joy is the result of trusting God and obeying what He says to do.

So, how do we get joy? Well, all answers to life's questions can be found in the Bible. We are going to look at the ingredients used to bake gingerbread cookies and liken them to various aspects of a joyful Christian walk.

First, let's talk about the flour. As I'm sure you are aware, flour is very necessary to baked goods. The flour we get at our store is milled from wheat, but did you know that you can also grind flour from a variety of seeds, nuts, and vegetables? However, flour is most commonly made from barley, rice, rye, soy, wheat, and corn. Milling grains for flour dates all the way back to the beginning of mankind. You may be interested to know that our bread has been improved greatly simply by removing the small bits of dirt, debris, and stones found in those early batches. Eating the thick, hearty bread of early centuries tended to wear down teeth at a young age because of the "extras" in the bread.

When used in baking, flour contributes to the body and structure as well as the texture and flavor of the end product. It binds the other ingredients together and supports the batter. Flour contains protein and when it comes in contact with water and heat, it produces gluten which gives elasticity and strength to baked goods.

If flour is very important to the baking process, what is essential in the process of becoming more like Christ and experiencing joy?

Nothing is more essential than Christ Himself. John, chapter 6 contains a pretty well known Bible event. Jesus had been teaching crowds of people who had been following Him all day long, and it was getting on towards night. Jesus knew that no one had eaten all day and He was concerned for them. The problem was, though, that the only food that could be found in the entire crowd was five small loaves of barley bread and two small dried fish. This was what one young boy had—no doubt what his mother had packed for him that morning to make sure he didn't go hungry.

The disciples weren't very optimistic about this small amount of food in the face of thousands of people, but Jesus simply bowed His head, thanked His heavenly Father for providing food for them, and began to pass it out to the disciples, who in turn passed it out to the people. When everyone was as full as full can be, they gathered the leftovers and there were twelve baskets full! This was truly a miracle, but what happened the next day was of even greater importance.

Jesus declared "*I am the Bread of Life.*" He went on to explain that while food is temporary, what He had to offer is permanent and eternally satisfying. What did He have to offer? Himself. You see, He came to the earth for the purpose of one day dying on the cross of Calvary to take the punishment you and I deserve for

the sin that we bear in our hearts.

We LOVE the lights and good cheer and gift-giving at Christmas time, but Christmas is really about Christ. Christmas is the day we remember that God sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to be born as a Human – for us. Jesus is the only One ever born Who did not have sin from the time of birth, so He alone could pay the penalty for our sin since God could only accept a sinless sacrifice.

Christmas IS a very special time of year, but Christmas is only the prologue to the story. The REAL story is Easter. That's when Jesus gave Himself to die on the cross in order to take the punishment for OUR sin. Because He is God, death had no power over Him, and He came back to life on the third day—giving US victory over death when we trust in Him as our Savior.

Have you done that yet? Acts 16:31 says, “*Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.*” This is the necessary first step to living a life of joy. Jesus Christ MUST be your bread of life.

All that is necessary to become a Christian is to receive God's gift of salvation, much as you “receive” gifts at Christmas. If the gifts have your name on them, you take them, open them, and they are yours. Believing Jesus died in your place to allow you to become a child of God is the gift you need to receive—and then YOU will have the Bread of Life—the flour that is necessary to please God—and this will bring you joy.

Going the extra mile:

Look up and read John 6.

Sunday, December 25, 2022

-Spend a few minutes in prayer before opening God's Word. Thank Him for what amazing things He's going to show you!

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

The next ingredient for baking is sugar. Show of hands: how many people are sugar addicts? I sure am! Did you know that sugar as we now know it was once so rare and expensive that it was called “white gold?” (By the way, no one used sugar in Bible times, they used honey and fruit to sweeten foods.)

Today our sugar comes from both sugar cane and sugar beets. When used in baking, sugar adds volume, tenderness, texture, and color to the end product. It also acts as a preservative. Sugar is what causes your baking to brown by reacting to the protein of the milk and eggs.

Our gingerbread recipe has the additional sweetener of molasses in it. (Did you know that brown sugar is simply white sugar with molasses added? In fact, you can make it yourself with these two ingredients!) The Bible has references to sweeteners, especially honey. It says in Psalm 119:103 “*How sweet are Your words to my taste; sweeter than honey to my mouth.*”

Did you know that the Bible IS the word of God? The Bible is so important to us because it contains what God wants us to know about Himself, and it tells us everything we need to know to please Him and therefore live a life of joy. The Apostle Peter once said to Jesus, “*Lord, to Whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that You are the Holy One of God.*” (John 6:68-69)

Ladies, nothing you do in your day can be more important than taking a few minutes in the Bible and in prayer. If your Bible version is too hard to understand, try a different version. The New International Version is a great translation that is easy to understand. The point is to read it—and to obey it. God will reveal Himself to you and you will grow in your understanding. That will help you become more like Christ and increase your joy.

Going the extra mile:

Don't let this Christmas Day pass without taking some time to pray and thank God for sending His Son to earth for YOU!

Monday, December 26, 2022

-Spend a few minutes in prayer before opening God's Word. Thank Him for what amazing things He's going to show you!

The next important thing in gingerbread cookies is the spices—ginger, in particular. Do you think gingerbread cookies could be gingerbread cookies without the ginger? Of course not!

Ginger is a knobby, fibrous root with smooth light brown skin and white flesh. It not only is used to flavor sweets, sauces, and fruit dishes, it is also used as a natural remedy for nausea, motion sickness, morning sickness, and general stomach upset. While there are no references in the Bible to ginger in particular, there are many references to spices. In fact, spices were used in the act of worshiping God in the Old Testament. The High Priest of the Israelites was supposed to burn incense made up of spices every morning to God. What is interesting about this is that the burning incense actually symbolized the prayers of God's people.

Next to daily reading the Bible, praying to God is perhaps the next most essential ingredient for the Christian to maintain a joyful walk with Christ. Prayer is simply talking—and ladies know how to talk! The difference is that prayer is talking to GOD! While using "Thee" and "Thou" isn't necessary, being too slangy with God might not be very respectful either. However we do it, God DOES want us to talk with Him every day about everything. He already knows all about us—the good, the bad, and the ugly—so He is the Perfect One to Whom you can bare your soul and He is the only One Who has the power to do something about your problems—so why go anywhere else?

Prayer is an amazing gift from God. It allows us, as His children, to go directly to Him with requests and concerns. It also gives us the chance to thank Him and praise Him for His goodness. Are you taking advantage of the gift of talking with God? Bible reading is likened to God speaking with us and prayer is our opportunity to answer back. If you want gingerbread cookies, you need ginger. If you want a joyful Christian walk, you need prayer.

Going the extra mile:

Spend some time in prayerful evaluation of what your current prayer habits are and how you might excel still more.

Tuesday, December 27, 2022

-Spend a few minutes in prayer before opening God's Word. Thank Him for what amazing things He's going to show you!

When baking, a leavening agent of some kind is necessary. Our cookie recipe uses baking soda. Both baking powder and baking soda are chemical leavening agents that cause batter to rise when baked. They do their job best when they have been sifted thoroughly into the other dry ingredients.

Leaven is found in the Bible too and it is sometimes used to represent sin. For example, during Passover, the Jews were instructed to remove all the leaven from their homes in a symbolic gesture to also remove any sin in their hearts and lives. But, the Bible also uses leaven in a positive way. Matthew 13:33 says, "*The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough.*"

The focus here is on growth. God wants us to grow in our walk as joyful Christians. As much as we love our babies when they come, we don't want them to remain babies forever. We feed them good food so they'll grow. We teach them how to walk so they can get around on their own. We instruct them how to behave to be a good citizen so they can be useful to their town and country. As Christians, we need all these things spiritually, too.

Jesus Christ is our example of what a God-honoring believer should look like, act like, and sound like. Are you growing as a Christian? Daily Bible reading and prayer are necessary, but so is attendance in a Bible

believing and teaching church. So is spending time with other believers who are also trying to become more like Christ. If you don't have a church home, make finding one a real priority. Did you know that right now, at this time in history, God's focus of blessing is on local churches? If you want to be in the place of God's blessing, being an active member of a church is necessary. Without it, your growth—and your joy—will be stunted.

Going the extra mile:

Spend some time in prayer thanking God for your church family. Don't have one? Seek biblical counsel to find one that teaches God's Word and follows it both as a church family and as individual members in it.

Wednesday, December 28, 2022

-Spend a few minutes in prayer before opening God's Word. Thank Him for what amazing things He's going to show you!

There are only a few more ingredients in our recipe for gingerbread cookies. One is eggs. Eggs, along with flour, are a structural ingredient in baking. Eggs also provide leavening as well as add color, texture, flavor, and richness to the batter. They are very important in helping to bind all the other ingredients together. Since eggs are a protein, they are important in our diet. Want to hear something that Jesus said was essential in His life? Jesus said in the Book of John, chapter 4, verse 34 that His "food" was to "*do the will of Him Who sent Him and to finish His work.*" In other words, while on earth, Jesus spent His entire life doing what God the Father wanted Him to do. Just as protein is necessary for physical health, doing God's will is necessary for spiritual health.

I think if Jesus spent His life doing God's will, then we had better put that super high on our priority list too! How can we know God's will? Well, that is a big question for sure, but once again, the answer is in Scripture. While not every single thing we wonder about will be spelled out for us, there will always be Bible principles to guide us. For example, if we want to know what to have for dinner tonight, we won't find a verse saying, "On Thursday thou shalt eat of the fatted calf with a side of Campbell's soup thereunto." BUT, we will find plenty of biblical principles to know that a meal of chocolate coated sugar bombs is probably not wise.

Certainly when we find a verse that spells out, "This is God's will," we definitely need to do it. Here's a good one from the Book of Thessalonians, "*Be joyful always; pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*" (I Thessalonian 5:16-18) Maybe if you are not experiencing joy it is because you aren't being thankful!

Going the extra mile:

Google "bible verses that mention God's will." See what treasures you find!

Thursday, December 29, 2022

-Spend a few minutes in prayer before opening God's Word. Thank Him for what amazing things He's going to show you!

Our next ingredient in baking gingerbread cookies is butter. Butter is produced by churning cream until the fats separate from the liquid (which is called buttermilk). We most commonly use cow's milk for our butter, but you might also choose milk from a buffalo, camel, goat, sheep, or horse!

Butter adds flavor and texture to baking. It also helps keep it fresh. AND as you probably know already from diet gurus, butter is a fat. The Bible actually has a lot to say about fat. Fat, believe it or not, signifies God's blessing in the Old Testament. It makes sense if you think about it. An animal will only be fat and heavy if it has had good pasture. Good pasture comes from the blessing of the right amount of rain and sun to cause the grass to grow thick and full.

So... what has that have to do with us? Well, God wants to bless us, too. Just like we use rewards for our children when they obey us, God blesses us when we obey Him.

There are many promises from God to the obedient believer in Scripture. Matthew 7:24,25 says, *“Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on a rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundations on the Rock.”*

Going the extra mile:

A very fun Bible study is a look at the promises of God in Scripture. Try it!

Friday, December 30, 2022

-Spend a few minutes in prayer before opening God’s Word. Thank Him for what amazing things He’s going to show you!

We have found that in order to make gingerbread cookies we need flour, sugar, spices, baking soda, eggs, butter—and salt. Salt? You ask. Does the recipe REALLY need salt? While it is true that it may seem okay to leave salt out, salt is actually an essential component in baking. You may only add 1/2 teaspoon at a time, but don’t take it for granted. Salt accentuates the flavor of baked foods—especially those that use butter and flour.

Salt is, in fact, essential for all animal life. It regulates the water content of our bodies and has been used as a preservative for food for centuries. Before modern day canning and refrigeration was available, salt was a crucial way to preserve food. It was so important that it was used as money at one time.

How does salt relate to our lives as believers? Salt seems to represent attitude. It isn’t just that we should say the right words to each other—HOW we say them matters too. Colossians 4:6 is a well-known verse about our words. It says, *“Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.”*

God wants us to use words that are encouraging, helpful, kind, thankful, and pleasant—and we should say them with sincerity and love for the hearer.

Going the extra mile:

There are many verses in the Bible about what we are to say, and how we are to say it. It is well worth the effort to look them up and study them.

Saturday, December 31, 2022

-Spend a few minutes in prayer before opening God’s Word. Thank Him for what amazing things He’s going to show you!

Now that we have all of our ingredients for cookies lined up, what next? Well, of course we need to mix the dry ingredients together, mix the wet ingredients together, and then mix the combined ingredients together before we can bake our gingerbread.

Hebrews 4:2 says, *“For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did, but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith.”* In other words, faith—or trust—in God’s Word will be what helps us do right, be obedient, grow, and maintain joy.

That word “combine with” means to mix together, or better yet, to cause to react with something. The fancy term is to “catalyze.” Did you know that when you bake gingerbread, you are actually causing a chemical reaction? It’s true. Anytime you mix various wet and dry ingredients called for in a recipe and put the batter in an oven, the heat and the combining of those components is going to result in an entirely different product coming out of the oven. It’s no longer just dry flour and goopy eggs: it’s gingerbread cookies!

This changing into something is what the Christian life here on earth is all about: God wants to take our

relationship with Christ as Savior, our reading of His Word, our prayer life, and attitudes, and mix them all together, cause a special reaction, and then—voila! We are being changed into mature Christians that look like Jesus Christ.

So what is the “oven” or the “baking” that causes this special change in us? According to Hebrews 4:2, it is our faith. That’s right, our confidence in Jesus Christ not only for salvation, but for His daily provision and supply will take the raw ingredients of our character and behavior and make them into something beautiful and beneficial that pleases God and is a blessing to other people. Without faith it is impossible to change and grow; without faith it is impossible to please God.

Are you trusting the Lord for His work in your life and with the challenges you face right now? If you’re not, then you’re like a cake pan full of batter sitting in the oven—with the oven off! The result is just a mess; it’s not anything. But if you are trusting God with your troubles and to be your daily help, then you are “baking” - being changed into the image of His Son. The result will be wonderful!

Conclusion:

Gingerbread cookies are one kind of cookie that isn’t really done until it is iced. It is the icing that gives each cookie a unique personality. God made each of us different—and He has placed us all in unique circumstances. All of us have different abilities and talents. Wherever God has placed YOU, let your personality shine for Him. Let others see the joy of the Lord on your face and in all you do.

How? Well, first and foremost, believe in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. Then read His Word, the Bible. Find out what He wants you to know about Himself. Find out what He wants you to do and not do—and then obey Him. Pray to Him often. Tell Him your concerns and cares, but praise Him and thank Him as well. Join a Bible believing and teaching church and become an active member. Find out how God wants to use your talents and then jump right in to use them for Him. Be a blessing to others. Use your words to encourage and direct others to Christ. Then wrap it all up in faith—a trust in God to do what He promised: to help you, bless you, and reward you—and then we will all be baking up joy!

Gingerbread Men Cookies

3 C flour
2 tsp. ginger
1 tsp. cinnamon
1 tsp. baking soda
1/4 tsp. nutmeg
1/4 tsp. salt
1 egg
3/4 C butter, softened
1 tsp. vanilla
1/2 C molasses
3/4 C brown sugar, firmly packed

Mix flour, spices, baking soda and salt. Beat butter and sugar in a large bowl with an electric mixer on medium speed until light and fluffy. Add molasses, egg, and vanilla. Beat well. Gradually beat in flour mixture on low speed until well mixed. Press dough into a thick flat disk. Wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate 4 hours or overnight.

Roll out dough into 1/4 inch thickness on lightly floured work surface. Cut into gingerbread men shapes with 5-inch cookie cutter. Place 1 inch apart on ungreased baking sheets.

Bake in preheated 350 degree oven 8 to 10 minutes or until edges of cookies are set and just beginning to brown. Cook on baking sheets 1-2 minutes, then on a wire rack until completely cool. Decorate as desired.

