

Bread of Life

Devotional Guide

Luke 4:4 "And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God."

September 1, 2009

Fellow Believers,

We are entering the beautiful autumn months. The leaves change colors and then fall. The children go back to school and are a little bigger and a little wiser.

Things change; people change. Whether we like it or not, mankind will continue to experience change, but there is a constant – Jesus Christ and His Word. ***"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever."*** (Hebrews 13:8) ***"For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven."*** (Psalm 119:89) Let us continue to put our faith, trust, and devotion in the One who never changes and His Word.

In Christ,
Pastor Russ Merrin

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 THE WORD FOR TODAY

God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day.” Psalm 7:11

The righteous anger of God is often confused with the sinful anger of man. Be ever so careful not to justify your anger with this verse or others proclaiming God’s anger.

God is without sin, and His anger is a righteous anger that is justified because of man’s sin. For God to be angry with our sin is perfectly just; His hatred of sin is merely a result of His righteousness.

Man can also have a godly anger against sin. To be angry about a violent sin of another is not wrong. To have a hatred for the murder of the unborn baby would be holy indignation. This type of anger will only grow as your sensitivity to the things of God increase.

However, that is not usually our problem. Our problem is that often we become angry in response to something that is not sin, such as a difference of opinion in a family decision. At that point, we are sinning against God ourselves.

How embarrassing to lose our temper over some trivial or minor incident that is obviously not sin. The man that is slow to anger will give a much better account one day to our Lord.
~RKM

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN

Romans 14:11-12 “For it is _____, As I _____, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Short Answer. Answer each of the following questions in the space provided. All answers are found in Philippians 2:1-11.

1. With what attitude should we esteem others better than ourselves?

2. Who gave the ultimate example of putting others first? _____
3. Even though Jesus was in the form of God, He was made in the likeness of what? _____
4. Who is going to eventually bow at the name of Jesus? _____

5. What will every tongue confess?

 QUOTE OF THE DAY

“Prayer meetings were the arteries of the early church. Through them, life-sustaining power was derived.” ~Author Unknown



 THE WORD FOR TODAY ♦

Love and Respect

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves . . . lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.” 2 Timothy 3:1-4

It has been estimated that every day in America six thousand couples say, “We do,” and before sunset another three thousand say, “We don’t anymore.” Every day in America nearly three thousand children run away from home. No one seems to be immune to this growing cancer in our society. Presidential candidates, preachers, Sunday school teachers, businessmen, and people in every walk of life are being infected. This disease is the lack of love and respect for each other. The Bible predicts that in the last days love will be self-centered and respect will be a rare jewel.

The bug is in the air, but we have the vitamins needed to stay healthy. Vitamin number one, to be taken without precaution, is love. Love is a funny thing, hard to define but easy to enjoy. You find it by giving it. Love is doing for someone else what you would do for yourself or what you would want someone to do for you. I am persuaded that there is not a family problem that love cannot cure. Love never faileth! Respect is the vitamin we take to ensure our love. When we respect someone, we care about their feelings, and we consider their needs. We want the best for that person.

Striving to be the best we can be for someone else is a million times loftier than doing it for ourselves. The balance of love and respect

 THE WORD FOR TODAY ♦

keeps us from coveteousness and self love. Family members are crying out for love and respect and cannot hear the cries of each other for their own crying. We do not have to be statistics! ~JWL (from *Balancing Our Lives*, 2004)

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN ♦

Romans 14:11-12 “For it is _____, As I _____, saith the Lord, _____ knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”

 BIBLE QUIZ ♦

True or False. Put a *T* for *true* or an *F* for *false* in the blank before each statement. All of the answers are found in Philippians 2:1-11.

- _____ 1. Christians should be likeminded.
- _____ 2. Some things should be done in vainglory.
- _____ 3. Jesus Christ is equal to God the Father.
- _____ 4. Jesus Christ came to this earth to acquire fame.
- _____ 5. The name of Jesus is above every name.

 QUOTE OF THE DAY ♦

“There are no crown-wearers in heaven who were not cross-bearers here below.”
~C.H. Spurgeon



Morning: Proverbs 1, 2

Evening: 1 Corinthians 12

 THE WORD FOR TODAY:

Creator, Sustainer, Redeemer

“Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself.” Isaiah 44:24

The Lord God Jehovah is the Maker of all things, from the baby in the womb to the heavens above to the earth below. One cannot help but stand in awe as this verse is read. The universe is so enormous, vast, and complex. God not only created it, but He also sustains it. The human body is so small in comparison to the universe, but it is so intricately and specifically designed. Just as He created and sustains the universe, He creates and provides for His children. What an awesome God!

Yes, God is the Creator and Sustainer of all things, but even more significant, He is called the Redeemer in this verse. Despite the perfect design of God’s creation and His perfect provision, mankind turned its back on God. Because of this devastating choice, God sent His Son to redeem mankind, take the punishment for sin and make mankind acceptable in the eyes of a holy God. He became the Redeemer of the world!

This God, the Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer of mankind, is accessible to YOU! How humbling! How extraordinary! How unbelievable! How great, our God! ~MFM

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN:

Romans 14:11-12 “For it is _____, As I _____, saith the Lord, _____ knee shall _____ to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Fill in the Blank. Fill in the blanks with the correct words that state the instructions given by Paul to the believers in Philippians 2:12-16.

1. Conduct (work) your life in Christ with _____ and _____. (verse 12)
2. God worketh in you to _____ and to do of _____ good _____. (verse 13)
3. Everything should be done without _____ and _____. (verse 14)
4. In the middle of a perverse world, Christians shine as _____. (verse 15)
5. Christians need to hold on to the _____ of _____ (Bible), while standing for Christ, so that all their labor is not in vain when Christ comes again. (verse 16)

 QUOTE OF THE DAY:

“The cross is not a mere event in history; it’s a way of life! Take up your cross DAILY, Jesus said!” ~John Piper



Morning: Proverbs 3, 4

Evening: 1 Corinthians 13

 THE WORD FOR TODAY

His Thorn in the Flesh

“I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such a one caught up to the third heaven.” 2 Corinthians 12:2

Here is an interesting phase of the Apostle Paul’s life. In 2 Corinthians 12, Paul mentions that he was “caught up into the third Heaven,” and there he saw things that were so wonderful he could not speak of them. Then, he mentions his “thorn in his flesh.” He states that three times he asked the Lord to remove this thorn. The Lord did not remove it, but He told Paul that His grace would be sufficient.

There have been various conjectures as to the nature of Paul’s “thorn” in the flesh. Some have thought Paul had epileptic seizures. Others have thought it was actually a person who bothered him while he preached. Still others thought he had fevers. It is generally believed, however, that it was some kind of eye problem that caused near or total blindness, physical weakness, and an ugly appearance. Look at 1 Corinthians 2:3-4, 2 Corinthians 10:10, and Galatians 4:15 to gain a clearer opinion of the problem Paul experienced.

Paul explains that this “thorn” was to make him better and to keep him from being unduly exalted because of the revelation that was made known to him when he was caught up in the third Heaven. In other words, it was to keep him humble.

 THE WORD FOR TODAY

A thorn in the flesh is something placed in our lives that can become a stumbling block or a stepping stone. It can be used as an excuse, or it can be overcome to become the strongest point in our Christian life. That hurdle can trip us or launch us to greater things for the Lord. God uses tragedy and weakness to humble us and to keep us ever dependent on Him. ~OV

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN

Romans 14:11-12 “For it is _____, As I _____, saith the Lord, _____ knee shall _____ to me, and every _____ shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Short Answer. Answer each of the following questions in the space provided. All answers are found in Philippians 2:17-30.

1. As he wrote this letter, Paul was trusting to send whom to the church? _____
2. Why did Paul want to send him?

3. How did Paul describe Epaphroditus?

4. How were the believers to receive Epaphroditus? _____



 THE WORD FOR TODAY

Tears

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” Revelation 21:4

End times seem so near now. There is so much happening in our world that indicates this to be true. Hate crimes, homosexuality, Israelites heading back to Israel, and North Korea threatening the US; the list is too long to enumerate. 2 Timothy 3:1 tells us that, **“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.”** Christians, it appears we are there.

With all that is happening in today’s world, I can absolutely say that I am ready to be in Heaven with the Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:8 says, **“We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”** Shout for joy Christians! There will be no more tears, death, sorrow, pain. We will receive new bodies, hallelujah! Can it get any better than that? Well, yes it can! We will be with the Lord Jesus Christ for ever and ever in a constant state of worshipping and praising the Lord. Revelation 19:1 says, **“And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God.”**

I hope you have settled where your eternal destination will be—Heaven or Hell! ~KAT

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN

Romans 14:11-12 “For it is _____, As I _____, saith the Lord, _____ knee shall _____ to me, and every _____ shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give _____ of himself to God.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Short Answer. Answer each of the following questions in the space provided. All answers are found in Philippians 3:1-6.

1. What are the three things listed that Christians should beware?

2. Christians should not have confidence in what according to verse three?

3. Paul could have gloried in some of his “good works,” but instead he found his glory in Jesus Christ. What were some of the “good works” that Paul listed in this portion of Scripture?

 QUOTE OF THE DAY

“As I go into a cemetery I like to think of the time when the dead shall rise from their graves.... Thank God, our friends are not buried; they are only sown!” ~D.L. Moody



Morning: Proverbs 7, 8

Evening: 1 Corinthians 14:21-40

A Legacy of Love

by Stephen Stallard

How will I be remembered when I die? Whether or not we like to admit it, many of us have pondered this question. Perhaps some people will be remembered as heroes, men and women who achieved greatness in the face of steep odds. Others might be remembered for the wealth and power which they acquired during their lifetimes.

Every family leaves a legacy. Some legacies are obvious even while various family members are alive. Other legacies only become known when a family has passed away. Some legacies are transferred from one generation to another, while some legacies end with the death of a father or mother.

As we consider the family, it is important that we purpose to build families that leave a legacy of love. That is the message of Ephesians 6:1-4: ***“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”***

The first three verses emphasize the relationship of young people to their parents. First of all, the Bible commands children to obey their parents. In our free-wheeling, libertarian era, this message is decidedly countercultural. Yet, this message of submission is exactly what God commands. Not only does God demand obedience, but he also expects

honor (an attitude of respect). He even promises to bless children who respect their parents! Honor is a missing ingredient in many Christian homes, for a child can be obedient without honoring his or her parents. Obedience is an outward action, but honor is an attitude of the heart.

Jesus demonstrated the difference when He confronted the Pharisees over their failure to honor their parents (Mk. 7:6-13). The Pharisees knew that the Law demanded obedience. They also knew that they were expected to take care of their parents when they could no longer care for themselves. Yet, the Pharisees devised an ingenious system that enabled them to avoid this responsibility. They said that their money was “Corban,” meaning that it was set apart for God. In other words, the Pharisees were saying that they were preachers, and their money had to be used to support “spiritual” causes – like their ministries!

Jesus looked the Pharisees in the eye and He said, “You are hypocrites!” Clearly, Jesus wanted young people (even those who were adults) to honor and respect their parents. In the eyes of God, this included the idea that the Pharisees should financially support their parents, if necessary. This attitude of honor is not always easy.

Sometimes parents are unlovable. But these verses tell us that sacrificial love puts the needs of the parents above those of the children. God expects us to obey our parents (when we are children) and honor our parents (when we

(See **Legacy** on page 31)

 THE WORD FOR TODAY:

And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry. 1 Timothy 1:12

The Bible tells us that when the Apostle Paul came to know Christ as Savior he was persecuting the church. Much later he penned this verse. Let us consider four things that had happened to Paul.

For one thing, Paul had something to be thankful for. His life had been changed. Paul was a poster boy for Judaism. He was on the fast track to the top of the religious system. Then, Christ saved and called Saul from a dead religion to a relationship with the living God. Now, Paul the Apostle is thankful for the change that had taken place.

He had been enabled by Christ. Christ alone understands the extent of our ability. He created us, saved us, gave us spiritual gifts, and guided our lives through helpful experiences that have enabled us to fulfill His purpose through us.

God counted Paul as being faithful. We all fail and can feel intimidated and discouraged. Paul had a list of failures. He expressed his struggle and unworthiness in the Scriptures. Despite our feelings, God can see us as faithful.

God put Paul into the ministry, and what a ministry Paul had. We may never experience the extent of ministry that Paul did, but God will enable all of us to fulfill the ministry that He has for us. ~DLW

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN:

John 17:3-4 “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Fill in the Blanks: Complete the following verses from Philippians 3:7-9.

“But what things were _____ to me, those I counted _____ for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have _____ the loss of all things, and do count them but _____, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own _____, which is of the law, but that which is through the _____ of Christ, the righteousness which is of _____ by faith.”

 QUOTE OF THE DAY:

“The dust of Lazarus was dear to Jesus; He would not leave it in the rocky tomb. So is the dust of every Lazarus dear in His sight. He will not lose so much as one of them. Wherever they lie, it matters not – beneath the deep blue sea, or on some distant battlefield, or consumed in flame and smoke – the Lord Jesus will yet collect their scattered dust, and make them like His own glorious body.”
~Robert Murray McChesney



Morning: Proverbs 9, 10

Evening: 1 Corinthians 15:1-32

 THE WORD FOR TODAY

*“But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.”
Ephesians 4:7*

I am not a chef or baker; neither do I watch the Food Network, but I did learn the measurement equivalencies in school. There are two cups in a pint, two pints in a quart and four quarts in a gallon. Despite my “kitchen knowledge,” during our missions trip to Camp Joy in Harrison, Tennessee, my confident knowledge of measurements failed me. Our team was asked to make the dessert for the entire camp. As the leader of the team, I separated the group into three teams of four. Each member had his job. The only thing left to do was to melt the butter and measure it out as each team came to me for their need. Each receipt called for different amounts of butter all measured in tablespoons. Since all we had were big blocks of butter and a half teaspoon, I quickly drew on my “knowledge” of measurements and blurted out, “There are two teaspoons in a tablespoon. So, we need four of these per tablespoon.” Despite many different members of our team telling me there were three teaspoons in a tablespoon, not two, I measured each dessert short of the needed butter.

Paul reminded the church at Ephesus that the grace of God is given to everyone of us “according to the measure of Christ.” There is no need to worry that God’s grace will be short nor cause to think that God does not know His measurement equivalencies. Just when we need the grace of God and in the amount that we need the grace of God, it has and will be meas-

 THE WORD FOR TODAY

ured out to us. So, let His grace be added to your life, and taste and see if the Lord is good. ~PMO

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN

John 17:3-4 “And this is life _____, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Short Answer. According to Philippians 3:10-12, answer the following questions.

1. What three things did Paul want to know (appreciate) in verse ten?

2. What was Paul being made conformable to?

3. In verse twelve what does the word “perfect” mean? _____

 QUOTE OF THE DAY

“When we die, we leave behind us all we have, and take with us all we are.”
~Author Unknown



 THE WORD FOR TODAY

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN

Be Ye Filled

***“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.”
Ephesians 5:18***

The world would tell us that we should fill our lives with the seeking of pleasure, monetary stability, and material grandeur, but these things in the end only will leave a person feeling empty and alone. If the world is our standard, then we might be convinced that a lifestyle bent on partying will bring real joy.

This verse in Ephesians speaks about being consumed by alcohol. This is another example of a temporary fix for those looking for a “good time.” When the buzz wears off, you are left empty again.

Those seeking to be pleasing to the Lord should not be involved in the practice of becoming drunk, but more important than just avoiding this pitfall, we are to be “filled.” When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, the emptiness of this life will pass away, and we find purpose in the work of the Lord.

Be not drunk (consumed by the emptiness), but be filled (consumed by the power of God) with the Holy Spirit, and get busy serving the Lord Jesus Christ today. ~DJD

John 17:3-4 “And this is life _____, that they might _____ thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Fill in the Blank. In Philippians 3:13-18, Paul gives several instructions. Fill in the blank to complete Paul’s advice to the Christians.

1. _____ those things which are behind. (vs.13)
2. _____ forth unto those things which are before. (vs.13)
3. _____ toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (vs. 14)
4. _____ by the same rule. (vs. 16)
5. _____ the same thing. (vs. 16)

 QUOTE OF THE DAY

“The church is not a democracy in which we have chosen God, but a theocracy in which He has chosen us. The church is the only society in the world that never loses any of its members, even by death. The church upon its knees would bring heaven upon the earth.”

~E.M. Bounds

 THE WORD FOR TODAY

Interceding for a Guilty Slave

“I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds.” Philemon 10

The book of Philemon is a private letter. It is the only one of its kind, written by the Apostle Paul and the shortest of all of Paul’s epistles.

Philemon lived in Colosse. He was a wealthy man and perhaps a member of the church at Colosse. He owned a slave named Onesimus, who had robbed his master, Philemon, and fled to Rome. While in Rome, he was apprehended and put into prison. It was there that he met the Apostle Paul. Paul witnessed to him and won him to Christ. Due to the changes, Paul observed in the life of Onesimus, he wrote a letter to Philemon asking him to receive Onesimus back (Philemon 9-19) as his brother in Christ and to have mercy on him. Paul told Philemon he would repay whatever Onesimus owed to him.

Onesimus did not go back because he was good; he went back because he had accepted Christ as his Saviour, and realized it was the right thing to do. He also had the letter from the Apostle Paul explaining the changes that had occurred in his life.

This is the way it should be for the Christian. He does not change so he can come back to God; the spiritual change brings him to God. He does not turn over a new leaf in order to become a Christian; he “turns over a new leaf” because he is a Christian.

Thank God for our salvation, pictured so beautifully in this little book. ~OV

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN

John 17:3-4 “And this is life _____, that they might _____ thee the only _____ God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

True or False. Put a *T* for *true* or an *F* for *false* in the blank before each statement. All of the answers are found in Philippians 3:17-19.

- _____ 1. Paul encouraged the believers to follow his example.
- _____ 2. Paul wept over his lack of leadership.
- _____ 3 The end of the enemies of Jesus Christ is destruction.
- _____ 4. Enemies of Jesus satisfy their own desires, pride themselves in wickedness, and are interested in the things of this world.

 QUOTE OF THE DAY

“The best moment of a Christian's life is his last one, because it is the one that is nearest heaven. And then it is that he begins to strike the keynote of the song which he shall sing to all eternity.” ~C.H. Spurgeon



 THE WORD FOR TODAY

Just Listen!

“Now when Job’s three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came . . . to mourn with him and to comfort him.” Job 2:11

Job had lost his career, his possessions, his health, and his family. One can only imagine his emotional state after such significant loss. His friends came to him in response to all the calamity. However, they caused more grief by their presence. Job says in Job 6:14, *“To him that is afflicted pity should be showed from his friend.”* Instead of showing pity, his friends accused him of sin and berated him. Job 16:20 says, *“My friends scorn me: but mine eye poureth out tears unto God.”*

According to pbs.org, 15 million American adults are affected by depression, which is 8 % of Americans. Depression will become the second most common health problem in the world by 2020. People are crying out for help.

I am afraid that we, as Christians, are not fulfilling the needs of people who are hurting. Oh, we know all the Bible verses to recite to them. We have experienced pain and can relate to their various circumstances. We have plenty of advice. BUT sometimes we just need to LISTEN! Job did not need his friends speculating on why his life was a mess. No, he needed their listening ears. He needed their support.

The next time someone comes to you with a problem, do not be quick to judge. Be quick to listen! ~MFM

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN

John 17:3-4 “And this is life _____, that they might _____ thee the only _____ God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have _____ thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Fill in the Blank. Complete the following verses from Philippians 3:20-21.

“For our conversation is in _____; from whence also we look for the _____, the Lord _____ Christ: Who shall _____ our _____ body, that it may be fashioned like unto his _____ body, according to the working whereby he is able even to _____ all things unto _____.

 QUOTE OF THE DAY

“Prayer is an acknowledgment that our need of God’s help is not partial but total.... Yet many of our church prayer meetings have dwindled in size and influence. Ultimately, the explanation can be traced to spiritual warfare. If, as the hymn writer says, “Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees,” then we may be sure that he and his minions will be working hard to discredit the value of united prayer. The Evil One has scored a great victory in getting sincere believers to waver in their conviction that prayer is necessary and powerful.”

~Alistair Begg



Morning: Proverbs 17, 18

Evening: 2 Corinthians 2

 THE WORD FOR TODAY

Be Ye Holy

“For I am the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy...ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.” Leviticus 11:44-45

God never calls us to do anything that He will not give us the power to do. This is no less true when he calls us to holiness. Here, God is speaking to the Hebrew children as they have left their bondage in Egypt. He reminds them that He brought them out and has a purpose for their lives. Part of that purpose is for them to be holy.

Now, some would say that there is none holy but God, and that most certainly is true. However, God is calling Israel and in turn us to live a separated life, one set apart and dedicated to Him. To be dedicated to Him, we must eschew evil and be given to the pursuit of purity. We will never experience perfection this side of heaven, but we can be holy in that we live in a constant state of confession of sin, submission to God’s will, and dedication to prayer and Bible study.

As we seek to be free from unconfessed sin and to be busy about what God has called us to do, we can be holy. Through the finished work of Christ on the cross and the redemptive power of God moving in our lives, we can be holy as He is Holy. ~DJD

 SCRIPTURE FILL-INS

John 17:3-4 “And this is life _____, that they might _____ thee the only _____ God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have _____ thee on the earth: I have _____ the work which thou gavest me to do.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

True or False. Put a *T* for *true* or an *F* for *false* in the blank before each statement.

- _____ 1. Elkanah gave Hannah a worthy portion because he loved her.
1 Samuel 1:5
- _____ 2. Elkanah asked Hannah if he was not better than ten sons.
1 Samuel 1:8
- _____ 3. Hannah asked God to give her a son, and she would give him back to God. 1 Samuel 1:11
- _____ 4. Eli, the priest, thought Hannah was drunk when she was praying.
1 Samuel 1:14

 QUOTE OF THE DAY

“Let the fires go out in the boiler room of the church and the place will still look smart and clean, but it will be cold. The Prayer Room is the boiler room for its spiritual life.”

~Leonard Ravenhill

 THE WORD FOR TODAY: 

“They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?”
Isaiah 14:16-17

This verse pictures Satan in Hell. Because God is just and holy, Satan will one day be in hell forever. He will not be in charge, and he will not be shoveling coal into a furnace, but rather he will be in continual suffering and tormented.

Those who have followed his cunning devices of sin will look at him, and he will be so powerless, that they will be astonished and say, “Is this the man that made the earth to tremble?”

His condition will be so deplorable that it will be almost unbelievable to those around him. Hell was created for Satan and his fallen angels, but sadly, many souls will follow him into Hell. How distraught they will be to have been tempted, lied to, and led into Hell by Satan, the father of all lies!

Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. All the false religions of the world have followed the evil devices and lies of Satan. How simple the Gospel really is; yet Satan has misquoted and lied to billions of souls that will follow his path into Hell.

“Seeing him narrowly” means they will closely study him. No, there is no mistake; the

 THE WORD FOR TODAY: 

person they will be looking at is Lucifer (Satan). Although he comes as an angel of light today, he will one day be cast into Hell and bound there forever. Praise God, for He is just! ~RKM

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN: 

John 17:3-4 “And this is life _____, that they might _____ thee the only _____ God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have _____ thee on the earth: I have _____ the work which thou _____ me to do.”

 BIBLE QUIZ 

Multiple Choice. Circle the correct answer.

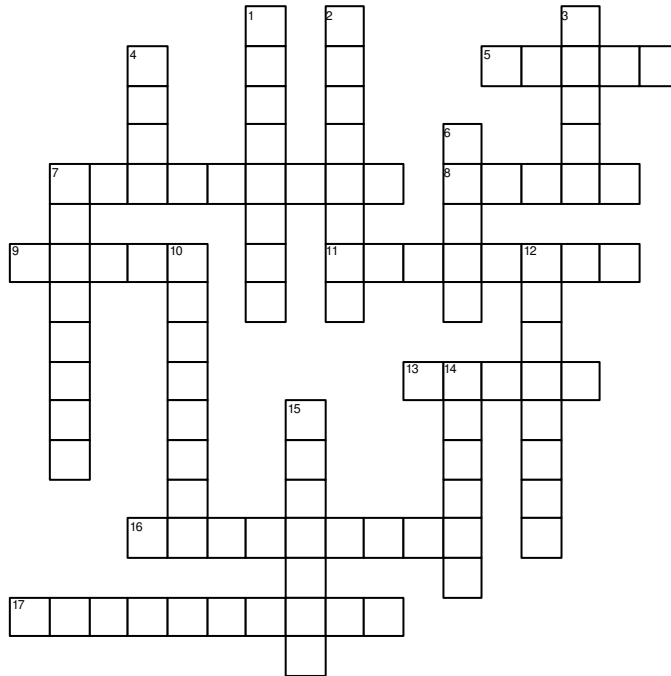
1. How many generations were there from Abraham to David, and from the carrying away of Babylon until Christ? Matt. 1:17
A. 14 B. 28
C. 7 D. 32
2. Who was the father of Boaz? Matt. 1:5
A. Aram B. Phares
C. Salmon D. Aminadab
3. Who was Roboam’s father? Matt. 1:7
A. Solomon B. Asa
C. Joram D. Abia

 QUOTE OF THE DAY: 

“There has never been a spiritual awakening in any country or locality that did not begin in united prayer.” ~A. T. Pierson



CROSSWORD PUZZLE The Coming of Christ



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DOWN

- 5 God did not appoint us unto this. 1 Thess. 5:9
- 7 Paul tells us in 1 Cor. 15:14 that this is done in vain if Christ be not risen.
- 8 Born-again believers are children of this. 1 Thess. 5:5
- 9 We should give _____ to the Lord God. Rev. 19:7
- 11 The angel will bind Satan and put him in the pit for a _____ years. Rev. 20:2
- 13 Jesus will come as one of these in the night. 1 Thess. 5:2
- 16 Satan will eventually be thrown into a like of fire and brimstone to be tormented. Rev. 20:10
- 17 An angel came down from heaven having a key to a _____ pit. Rev. 20:1

ACROSS

- 1 The Lord is _____ ... to keep us from sin. 2 Thess. 3:3
- 2 The Lord God omnipotent does this. Rev. 19:6
- 3 We should be doing this as we wait for Christ's appearing. 1 Thess. 5:6
- 4 Jesus told Martha that Lazarus would do this. John 11:23
- 6 Jesus was taken up into one of these. Acts 1:9
- 7 Two witnesses in Rev. 11:3 will be given the power to do this.
- 10 Job 19:25 refers to Job's _____.
- 12 A great voice praised God saying, _____. Rev. 19:1
- 14 In Rev. 19:11, Paul saw this open.
- 15 _____ are they who are called unto the marriage supper. Rev. 19:9

 THE WORD FOR TODAY:

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”
Romans 1:16

I think that it is interesting that every time that I have tried to witness to someone I have sensed opposition. Sometimes the person is defensive, maybe because someone else is in the room. The tendency is to become intimidated by the opposition. The truth is, that when we share the Gospel we enter into spiritual warfare. The same opposition we face today was around in Paul’s day, as well. Paul stated a fact that helped him to be faithful to witness.

Paul refused to be ashamed because he had nothing to be ashamed of. The Gospel contains the power to save lost souls. The Gospel can make a liar into an honest man and a drunk into a respectable citizen. It takes those who are destined for Hell and makes them fit for Heaven. It changed my life on earth and my eternal destination. The Gospel is the only answer for a lost world. There is no power like it in the world. Nothing else can change lives like the Gospel. It is necessary for every person of every culture.

Jesus had every reason to be ashamed of us. We have all failed Him and sinned against Him. He was not ashamed of us as He bore our cross and was mocked and beaten. We must not be ashamed of His Gospel. ~DLW

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN:

John 17:9-10 “I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Matching. Match the person in column 1 with the correct attribute in column 2.

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| ___ 1. Caleb | A. Left handed judge
Judges 3 |
| ___ 2. Hiram | B. Spy at Kedesh
Numbers 13 |
| ___ 3. Moses | C. Lawgiver |
| ___ 4. Ehud | D. High priest
2 Samuel 15 |
| ___ 5. Zadok | E. Eldest son of Noah
Genesis 9 |
| ___ 6. Elihu | F. Critic of Job, Job 32 |
| ___ 7. Shem | G. Workers of brass for
temple, 1 Kings 7 |

 QUOTE OF THE DAY:

“Where are the marks of the cross in your life? Are there any points of identification with your Lord? Alas, too many Christians wear medals but carry no scars.”

~Vance Havner



 THE WORD FOR TODAY:

*“Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men, And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.”
Ephesians 4:8, 11*

The family gathers around the brightly decorated Christmas tree. The packages are wrapped in a variety of papers and the stockings are full of presents just waiting to be discovered. The father begins the gift giving ceremony with his gift to his eldest child. The biggest box is chosen and handed to his eldest. The father quickly grabs two big boxes and hands them to his second son. His eldest daughter is handed a medium sized box and four small boxes. His fourth child receives one tiny box. His fifth child is the recipient of two big boxes and a tiny box. His youngest child is handed one medium sized box. All of the children received exactly what the father wanted them to have. The biggest box was not given to the daughter because it was not her gift. Although all of his children could have used what was in the tiny box, only the fourth child received it. So it is with our spiritual gifts. Our Heavenly Father used Jesus Christ to “pass out” spiritual gifts to His children. He gave some the gift of apostles. He gave some the gift of prophets. To others, He gave the gift of being a pastor/teacher. Each gift was given to the child who could use it the best. The gift someone else received may seem like a better fit for you, but our Father knows best. There will be no exchanges. Our job is to use the gift we have been given for His glory. What gift have

 THE WORD FOR TODAY:

you been given? How are you using that gift to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ? ~PMO

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN:

John 17:9-10 “I _____ for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Fill in the Blanks: Complete the following verses from the 23rd Psalm, verses 1-4.

1. Vs.1 The LORD is my _____; I shall not want.
2. Vs.2 He _____ me to lie down in green pastures: he _____ me beside the still waters.
3. Vs.3 He _____ my soul: he _____ me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
4. Vs.4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will _____ no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they _____ me.

 QUOTE OF THE DAY:

“If you want God’s help to get out of debt, you must put God first in your giving. It flies in the face of conventional wisdom, but I have seen many families give their way out of debt.” ~Rod Rogers



 THE WORD FOR TODAY

Waiting

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

Isaiah 40:31

Have you ever just simply been tired of waiting? Tired of being patient? I know I have. It is exciting to know that God’s promises are always great and always on time.

Isaiah 40:31 tells us if we wait on the Lord and His promises, He will provide us the strength to do the task at hand. Not only will He give us strength, but we will not become weary and never be faint. We all know that serving the Lord, at times, can be very tiring. As with Isaiah, he tried continually to urge Judah to trust in the Lord. Even though Isaiah worked hard to bring the nation of Israel God’s Word, they did not heed his warnings. He must have felt weak and exhausted after all his efforts. But Isaiah did not give up. Friends, we must not give up either.

Here are a few verses that have been an encouragement to me. *“Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.”* (Psalm 27:14) *“Because of his strength will I wait upon thee: for God is my defense.”* (Psalm 59:9) *“But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.”* (Romans 8:25) ~KAT

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN

John 17:9-10 “I _____ for them: I pray not for the _____, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

True or False. Put a *T* for *true* or an *F* for *false* in the blank before each statement.

- _____ 1. Hannah spoke in her heart, only her lips moved when she prayed. 1 Samuel 1:13
- _____ 2. Hannah said she had poured out her soul before the Lord. 1 Samuel 1:15
- _____ 3. Hannah was remembered by the Lord. 1 Samuel 1:19
- _____ 4. Hannah took her son to live with Eli, the priest, at the age of 15. 1 Samuel 1:24

 QUOTE OF THE DAY

“We want gain without pain; we want the resurrection without going through the grave; we want life without experiencing death; we want a crown without going by way of the Cross. But in God’s economy, the way up is down.” ~Nancy Leigh DeMoss

 THE WORD FOR TODAY

Why Pray When You Can Worry?

“Fret not thyself because of evil men, neither be thou envious at the wicked.”

Proverbs 24:19

Worrying is like rocking in a rocking chair. It gives you something to do, but it doesn't get you anywhere. The word *worry* is not found anywhere in the Bible, but the word *fret* is found here in Proverbs 24:19.

Many people today are fretting. Daily, 1665 people suffer from nervous breakdowns, and 25 million dollars is spent annually on tranquilizers and other nerve medicines. Today, people are even being paid to do your worrying for you. Think of them as professional worriers.

God has a much better plan. We are commanded to think only on good things. Philippians 4:8 says, *“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”*

I read a sign one day that said, “I am an old man, and I have had many problems, but most of them have never happened.” ~JWL (from *Balancing Our lives*, 2004)

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN

John 17:9-10 “I _____ for them: I pray not for the _____, but for them which thou hast _____ me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Multiple Choice. Circle the correct answer.

- Who sold Jesus to the priests for 30 pieces of silver? Matt. 26:14-15
A. Judas B. Juda
C. Joel D. Jehu
- What special food did God give the Israelites to eat in the wilderness? Exodus 16:15
A. Millet B. Manna
C. Corn D. Wheat
- Which of the twelve tribes of Israel served as priests? Deut. 10:8
A. Reuben B. Levi
C. Joseph D. Benjamin

 QUOTE OF THE DAY

“We must never forget – if we are to grow in grace, and therefore grow like Christ – that the One we trust, love, and serve is a *crucified* Saviour. To follow Him means taking up the cross, as well as denying ourselves. It means a crucified life.”

~Sinclair B. Ferguson



Morning: Proverbs 30, 31

Evening: 2 Corinthians 8

 THE WORD FOR TODAY: 

Following Through

“For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him: Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD.” 1 Samuel 1:27-28

Hannah was a woman who kept her word. Hannah had yearned for a child, but she had been barren. Finally, she vowed to the Lord that if she would bare a son, she would, in turn, give the child back to God. 1 Samuel 1:11 says, *“And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou . . . wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life.”*

As these verses explain, Hannah did keep her word. She followed through on her promise. Was this easy for her to do? No, it was probably the biggest sacrifice she made in her entire life. She had every reason in the book to go back on her word. Eli, the priest, would be the one raising her son. However, he could not even control his own sons (1 Samuel 2:22-36). Just imagine the thoughts that must have done somersaults in Hannah’s mind as she left her only son with Eli. Plus, at the time, she had no other children to raise. It would have been so easy for her to rationalize going back on her promise, but instead, she followed through on her word.

What about you? Are you keeping all the vows you have made to God? It is so easy to say, “God, I am going to read my Bible every day,” and then slack on your promise. Be slow

 THE WORD FOR TODAY: 

to make promises, but when you do, be quick to fulfill them. ~MFM

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN: 

John 17:9-10 “I _____ for them: I pray not for the _____, but for them which thou hast _____ me; for they are _____. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.”

 BIBLE QUIZ 

Matching. Match the person in column 1 with the correct attribute in column 2.

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| ___ 1. Gomer | A. Possible builder of Tower of Babel
Genesis 10-11 |
| ___ 2. Ishmael | B. Murdered 85 priests
1 Samuel 22 |
| ___ 3. Adonijah | C. Babylonian king
Daniel 5 |
| ___ 4. Korah | D. Son of Abraham
Genesis 16 |
| ___ 5. Nimrod | E. Son of David
1 Kings 1 |
| ___ 6. Doeg | F. Rebelled against Moses,
Numbers 16 |
| ___ 7. Belshazzar | G. Unfaithful wife
Hosea 1 |

 QUOTE OF THE DAY: 

“The thermometer of a church is its prayer meeting.” ~Vance Havner



Morning: Ecclesiastes 1-3

Evening: 2 Corinthians 9

 THE WORD FOR TODAY

Justification by Works

“Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?” James 4:5

In James 4:5, we are reminded that if we are to prove our salvation to man or become justified before man, we are to conduct ourselves as Christians ought to behave. In other words, it matters that we are courteous, honest, fair, and straightforward. It matters that we wear proper clothing and hair styles that are honoring to our Lord. It matters that our way of life is not patterned according to the world, but according to the plan of God and His will for our lives.

When the world sees how we care for each other, we are a testimony to them and perhaps they may come to believe that we are justified by faith. For example, in James 5:7-8, we are commanded to be patient with each other, and in James 5:9, we are commanded not to hold a grudge against one another. In James 5:16, we are commanded to confess our faults one to another. In James 5:19-20, we are commanded to lift up the fallen brother who is weak.

Our Lord said in John 13:35, *“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”* When the people of the world see Christians getting along with each other, loving each other and caring for each other, then we can become justified in their sight. ~OV

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN

John 17:9-10 “I _____ for them: I pray not for the _____, but for them which thou hast _____ me; for they are _____. And all _____ are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Fill in the Blanks: Complete the following verses from the Psalm 23:4-5, and Psalm 1-2.

1. Ps. 23:5 “Thou _____ a table before me in the presence of mine _____: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.”
2. Ps. 23:6 “Surely _____ and _____ shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.”
3. Ps. 24:1 “The _____ is the LORD'S, and the fullness thereof; the _____, and they that dwell therein.”
4. Ps. 24:2 “For he hath _____ it upon the seas, and _____ it upon the floods.”

 QUOTE OF THE DAY

“I would rather live my life as if there is a God and die to find out there isn't, than live my life as if there isn't and die to find out there is.” ~Albert Camus

 THE WORD FOR TODAY:

Do You Have Any Marks?

“From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.” Galatians 6:17

Paul has spent much of this epistle defending his authority as an apostle. He has recalled his salvation experience on the road to Damascus, changing him from a Christ-hating Jewish zealot to a blood-bought defender of the faith. He could have continued to tell all that God had changed in his life. He could also have shared all that had been accomplished for the kingdom of Christ at his hands. Instead, he stops and says essentially, “Stop bothering me, and just look at the scars. They will speak for themselves.” He had suffered beatings, stoning, and shipwreck, all to tell of the grace that he knew.

What scars do we have? Perhaps a joke at your expense at work, or now you’re the holy-roller of the family. Maybe you have even lost a friend or two, but do you have any marks? Paul left everything he once knew – a great name among the Jews, power, and even influence, to become a slave of a man. Most of the people of his time considered him a lunatic.

Paul says in Philippians 3:10 that he wants to know Christ, the power of His resurrection, the fellowship of His sufferings, and conformity unto His death. We say we want to know Jesus intimately, but are we willing to endure some marks? ~DJD

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN:

John 17:9-10 “I _____ for them: I pray not for the _____, but for them which thou hast _____ me; for they are _____. And all _____ are thine, and thine are mine; and I am _____ in them.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

True or False. Put a *T* for *true* or an *F* for *false* in the blank before each statement.

- _____ 1. Samuel didn’t do anything at the house of the Lord. 1 Samuel 2:11
- _____ 2. Eli’s sons did not know the Lord. 1 Samuel 2:12
- _____ 3. God blessed Hannah with three more sons and two daughters after Samuel was born. 1 Sam 2:21
- _____ 4. Eli’s sons died one day apart. 1 Samuel 2:34
- _____ 5. Samuel thought God was calling him in 1 Samuel 3:5.
- _____ 6. The Lord revealed Himself to Samuel at Beersheba. 1 Samuel 3:21

 QUOTE OF THE DAY:

“God is ready to assume full responsibility for the life wholly yielded to Him.”

~Andrew Murray



Morning: Ecclesiastes 7-9 Evening: 2 Corinthians 11:1-15

The Man Who Purges Himself

by Sumner Wemp

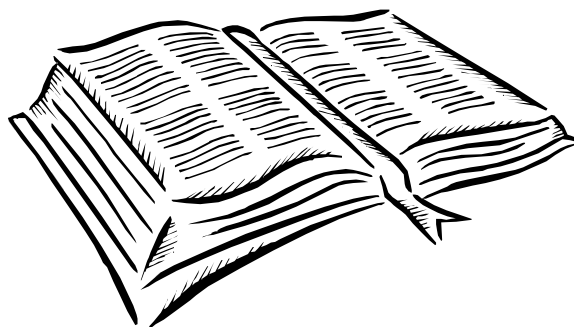
"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves." (1 John 1:8) David had committed adultery; the baby had been born, and he did nothing about it. He needed Nathan to put his finger in his face and say, "Thou art the man." You have sinned. (2 Samuel 12:7)

There is a multitude who have not committed adultery as did David (2 Sam 11:4), or killed someone as did Moses (Ex 2:12) or cheated and stole as Jacob did to Esau (Gen. 27), but there are those in a desert place not seeing the blessings of God. Some have "left their first love" (Rev 2:4); some have gotten "lukewarm" (Rev 3:16) or are just are not doing what they know they ought to do (Jas. 4:17). They are not "fishing for men" (Matt. 4:19); they are not praying (Jas. 4:2); or they are not "meditating in the word, night and day" to become successful (Josh. 1:8); or they are not filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18) and are fruitless or discouraged (Josh. 1:6-7, 9, 18), hiding under a juniper tree as was Elijah in 1 Kings 19.

Please believe me; I am agonizing over every word I am writing and saying it with my heart full of love for you as you read it. Jesus said, "The harvest is plenteous." (Matt 9:37) 2 Timothy 2:21 says, "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use." I did not write this! God promised it, and everyone who purges himself can be mightily used of God. "And He

did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." (Matt. 13:58) "If we would judge ourselves," and then, "confess our sins" (1 John 1:9), and "purge ourselves," we could get in on the harvest that is plenteous.

Peter was a good example of one who "purged himself" and was greatly used of God. He was up and down all through the earthly life of Christ. Then, he blew it big time when he denied the Lord Jesus three times. His response though was to weep bitterly. Then, the Lord Jesus appeared to him (1 Cor. 15:5). We do not know where and when, but I am sure I know what Peter did. He fell at His feet and asked, "Can you ever forgive me. I am so ashamed; please forgive me." He purged himself, and God used him to preach on the day of Pentecost when 3000 were saved in one meeting. He was a vessel unto honor and of gold. You can be too if you purge yourself of every sin, whether small or big, that is "ever before you" as was David's. Don't cover it or condone it, but confess and forsake it, and "be filled with the Holy Spirit" as Peter was when he preached with holy boldness and heavenly blessing in Acts 2.♦



 THE WORD FOR TODAY

“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.” 1 Timothy 6:17

Though this passage was written almost 2000 years ago, it has a great message for us today. We are in a time of great financial difficulty for our country. As a result, we have a tendency to become worried over our financial future. Paul’s charge was that we trust not in money, or as he calls it “uncertain riches.” On the other hand, he said that we should trust in the living God. Riches are truly uncertain. Companies fail, markets crash, jobs abruptly end.

If you are worried about financial trouble, I would encourage you to trust in the living God. He owns all the resources of the universe. He will always have a way to provide for those who trust in Him. He fed a nation of hungry Jews with manna from Heaven as they wandered in the wilderness. He provided tax money for a disciple with a coin in a fish’s mouth. He caused Hebrew children to flourish on pulp while the Babylonians were simply maintained on their best diet. He used ravens as waiters to take care of a prophet. He can cause there to be just one more scoop in the bottom of the barrel day after day. He gave Abraham a ram to sacrifice when his son was on the altar. He sent his own Son to provide salvation for us.

I am glad that I have a job, but I am thankful that I trust in the living God who is my Provider. ~DLW

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN

John 17:17-19 “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Multiple Choice. Circle the correct answer.

1. Who was the first Christian martyr?
Acts 7:59
A. James B. Matthew
C. Stephen D. John
2. Who was the first person to see the risen Lord? John 20:1, 16
A. Mary, Martha’s sister
B. Mary Magdalene
C. Mary, Mother of Jesus
D. Mary Magalaney
3. What was Christ’s first miracle?
John 2:1-11
A. Changed water to wine
B. Gave sight to a blind man
C. Calmed a storm
D. Healed a leper
4. Who denied knowing the Lord three times before a cock crowed?
Matt. 26:34-35
A. John B. Luke
C. Mark D. Peter

 QUOTE OF THE DAY

“God’s work done in God’s way will never lack God’s supply.” ~Hudson Taylor



Morning: Ecclesiastes 10-12 Evening: 2 Corinthians 11:16-33

 THE WORD FOR TODAY

“For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” Ephesians 4:12

Have you ever received a gift that just confused you? No, not that “white elephant” gift from the church Christmas party; those are supposed to confuse you. Have you ever received a “real” gift, a gift that was supposed to be serious, a gift that you expected to be serious, but yet it confused you as to its purpose? Perhaps you thought, “What am I supposed to do with this?” Maybe you thought to yourself, “Why in the world would anyone give this to me?” Some people view their spiritual gift in this manner. “Why in the world would God give me this gift? I am not sure I want to be a pastor/teacher,” you might think to yourself. So, what is the purpose of spiritual gifts?

The Apostle Paul, in a few written words to the church at Ephesus, takes the mystery out of spiritual gifts. In Ephesians 4:12, he gives the reason for your spiritual gift. Gifts have been given so the saints will be mature, do the work of the ministry, and the church will be built up. Paul reminds us that we have been given our gift to help “perfect” the saints. The pastor/teacher is to help the saints be mature enough to do the work of the ministry so the body of Christ, the church, can be built up or “edified.” If only the pastor/teachers do the work of the ministry, the church will not be edified like it is supposed to be. When all the saints are mature enough to use the gift they have been given, the church will be edified. Do not wait for your pastor to do all the work. Be mature; use your gift to edify the church. ~PMO

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN

John 17:17-19 “Sanctify them through thy _____: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Matching. Match the person in column 1 with the correct attribute in column 2.

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| _____ 1. Obadiah | A. Daughter of Jacob
Genesis 34 |
| _____ 2. Bar Jesus | B. Servant of Elisha
2 Kings 5-6 |
| _____ 3. Gehazi | C. Took Jeremiah to
Egypt, Jeremiah 43 |
| _____ 4. Johanan | D. Abraham’s nephew
Genesis 13 |
| _____ 5. Lot | E. Jewish sorcerer
Acts 13 |
| _____ 6. Tamar | F. Head of King
Ahab’s house
1 Kings 18 |
| _____ 7. Dinah | G. Judah’s wife
Genesis 38 |

 QUOTE OF THE DAY

“Death is not the end; it is only a new beginning. Death is not the master of the house; he is only a porter at the King’s lodge, appointed to open the gate and let the King’s guests into the realm of eternal day.” ~John H. Jowett



 THE WORD FOR TODAY:

Words to Live By: Titus 2

Titus is an epistle of Paul to his brother in Christ, Titus. Here, Paul shares his heart and gives advice to his friend. He challenges those who will read this letter to do several things in their service to Christ.

He calls them to be sober. This is more than not being drunk with alcohol; it is a way of thinking, being level-headed, not angry or hot-tempered. It means not making decisions too quickly or without careful consideration. As we serve Christ, we need to be clear-minded and full of the Holy Spirit as we follow Him in every decision.

He calls them to live a pattern of good works. Paul knows that these works are not the basis of our salvation, but they should be an example of it. Living a Christ-honouring life should allow those who live around us to see Him in all that we do.

He calls them to show uncorruptness, gravity, and sincerity in doctrine. This can only happen as they know what they believe and why. It comes by actively searching the Scriptures to know what God says about any situation. If the basis of belief is on anything other than the Holy Bible, corruption is the result. The world's view of truth will only remove balance and cause a loss of gravity. The foundation must be God's Word and then a lifestyle that says, "I live what I believe."

He calls them to have sound speech. What leaves a person's mouth is an indication of what is in his heart. Blessing God with pure communication glorifies Him and causes others to take notice of what is truly important in a

 THE WORD FOR TODAY:

person's life.

There are more gems of godly wisdom in this book, all of which as they are executed will draw us to Christ and show the world Whose we are. ~DJD

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN:

John 17:17-19 "Sanctify them through thy _____; thy word is truth. As thou hast _____ me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth."

 BIBLE QUIZ

Fill in the Blanks: Complete the following verses by filling in the blanks. The verses are from Matthew 5:3-6—The Sermon on the Mount.

1. Vs. 3 Blessed are the _____ in _____: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
2. Vs. 4 Blessed are they that _____: for they shall be comforted.
3. Vs. 5 Blessed are the _____: for they shall inherit the earth.
4. Vs. 6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after _____: for they shall be filled.

 QUOTE OF THE DAY:

"True joy comes only from God, and He shares this joy with those who walk in fellowship with Him." ~Jerry Bridges



 THE WORD FOR TODAY

Day by Day

“Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God.” Nehemiah 8:18

I am afraid sometimes we live too much in the past or in the future. Twenty-four hours a day, or fourteen hundred forty minutes a day, is all we are promised. Proverbs 27:1, says, **“Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.”** There are certain things we ought to do every day to have a good day and to experience a victorious life. Let us look at some.

Prayer is a necessity every day. Look at Psalm 88:9b: **“Lord, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee.”** Also, reading the Word of God is a necessity. Look at Acts 17:11: **“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”** We are to help others every day. We find in Hebrews 3:13, **“But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”**

Day by day, have a good day! ~JWL (from *Balancing Our Lives*, 2004)

*Today is the first day
of the rest of your life!*

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN

John 17:17-19 “Sanctify them through thy _____: thy word is truth. As thou hast _____ me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the _____. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

True or False. Put a *T* for *true* or an *F* for *false* in the blank before each statement.

- _____ 1. The Philistines took the ark of God and Eli’s sons prisoner in 1 Samuel 4:11.
- _____ 2. The Philistines kept the ark of God for three years. 1 Samuel 6:1
- _____ 3. When Samuel was old, he made his sons priests in Israel. 1 Samuel 8:1
- _____ 4. Death and hell were not cast into the lake of fire in Rev. 20:14.
- _____ 5. Those whose name was not found in the book of life were pardoned and forgiven. Revelation 20:15
- _____ 6. Alpha and Omega means the beginning and end. Revelation 21:6

 QUOTE OF THE DAY

“Throughout the world, in nation after nation, men and women have died for their Christian faith. The very least we can do is live for our faith.” ~Author Unknown



Morning: Song of Solomon 6-8

Evening: Galatians 1

 THE WORD FOR TODAY

Hannah’s Legacy

“And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.” 1 Samuel 3:19

As we saw previously, Hannah, the mother of Samuel, kept her vow to the Lord by giving her son to the Lord’s service. Even though it was a difficult vow to keep, Hannah remained true and faithful.

God rewards faithfulness. Samuel grew up to be a man of God. He gave spiritual leadership to the nation of Israel. He was the last judge; he became a prophet; and he anointed two kings chosen by God for Israel, Saul and David. Hannah had prayed for a son that she could give back to the Lord, and God used Samuel in a mighty way. Warren Wiersbe says, “It’s an awesome fact that, humanly speaking, the future of the nation rested with this godly woman’s prayers; and yet, how much in history has depended on the prayers of suffering and sacrificing people, especially mothers.”

Also, Hannah was blessed with more children. She had three other sons and two daughters. Now certainly, they could not compensate for the absence of Samuel’s presence in the home, but God continued to bless Hannah as a result of her faithfulness.

In conclusion, Hannah had a huge trial in her life, yet she responded by praying and lifting her heart to the Lord. As a result, she gave birth to the next leader in Israel and was blessed with more children.

 THE WORD FOR TODAY

Your legacy depends on your faithfulness! How are you living your life? ~MFM

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN

John 17:17-19 “Sanctify them through thy _____: thy word is truth. As thou hast _____ me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the _____. And for their _____ I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Multiple Choice. Circle the correct answer.

- This man was the cousin of the Lord Jesus and was beheaded. Mark 6:25-28
A. James B. Matthew
C. Mark D. John
- An angel released this man from prison in Acts 12:7.
A. Barnabas B. Mark
C. James D. Peter
- God changed human language into many tongues at this place? Genesis 11:9
A. Baal B. Barram
C. Bethel D. Babel

 QUOTE OF THE DAY

“Our heavenly Father never takes anything from his children unless he means to give them something better.” ~George Muller



 THE WORD FOR TODAY

Born Again

“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

John 3:3

On the radio, there is a new song out called “Born Again,” by Third Day. It has become one of my favorite songs. The song gives thought as to what it means and how it feels to be born again. The chorus says this:

*“It feels like I’m born again: it feels like I’m living
For the very first time, for the very first time.
It feels like I’m breathing; It feels like I’m moving
For the very first time in my life.”*

In reminiscing about my own salvation, I remember how excited I was to tell everyone that I had received Christ as my personal Savior. I was excited to share how my life had changed and how free and at peace I felt. Praise the Lord I still feel the same way today!

John 3 states that we must be born again. When Jesus was speaking with Nicodemus, Nicodemus asked, How can I be born again? In John 3:5-7 Jesus says, *“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.”*

Friends, it is very simple. Repent of your sins. Believe on what Jesus Christ did on the cross, that He was crucified, was buried,

and rose again from the grave to sit on the right hand of the Father for ever and ever. ~KAT

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN

John 17:17-19 “Sanctify them through thy _____: thy word is truth. As thou hast _____me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the _____. And for their _____ I _____ myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Matching. Match the person in column 1 with the correct attribute in column 2.

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| ___ 1. Sanballot | A. Canaanite commander, Judges 4 |
| ___ 2. Og | B. Offered strange fire Leviticus 10 |
| ___ 3. Goliath | C. Troublemaker for Nehemiah, Neh. 2 |
| ___ 4. Joab | D. Giant who fought Moses, Num. 21 |
| ___ 5. Ishbosheth | E. Killed by David 1 Samuel 17 |
| ___ 6. Sisera | F. Saul’s son 2 Samuel 2 |
| ___ 7. Nadab | G. David’s nephew and commander 2 Samuel 2 |



 THE WORD FOR TODAY

**Encouragement for Christians to
Keep Going on for God**

“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.” Hebrews 2:3

Many feel this verse has to do with the unsaved man neglecting his salvation. If he neglects salvation, he will not escape the wrath of God. This is a Bible truth, but it is not the teaching of this verse. This verse teaches us that the Christian should not neglect his salvation. For example, a person who owns a coat or a house should keep it clean. A person who owns shoes should keep them shined. The person who owns a yard should keep it mowed. A person who owns so great a salvation should continue to mature in it.

This does not mean we should take our salvation for granted. It means that since we have salvation, we should be the best Christian we can be and work toward maturity in our faith.

The entire book of Hebrews is written to persuade new Christians, particularly the Jewish Christians, to do these three things (Hebrews 12:1):

1. Lay aside every weight.
 2. Lay aside every sin.
 3. Run the race with patience.
- ~OV

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN

John 17:17-19 “Sanctify them through thy _____: thy word is truth. As thou hast _____ me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the _____. And for their _____ I _____ myself, that they also might be sanctified _____ the truth.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Fill in the Blanks: Complete the following verses by filling in the blanks. The verses are from Matthew 5:7-10

1. Vs. 7 Blessed are the _____: for they shall obtain _____.
2. Vs. 8 Blessed are the _____ in heart: for they shall _____ God.
3. Vs. 9 Blessed are the _____: for they shall be called the _____ of God.
4. Vs. 10 Blessed are they which are _____ for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the _____ of heaven.

 QUOTE OF THE DAY

“As Christians, we accept one foundational truth—God—and everything else makes sense. An atheist denies God and has to accept incredible explanations for everything else. It takes more faith to deny God than to believe in Him.” ~John MacArthur



The Bread of Life . . . Page 31

(Continued from *Legacy* on page 7)

are grown). Only Biblical, selfless love can manage to accomplish this.

Verse four moves on to parents – specifically to fathers. God proceeds to give two commands. The first one is negative: “Do not provoke your children to wrath.” Fathers are not to be discouraging to their children. In an attempt to raise godly children, it can be easy to weigh them down with oppressive rules without ever demonstrating unconditional love. This graceless spirit will backfire and will provoke children to wrath. Eventually, they will rebel against their parents, and perhaps even against the God of their fathers. Fathers must ask themselves if they are doing anything that would discourage their children.

The positive command is straightforward: “Bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” God wants parents (especially fathers) to provide sound Biblical discipleship through every stage of growth until a child reaches adulthood. Parents have a responsibility to train their children in the ways of God. This is a responsibility that cannot be

outsourced. Fathers cannot expect the pastor or the church to raise their children for them. There is no substitute for a godly leader in the home. Some fathers feel inadequate, or perhaps just do not care. But true love finds a way.

And that is the message of these four verses: true love finds a way. Families that live by love will be families in which children honor their parents and in which parents encourage and disciple their children. The world is full of dysfunctional families, so Christian families should stick out like a sore thumb. We should be children and parents who live by love, so that when we are gone, everyone will know our legacy is a legacy of love. It is a legacy that will point men to the God who is love (John. 3:16).♦

*“Lo, children are a heritage
of the LORD: and the fruit
of the womb is his reward.”
Psalm 127:3*

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 THE WORD FOR TODAY

“For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.” Romans 14:7-8

The context of this passage is dealing with Christian liberty and the affect that we as believers have on our brothers and sisters in Christ. We all have an impact on each other; we do not live unto ourselves. Our choices affect others, and when others make decisions that differ from ours, we have the tendency to either judge our brothers and sisters or to despise them. We must be considerate of others. Some believers are stronger than we are, and some believers are weaker.

Here are some guidelines for making decisions. First, we must seek to please the Lord in all that we do. We are the Lord's, and we must please Him. When we have confidence that what we plan to do is Biblically acceptable, and we have peace about doing it, there is still a consideration that we must make. We also must consider how our actions will impact others. As we seek to please the Lord, we must seek to build up others. If our actions cause a weaker believer to stumble, we have damaged the work of God in that person. We need to strive to be stepping stones not stumbling blocks.

None of us lives unto himself; we are our brother's keepers. We are called to build up the weaker through a demonstration of our love.
~DLW

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN

John 17:24-25 “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

True or False. Put a *T* for *true* or an *F* for *false* in the blank before each statement.

- ___ 1. Elisha inherited Elijah's mantle and responsibilities. 2 Kings 2:12-13
- ___ 2. When Solomon was born, Nathan, the prophet, called him Jedidiah. 2 Samuel 12:24,25
- ___ 3. Gideon's other name was Jerubbaal. Judges 7:1
- ___ 4. Jesus gave James and John the sir name of Boanerges (meaning the sons of thunder.) Mark 3:17
- ___ 5. Pharaoh renamed Joseph Zaphnath-paaneah. Gen. 41:45

 QUOTE OF THE DAY

“The man who lives right, and is right, has more power in his silence than another has by his words.” *Phillips Brooks*



 THE WORD FOR TODAY:

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.” Ephesians 4:14

Do you like amusement parks? For several summers while I was in high school, I worked at a small amusement park in Monroe, Ohio, named Americana. From its birth in the 1920’s until the 1970’s, the park was the highlight of the area. With the opening of Kings Island in the 1970’s and financial difficulties in the 1990’s, the park struggled to stay alive. When I worked at the park, there were times when I was allowed to ride the rides. Some of my favourites were the Electric Rainbow and the Screeching Eagle. But when I wanted to experience a classic ride, I would get on the Scrambler. The Scrambler would toss its riders, back and forth and around in circles until they felt like “scrambled eggs.” As a rider, my world was tossed to and fro, and I would leave the ride and be all mixed up.

The Apostle Paul described an immature believer like the rider of the Scrambler. Their belief system is back and forth, round and round, and they are altogether mixed up. He reminds us to use the spiritual gift that God has given us so we will be mature. As we mature in our faith and involve ourselves in the ministry, we will be united with other believers and will increase in the knowledge of Christ. The knowledge of Christ will give us the stability and perception to avoid “every wind of doctrine,” the “sleight of men” and the “cunning

 THE WORD FOR TODAY:

craftiness” used to deceive. So, use your spiritual gift, increase in the knowledge of Christ, and get off the “Scrambler” of immaturity. ~PMO

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN:

John 17:24-25 “Father, I _____ that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Multiple Choice. Circle the correct answer.

- Who gave up his birthright for a bowl of pottage? Genesis 25:32-34
A. Jacob B. Joseph
C. Esau D. Eli
- Who was thought to be a god when he was bitten by a snake and nothing happened? Acts 28:3-6
A. Mark B. Paul
C. Barnabus D. Luke
- Who built the first temple in Israel? 1 Kings 6:1
A. Solomon B. Moses
C. David D. Peter

 QUOTE OF THE DAY:

“The Christian is a person who makes it easy for others to believe in God.”

~Robert M. McCheyne



 THE WORD FOR TODAY:

Never Forsaken

“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” Hebrews 13:5

In today’s world where everything moves at a fast pace, I am reminded of how lonely we can sometimes feel. Even when we are with a group of people, loneliness can still be present. We can still feel forsaken and forgotten. Webster’s 1828 dictionary defines *forsake* as: “To quit or leave entirely; to desert; to abandon; to depart from.”

There are many Biblical accounts where the Bible proves that God never, ever leaves us. Starting with the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve sinned, but God was still with them and still provided for them. In Exodus, God provided the Israelites with freedom from bondage and a new land of their own, which they still possess today. All through the Old Testament, God provided many kings, prophets, and good men to lead Israel in His ways.

In the New Testament, God provided us with the Lord Jesus Christ who paid the penalty of sin by His cruel crucifixion. In Matthew 27:46, Jesus said, *“Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? That is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”* Even Jesus felt forsaken at that moment in time.

It is ok to ask why. Remember, it is God’s way of molding us. There will be some difficult times in our lives. It is in these trying times that we become usable vessels. I chal-

 THE WORD FOR TODAY:

lenge you today to be moldable in the Master’s hand and remember He is always with you. ~KAT

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN:

John 17:24-25 “Father, I _____ that they also, whom thou hast given me, be _____ me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Matching. Match the mountains in the Bible in column 1 with the activity that happened on that mountain in column 2.

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| _____ 1. Mt. of Olives | A. Baal worship
Zechariah 14:4 |
| _____ 2. Mt. Nebo | B. Temple built
Deuteronomy 32:49-50 |
| _____ 3. Mt. Carmel | C. Moses died
1 Kings 18:19 here |
| _____ 4. Mt. Moriah | D. Moses viewed
2 Chronicles 3:1 Canaan |
| _____ 5. Mt. Pisgah | E. Jesus will return
Deuteronomy 3:27 to this place |

 QUOTE OF THE DAY:

“A gospel that does not confront sin is not the gospel of Jesus Christ.” ~John MacArthur



 THE WORD FOR TODAY:

Don't Quit

“But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. 1 Corinthians 9:27

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” 1 Corinthians 15:58

One of the Apostle Paul's biggest fears was becoming a has-been or a used-to-be or a castaway. I wonder if that is our concern, or if, it is because so many people around us quit, that it has become almost common place. One of the greatest things that can be said about you is that you are steadfast and unmovable for a good cause. What causes people to quit on God? Let me give you five things I believe cause people to become castaways.

The first would be weariness, just getting tired and quitting under pressure. Secondly, sin can cause us to have broken fellowship with God which, if not confessed, could cause us to quit. Thirdly, Satan seeks to move us by all of his attacks in our lives. Fourthly, bitterness toward God or others could cause us to fall and to stay down. Lastly, afflictions such as sickness, death, or financial strain could cause us to want to give up if they were not seen in the light of God's Word.

Will you be a castaway? (~JWL from *Balancing Our Lives*, 2004)

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN:

John 17:24-25 “Father, I _____ that they also, whom thou hast given me, be _____ me where I am; that they may behold my _____, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Fill in the Blanks: Complete the following verses by filling in the blanks. All the verses are found in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5.

1. Rejoice _____. Vs. 16
2. Pray without _____. Vs. 17
3. In every thing give _____; for this is the _____ of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Vs. 18
4. _____ not the Spirit. Vs. 19
5. Despise not _____. Vs. 20
6. Abstain from all _____ of evil. Vs. 22

 QUOTE OF THE DAY:

“Always remember the goal of family worship is knowing God. When you lose sight of that goal, family worship becomes an empty ritual.” ~Tedd Tripp

