

## The Scriptures: Power to Believe!

*Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead." Luke 24:45-46 ESV*

We read in Luke 24 three stories of Jesus appearing after His resurrection. Each time the disciples' response is some sort of unbelief. In one, Jesus appears to a couple of women who shared with the disciples that Jesus was alive. Their response: it seemed to them an idle tale.

The second is with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. They walked unknowingly with Jesus, and they shared with Him about all that happened. They heard of some who were saying He was alive. Their response was to tell Jesus "they had hoped" that He would be the Messiah, in essence saying that hope was now dead.

The third time was when Jesus showed up in a room where the disciples had gathered. They saw Him, talked with Him, and yet still "disbelieved because of their joy." It's good they were glad, but still, they disbelieved.

I would have imagined Jesus telling them, "C'mon, guys, it's Me! Touch Me—stop this silly unbelief!" In the gospel of Matthew that is what He in effect tells Thomas, but here Jesus is after something else. What? "Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures . . ." The Scriptures changed everything! From that point on, the disciples **never** doubted again. Read the rest of Luke, and then read the sequel in Acts. Not one single time did the disciples ever doubt again.

Luke is also challenging us. Dear reader, what will it be? Will you continue in unbelief? Or will you engage with the Scripture, and let it change your doubt into belief? Scripture changes everything!

### Submitted by:

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### One-Year Bible Reading

2 Chronicles 30:1-31:21  
Romans 15:1-22  
Psalm 25:1-15  
Proverbs 20:13-15

## Fortified Tower

*The name of the LORD is a fortified tower; the righteous run to it and are safe. Proverbs 18:10 NIV*

Last year my wife and I stayed in a hotel that had a large concrete wall directly behind it. The wall was massive. It was 10 to 20 feet high and thick, reinforced concrete. Basically, the view out our window was a giant concrete wall: not a very visually appealing thing to look at during our stay. And the wall ran the entire length of the hotel.

Having taken college courses in slope stabilization methods, I eventually realized what the wall was. It was too tall to be a simple retaining wall. It was constructed to provide a barrier against a potential debris flow event. In other words, if a heavy rain were to fall on the slope behind the hotel, and mobilize (or move) the debris down the hill, the massive concrete wall would (Lord willing) protect the hotel from any damage or loss of life. Once I realized what the wall was there for, I wasn't bothered by it restricting our view. In fact, I was glad it was there.

The massive concrete wall reminded me of this verse in Proverbs. The name of the Lord is a protection for believers! Now understand that God and His Word won't protect us from all of life's hardships and trials. The Bible is clear—we live in a broken world, with much pain and suffering.

But the Bible (specifically the book of Proverbs) was written to teach us wisdom so that we can be skillful at living. God and His Word do provide a fortified tower for much of life's hardships and trials. If we listen to and obey God's wisdom (related to our sexuality, money, relationships, conflicts, parenting, marriage, and more), it truly is a fortified tower for the righteous!

### Submitted by:

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### One-Year Bible Reading

2 Chronicles 32:1-33:13  
Romans 15:23-16:9  
Psalm 25:16-22  
Proverbs 20:16-18

## How Full Is Your Memory Bank?

*Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Colossians 3:16*

In the early years of our church movement, we sang hundreds of songs, word for word, right out of our Bibles. As a result, I have a memory bank full of God's living Word. It always surfaces in my time of need of truth or encouragement.

On the rainy April morning when I wrote this, Hosea 6:3 surfaced in my thoughts: "So let us know, let us press on to know the Lord. His going forth is as certain as the dawn; and He will come to us like the rain, like the spring rain watering the earth." If you know the melody, you can hear it as your eyes follow the words. Let's muse on how these physical realities reflect spiritual realities.

"His going forth is as certain as the dawn": Even though I can't see the sun today, it did rise at the specific time that God told it to. I never question if the sun is going to come up or not. It just does. Even in the Broadway hit *Annie*, she sings "The sun'll come out tomorrow, bet your bottom dollar that tomorrow there'll be sun!" (I know you heard *that* melody as you read those words.) Our Lord's going forth is more certain than that!

"He will come to us like the spring rain watering the earth": After the long, cold, dead of winter, how refreshing it is to see new life springing up from the spring rain. He will come to us like that, infusing life into us. In Isaiah 55:11 God says that His word "will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it."

So, dear follower of Christ, fill up your memory bank with God's Word. "Press on to know Him," and encourage one another.

### Submitted by:

Terry Putthoff  
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### One-Year Bible Reading

2 Chronicles 33:14-34:33  
Romans 16:10-27  
Psalm 26:1-12  
Proverbs 20:19

## Forgiving

*Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. Ephesians 4:32*

I was talking to a friend after a prayer meeting about a person who had decided to be permanently estranged from a relative. Mike was pointing out that reconciliation is God's way.

"Yes," I agreed. "Forgiveness is a very important part of the Christian life."

"Forgiveness is everything," Mike replied.

That was an eloquent statement. In my mind it goes right up there with "The goal of our instruction is love" (1 Timothy 1:5); "For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what a man has, not according to what he does not have" (2 Corinthians 8:12); and "Ripeness is all" (Shakespeare's *King Lear*, Act 5, Scene 2).

Forgiveness is required of us by God in the Lord's Prayer: "And forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors" (Matthew 6:12). Notice the verb tense—"have forgiven—the *present perfect* denotes an action done in the past which continues up to the present. We ask God to forgive our sins because through His power and because of His example, we have forgiven and are forgiving those who sin against us. Forgiving those who sin against us (even our closest friends and family and even for the most serious sins) is not optional. We have no freedom to say, "I cannot forgive that person." You can—God provides the power. If I am quite honest with myself, what I am really saying is "I choose not to forgive that person." Am I elevating my hurt feelings over forgiveness, over the possibility of release for the other, over restored relationship?

Christians can forgive from a torture rack. Christians can forgive from a prison cell. Our Master forgave from a cross.

### Submitted by:

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### One-Year Bible Reading

2 Chronicles 35:1-36:23  
1 Corinthians 1:1-17  
Psalm 27:1-6  
Proverbs 20:20-21

## Healthy Motivation

*Then the LORD answered me and said, "Record the vision and inscribe it on tablets that the one who reads it may run." Habakkuk 2:2*

Motivation is a tricky thing sometimes. We can have a good goal and still fail to motivate others in a healthy way. You may want your husband to take the trash out every week, so you promise to cook his favorite meal if he will. Bribery, manipulation, threats, guilt, control, and fear are all powerful ways to motivate others to do what we want. History is full of examples of these bad methods of motivation.

God says that love, His love, is the only right way to motivate. Both husband and wife should be motivated by God's love so that you serve one another voluntarily and cheerfully. But we must know *experientially* that Christ loves us to be able to love others by His Spirit.

A recent example occurred in our church when we only had one guitarist. How could we start more churches unless we had more guitarists to help these new groups sing? True, singing is not a requirement to be a church, but it sure can be edifying and help others worship Jesus! How then could I motivate others to play the guitar?

I believe Christ's love, coupled with helping others see the big picture, is a powerful and effective motivator. Start with God's heart for people—His love for mankind and desire that all come to know Him personally and then go on to make other disciples. God's vision, recorded in the Scriptures, was written so "the one who reads it may run"! Paul understood it was God's vision, and not his, when he wrote, "So, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision" (Acts 26:19).

Ask God to show you how you have been motivating others, and make changes if necessary. Trust Him to motivate them with His love and His vision for their lives!

### Submitted by:

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Atlanta, Georgia

### One-Year Bible Reading

Ezra 1:1-2:70  
1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5  
Psalm 27:7-14  
Proverbs 20:22-23

## Obedience, Frustration, and Salvation

*It is obeying the law that makes us right in his sight. Even Gentiles, who do not have God's written law, show that they know his law when they instinctively obey it, even without having heard it. They demonstrate that God's law is written in their heart, for their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right. Romans 2:13b-15 NLT*

God has put a moral code in our hearts: to be right with God, we must do what is right. We don't always do what is right, and so we try harder to live morally. But even our own consciences tell us that no matter how hard we try, it is not enough. We must obey to be made right in God's eyes, but we can't follow His standards perfectly enough to achieve a right standing with God. In addition to our own consciences telling us this, God's Word confirms it in the next chapter: "For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are" (Romans 3:20 NLT).

Instead of making us right with God, trying to obey God's laws just frustratingly points out that we don't, won't, or can't obey God's whole law. All we can really do is cry out to God for mercy.

God is a savior and loves to rescue, and here is how He does it: "Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood" (Romans 3:24-25a NLT).

Let's live in this "made right with God" reality today!

### Submitted by:

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### One-Year Bible Reading

Ezra 4:24-6:22  
1 Corinthians 3:5-23  
Psalm 29:1-11  
Proverbs 20:26-27

## Three Ways to Love People Better

*Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. 1 John 3:18*

I recently observed three different families in our church who were loving others in practical, amazing, and helpful ways. I believe there are three lessons we can learn from their examples.

**The first way** to love people better is to *make yourself available*. You actually need to tell someone—maybe a Small Group Leader, a pastor, or the person you see with a need. Tell them you are willing and available to help! That's why I love this verse so much. Don't just have some nice thoughts about how you want to help — actually *do* something. I know a family in our church who had a broken car. A different family in our church had told a leader they wanted to help with practical things, like broken cars. Thankfully, as you guessed it, the broken car got fixed!

**The second way** to love people better is to *spend your money and time*. Truly loving people is costly, both financially and time-wise. In the example above, a second family had told the same leader that they wanted to spend their money helping others. So because they had the desire and means (and again, had *actually communicated* their desire to help), they were able to spend their money in a directed, practical way to help someone else out.

**The third way** to love people better is to *pray that God would meet the needs* in our church. Recently, I heard about a family who had a need. I prayed that morning that God would meet their need. I kid you not, only a couple of hours later, a third family texted me and said they wanted to bless someone in the church randomly. Boom, answered prayer!

### Submitted by:

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### One-Year Bible Reading

Ezra 3:1-4:23  
1 Corinthians 2:6-3:4  
Psalm 28:1-9  
Proverbs 20:24-25

## Covenant Faithfulness

*My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be My disciples. John 15:8 HCSB*

At first glance this verse seems odd. We produce fruit, thereby proving we are disciples. This seems works-based! Several things need to be discussed before we can rightly understand this verse. First, this verse is nestled in perhaps one of the most beautiful allegories of all Scripture, which is also used in the Old Testament in Isaiah 5. Secondly, the Father receives glory for two things. One is the covenant obedience of the Son (who stands in the place of disobedient Israel). The other is the branches who give glory to the Father: the disciples who are remaining in the Son, both the current branches (disciples of Jesus) and the coming disciples (new believers—us).

Now we can rightly interpret the verse. The Father receives glory because the Son has been obedient, and because the Son has been obedient the Holy Spirit is sent, and because the Holy Spirit is sent and regenerates believers, such new believers produce much fruit and prove to the whole world that they are His disciples!

This verse is ultimately not about our obedience or remaining in the vine or production of fruit or fruitful prayer life, but about the much grander obedience between the persons of the Trinity. This unity and obedience allow us also to bring God glory.

Think about the picture of the grapevine. List the things that branches need to grow, to be protected, to flourish, and ask yourself if you can provide those things or if you depend on those things from the Holy Spirit. Do you see that your covenant faithfulness with God is really not your own, but His? The Triune God is all about covenant faithfulness with Himself so He grafts us into it—we are the grateful branches.

### Submitted by:

Andrew D. Roberts  
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### One-Year Bible Reading

Ezra 7:1-8:20  
1 Corinthians 4:1-21  
Psalm 30:1-12  
Proverbs 20:28-30

## What Kind Of Fragrance Are You?

*But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. 2 Corinthians 2:14-16*

Honeybees communicate by pheromones or fragrance. A bee's pheromone can tell the other bees if they need to defend the hive, if they have a queen or not, or if it is time to swarm (leave) and start another colony. The colony knows if they have a queen or not by the pheromone she emits. If the bees don't smell her pheromone, they will find a new egg (if there are any) that the old queen laid, and feed it until it develops into their new queen. It is a "God thing"!

In the same way, we Christians emit an aroma, not a physical one, but an aroma of God living in us. It is an attractant the lures people to Jesus. I put out swarm traps in the spring to catch honeybees that have left home and are relocating to a new location. The lure is lemongrass, and it draws the scout bees into the swarm box, where you hope they will lead the colony to relocate. Then I have free bees! (No pun intended.)

What aroma are you emitting to those on your campus, in your community, or at work? Do they "smell" Jesus Christ in you because of the deeds of kindness, a good attitude, joy, peace, and the selfless living they see? If not, ask God to change you with His love and grace to live in His triumph!

### Submitted by:

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### One-Year Bible Reading

Ezra 8:21-9:15  
1 Corinthians 5:1-13  
Psalm 31:1-8  
Proverbs 21:1-2

## Focus on What You Do Best

*I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. 1 Corinthians 3:6-8 9 NIV*

I stepped up to the counter and ordered my coffee, paid, and moved out of the way so other customers could place their order. The place was busy. I waded through the crowd and took a seat at a table.

Ten minutes later my friend, John, arrived and approached the counter to order a drink just as an employee was taking a photo of the display case nearby. John stood next to the guy, and with exaggerated movements pretended like he was taking a photo with an imaginary camera. He was being goofy. Strangely, the photographer was so preoccupied with his work that he didn't notice my friend. But a co-worker did. And laughed. Then the photographer noticed my friend, and the three of them bantered back and forth for a minute or two as John ordered.

I thought, "I wish I could be as warm and friendly as John. He has such a great way with people! I could be used more by God if I weren't so stiff."

John sat down at my table and we chatted, then began our individual devotions, as planned. My Bible passage was 1 Corinthians 3, where Paul wrote about how he and Apollos possessed different special abilities in order to serve God. Paul sowed the seed in the heart of the Corinthians, Apollos watered, and God caused it to grow. Paul concluded the passage by saying that he and Apollos were on the same team, with the same aim, and tended to God's garden, each in his own way.

Lord, I am not gifted in ways that I sometimes wish I were. But this is by Your design! Help me to relax and focus on what I do best, and let others do what they do best. Help me to see that as we work together, You'll grow Your kingdom on earth. This is refreshing good news!

### Submitted by:

Ken Johnson  
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### One-Year Bible Reading

Nehemiah 1:1-3:14  
1 Corinthians 7:1-24  
Psalm 31:19-24  
Proverbs 21:4

## Never Compare!

*But when they . . . compare themselves with one another, they are without understanding. 2 Corinthians 10:12 ESV*

Each tribe in Israel was given a very specific allotment of land within the nation of Israel with very specific boundaries. Each tribe was blessed by God, but in different places and different ways. (For an example, see Joshua 15.)

This allotment of land is a picture of how God chooses the "realm" in which we live and the "resources" we possess (see also 1 Corinthians 12). We must, therefore, never compare ourselves to others but instead be joyfully thankful to God for the place in which we live, for the talents we are given, for the resources we possess, and the good effect we have upon others.

If we are comparing ourselves to what others have, we are not appreciating what God has given, nor are we joyfully using it in faith for the glory of Jesus Christ! If we recognize the goodness of God, the wisdom of God, and the sovereign control of God in all things (including what we possess and what we do not possess), we will not be full of grumbling, jealousy, envy, and discontent. Rather we will be filled with joy in and faithfulness with what He has given.

What God *has* given equally to all who believe in Christ, Paul tells us in Ephesians 1:3-14, is His perfect love, total forgiveness of our sin, adoption as His sons and daughters, and eternity with Him!

### Submitted by:

David Brandts  
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### One-Year Bible Reading

Ezra 10:1-44  
1 Corinthians 6:1-20  
Psalm 31:9-18  
Proverbs 21:3

## Working Together

*So we built the wall and the whole wall was joined together to half its height, for the people had a mind to work. Nehemiah 4:6*

Nehemiah had all the Israelites work together: first, on repairing the wall, then on protection, and, lastly, on caring for each other.

**Repairing the wall.** If you look at Nehemiah 3, you will see that the people were working together. Goldsmiths, perfume makers, priests, and even women, regardless of their skills, regardless of their abilities, were all coming together to do the work of God. As Christians, we should join together from every walk of life to work in our churches, our ministries, our life groups, and even our regions. And together we can support and serve our overseas missionaries as well.

**Protection.** In Nehemiah 4 we read about the Israelites protecting each other: "Neither I nor my brothers, not my men, not the guards with me took off our clothes; each had his weapon, even when he went for water" (Nehemiah 4:23). Nehemiah had the people protecting each other every day. The battle is ongoing; it doesn't stop. Daily we need to check our armor. Daily we need to spend time with God. Daily we need to pray for our brothers and sisters, keeping accountable, watching each other's backs. And remember, "Our God will fight for us" (Nehemiah 4:20).

**Caring.** Don't take advantage of one another, but care for one another. Nehemiah in chapter 5 talks about how some of the people were taking advantage of others, even selling them back into slavery. Nehemiah rebuked the leaders doing so and had the situations made right. This reminds me of how we need to love and care for one another. Don't take advantage of people or "lord it" over them. Instead Jesus gives us our example of serving one another, even laying down our lives.

Let's work together.

### Submitted by:

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### One-Year Bible Reading

Nehemiah 3:15-5:13  
1 Corinthians 7:25-40  
Psalm 32:1-11  
Proverbs 21:5-7

## A Suffering Mom

*Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer. . . . Isaiah 53:10 NIV*

Singing in church on a Sunday recently, I noticed one of my sons looking rather emotional and sad. He had been experiencing some hard trials, causing me in turn to feel sad. As a mom, my first impulse is to rush in, rescue, and shoo away the difficult times and sadness.

As I felt these things, God brought to mind another mother, Mary, who ultimately stood near the cross of her son Jesus and watched Him suffer and die an excruciating death. As I thought about the agony and helplessness that she must have felt, God asked me this question, "Was that my will that her Son had to suffer?"

Assuredly, the answer was **yes!** "Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer. . . to make his life a guilt offering. . . ." God knew that Jesus' suffering was the path to true joy and contentment, not only for Jesus, but for all who call upon His name.

With those thoughts in my mind, God asked me a second tough question: "Dawn, was it My will that Mary also had to suffer?" What could I say? Assuredly this answer was also **yes.** Just as with Jesus, it was also God's will for Mary to suffer as she looked upon her suffering Son: "And a sword will pierce your own soul too" (Luke 2:35 NIV).

These thoughts lifted quite a weight off of me, as I freshly submitted to God's will for my son *and* for me. My Father has a perfect plan in all of this trial, and as it was for Jesus, I believe the following will be true also for me and my son: "After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied. . ." (Isaiah 53:11 NIV).

### Submitted by:

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### One-Year Bible Reading

Nehemiah 5:14-7:73  
1 Corinthians 8:1-13  
Psalm 33:1-11  
Proverbs 21:8-10

Thursday, August 15

## Set Apart for What?

*. . . you are to be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy; and I have set you apart from the peoples to be Mine. Leviticus 20:26*

A few years ago Dave and I lived in a rental next to a small conservation area. Our backyard was lined with a wall of evergreens. After every snow I would marvel at the beauty of those Christmas trees adorned with bright red balls! Those red balls didn't come from Hobby Lobby. They were God-made. Cardinals! I remember thinking: "A cardinal is not designed to blend in, and neither are we!" What a beautiful picture of sanctification!

God set us apart even before time was birthed. "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him" (Ephesians 1:4).

The Apostle Paul introduces himself in his letter to the Roman church as one "called" or "set apart" for the gospel of God. To King Agrippa Paul retells what Jesus said to him on his way to Damascus: "I am sending you [Paul] to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me" (Acts 26:18).

We, too, have been set apart to shed light in the darkness. Jesus told His disciples: "We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work." And Paul reminds us that "the night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light" (Romans 13:12).

Time is short! Be who you were set apart to be! Be a bearer of His light!

### Submitted by:

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### One-Year Bible Reading

Nehemiah 9:22-10:39  
1 Corinthians 9:19-10:13  
Psalm 34:1-10  
Proverbs 21:13

## Every Act of Service is Significant

*With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free. Ephesians 6:7-8*

There is an ongoing debate about what is eternal and what is secular. I believe we are asking the wrong question. Actually, if we do attempt to answer that question, we end up making most of our daily service worthless. The mundane tasks of taking out the garbage, changing diapers, or getting the oil changed are looked down on as less spiritual than going on a mission trip, leading a Bible study, or building a house for the homeless. Those last efforts are labeled "spiritual," whereas the first group is supposedly "not spiritual." How sad. How dangerous. How false. Then how does God want us to think about what most of us do with our time?

*Serve God and not man.* He appreciates everything you do and is glorified in our everyday tasks.

*Serve with a good attitude.* You are not only serving your boss or working for money.

*Serve God, and He will reward you later in heaven.*

Knowing what matters to God will elevate the value of every service and motivate us to serve with excellence. We will never again see anything as a menial task that is beneath us. We will not view changing a diaper or washing the car as some necessary task that must get done so we can get to the important, the eternal service. Every act of service becomes significant!

What specific tasks and ways to serve have you looked down on and considered unimportant in the grand scheme of life? Are there any bad attitudes you need to change about these tasks? How has thinking this way impacted your daily service at home or at work?

### Submitted by:

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### One-Year Bible Reading

Nehemiah 7:73-9:21  
1 Corinthians 9:1-18  
Psalm 33:12-22  
Proverbs 21:11-12

Friday, August 16

## When Stumbling is Scandal

*I have told you these things to keep you from stumbling. John 16:1 HCSB*

These verses mark the fullness of the witness of the Trinity. One may argue that John 16:1 is not talking about stumbling from persecution or sin, but stumbling from belief in the Triune God. ("I have told you these things so that you won't abandon your faith" - John 16:1 NLT.) We can confidently say this because of the logical progression of the amazing truths revealed in this chapter: When the Counselor or Holy Spirit comes, the One sent by Jesus, the One from the Father, the Spirit of Truth proceeding from the Father, He will testify about Jesus; the disciples will also testify about Jesus.

There is an incredible four-fold witness on display: the three distinct persons of the Trinity and the disciples. All witness to one another, yet the purpose of their witness is profound. Their witness points to the Triune God—Indomitable Father, Incarnate Son, and Indwelling Spirit. Also, the word for stumbling in Greek is *skandalizo*; we derive our word *scandal* from this word. The greatest scandal in all of existence is to deny the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

In fact, all of the gospel writers share that the religious leaders were *scandalized* by Jesus, and all of the gospel writers label those who fall away or never believe as *scandalous*. John 16:1 cannot mean to keep us from stumbling in sin. In this context, such meaning makes little sense, though it is comforting. Jesus is giving a great discourse on the Triune God. He is telling us that we will face persecution, even death, not for stumbling in a little sin, but for believing in the Triune God.

It is our belief in the Triune God that keeps us from stumbling. The Holy Spirit, the Counselor and the One who leads us into all truth, will be able to keep us from the ultimate scandal—rejection of the Triune God.

### Submitted by:

Andrew D. Roberts  
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Jacksonville, Florida

### One-Year Bible Reading

Nehemiah 11:1-12:26  
1 Corinthians 10:14-33  
Psalm 34:11-22  
Proverbs 21:14-16

## Elastic Hearts

*I shall run the way of Your commandments, for You will enlarge my heart.*

*Psalm 119: 32*

We have a house with elastic walls. Twelve years ago we moved into our house with my parents and our five kids. Nine of us in all, not counting pets. After a time we started having different exchange students live with us for one school year at a time. Four years ago my nephew moved in, and recently my mother-in-law joined us as well. For each new person joining our home we didn't know how it would be, but we knew God was leading us.

It has been a blessing for my kids to grow up with my parents right downstairs. With the exchange students, it was a time of planting seeds and sharing God's love. As for my nephew, he has turned to God and is living for Him. With my mother-in-law? It's too early to tell what God has planned. But we are trusting that God will be glorified as we share the love of Jesus.

Each new addition makes a change to our family. Along with God, my husband and I initiate the change, but we don't control the outcome. We need to keep open hands and trust God that He will lead and provide for us.

Opening our home to others has not always been easy. But God has used these opportunities as times of growth. Maybe it's not as much our house having elastic walls as our hearts.

Who is God calling you to open your life to? Who will God use to stretch your elastic heart?

### Submitted by:

Shirley Ferguson  
Oakridge Community Church  
Clarksville, Maryland

### One-Year Bible Reading

Nehemiah 12:27-13:31  
1 Corinthians 11:1-16  
Psalm 35:1-16  
Proverbs 21:17-18

Monday, August 19

## Do You Take Yourself Too Seriously?

*God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. James 4:6 ESV*

One thing I appreciate about my father-in-law is that he never lets me take myself too seriously. Whenever I do, he will use his sense of humor to bring me down a notch!

Taking ourselves too seriously is simply a manifestation of pride. Like my father-in-law, God will not abide us taking ourselves too seriously. In both James 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:5 we are told, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

There are two fundamental ways that we try to relate to God in our pride. One way is approaching Him as though we are good people, deserving of His favor. Romans 3:10-11 tells us, "There is none righteous, no, not one." God will oppose us whenever we try to relate to Him as though we did not need Jesus Christ and His death in our place to have God's favor (see Galatians 2:21).

The second way we manifest our pride is much more subtle. We think God will not grant us favor, even if we come by faith to His Son for salvation because our sin is too great for Jesus to receive us. When this is our prideful attitude, we are ultimately stating that our sin is greater than Jesus Christ and His ability to redeem us! Romans 5:20 (KJV) tells us that "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound"! Humility before God is coming to God expecting His favor based solely on His grace given through the death of Jesus Christ in our place. In humility we expect His favor because we know that God's grace, given in Jesus' substitutionary death, is far greater than our sin, no matter how great our sin is!

Do you take yourself too seriously, or do you rejoice greatly in the abundant grace of God given in the good news of Jesus Christ saving you through His shed blood?

### Submitted by:

David Brandts  
New Life Church  
Cincinnati, Ohio

### One-Year Bible Reading

Esther 4:1-7:10  
1 Corinthians 12:1-26  
Psalm 36:1-12  
Proverbs 21:21-22

## Rock on the Roots

*Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go." John 11:44 ESV*

On a cool spring day in April I was out with our grandson Amos. At 17 months he was getting quite proficient at finding painted wooden eggs I was hiding in plain sight among the rocks in the limestone outcroppings that define the edge of our backyard. I was savoring the "Be Here Now," living-in-the-moment experience that young children bring to us. In interacting with them, one is fully alive, not a dull spectator!

As Amos hunted eggs and explored, I picked up sticks and tidied the rock gardens a bit. I wondered at the rose bush branches, healthy and green in their new spring growth, but lying prone on the ground. I rarely take time to inspect these gardens closely—they are mostly perennials that take care of themselves. But moving dead leaves and tracing the rose branches back to the roots, I noticed a flat rock lying on top of them. I easily moved it, grabbed a nearby short garden trellis, and stood the branches up against it. I was pleased at a good and quick bit of rescue.

Of course, this rescue made me think of people. How many people do we know who appear healthy, but are somehow burdened and carrying weight they find hard to bear? Do we try to help them at the leaf level, or the branch level, or the fertilizer level? "This verse may encourage you," or "The discipline of journaling is a good way to talk to God," or "Choose your friends wisely." While these instructions may promote growth at some level, is anybody willing to check at the root level? Good counselors do this, unbinding people. A "rock on the roots" could be a negative early influence on a child's life, or a traumatic incident, or a misinterpreted pattern that created a lie in someone's mind. Prayerful insight may result in removing the rock at the roots and releasing the beautiful and powerful growth God intends for Christians (as well as Amos!).

### Submitted by:

Dotty Vanderhorst  
Cornerstone Community Church  
Lenexa, Kansas

### One-Year Bible Reading

Esther 1:1-3:15  
1 Corinthians 11:17-34  
Psalm 35:17-28  
Proverbs 21:19-20

Tuesday, August 20

## Covenant Love

*As the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you. Remain in My love.*

*John 15:9 HCSB*

We talk a lot about the love of Jesus, and how much Jesus loves us. We inculcate that truth into our children's lives via stories and songs, and rightly so. Here is perhaps the most well-known example.

*Jesus loves me! This I know,*

*For the Bible tells me so;*

*Little ones to Him belong;*

*They are weak, but He is strong.*

*Yes, Jesus loves me!*

*The Bible tells me so.*

However, perhaps in our programming, whether it is VBS or Sunday School, we have forgotten to tell our children why Jesus loves them. Even as adults we graduate and sing songs about the Father's "Reckless Love." These songs are good, but in the euphoria of emotion we can lose sight of the logical, loving propositions of Scripture. Jesus loves us and the Father loves us because they are first in a loving, covenant Triune relationship with one another.

The love Jesus has for us is not because He wants to be our buddies, saving us so we can have a "Good, Good Father." ***The reason Jesus loves us is because the Father loves Him.*** It is for precisely this reason that Jesus will lay down His life for His disciples and call them friends: He has already laid His life down for the Father. His love for His Father comes first. We can believe the lie that Jesus's love for us is conditional, based on our obedience and good morals. The message of the rich power of love and friendship between Father and Son is needed so that we rest and remain in love because of our belief, not our performance.

### Submitted by:

Andrew D. Roberts  
Awaken Church  
Jacksonville, Florida

### One-Year Bible Reading

Esther 8:1-10:3  
1 Corinthians 12:27-13:13  
Psalm 37:1-11  
Proverbs 21:23-24

## Clean up Your Act

*For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.*

*1 Peter 3:18*

One of our relatives decided to do something nice for his wife. She worked a full-time job at a large bank, often getting home from work quite late, having little time to tend to the home. So her husband hired a cleaning lady to come to their house on a regular basis and clean so that his wife didn't have to bother with that chore. She could enjoy a clean house without having to do the work.

However, the night before the cleaning lady was to come for the first time, this man's wife stayed up until 2 am cleaning the house. She didn't want to bear the embarrassment of this stranger walking into such a dirty, messy home, so she did most of the work herself, leaving little work for the professional. Doesn't this true story sound ridiculous?!

Yet many people view their spiritual life this way. I have talked with unbelievers about having a personal relationship with Jesus. Often their response is, "I need to clean up my life first before asking Jesus to come into it." What is really being said is, "I am too embarrassed to ask Jesus to forgive me of my 'big sins.' When I quit doing them, perhaps I will consider Jesus." They are trying to do the work themselves that Jesus' death was meant to do.

Even as a Christian, I can fail to come to Jesus regularly asking for forgiveness. My thinking is, "I'll do better next time." Though my sins are forgiven, I forget to accept and enjoy the peace that forgiveness brings. I subconsciously want to clean up my own act before enjoying the total forgiveness of Christ. May we all relish the blessing of God cleaning up our life, so we don't have to.

### Submitted by:

Barbara Wilson  
Grace Community Church  
Raleigh, North Carolina

### One-Year Bible Reading

Job 1:1-3:26  
1 Corinthians 14:1-17  
Psalm 37:12-29  
Proverbs 21:25-26

Friday, August 23

## Submitting

*Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. Ephesians 5:21-22 NIV*

*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her. Ephesians 5:25 NIV*

*Submitting*—such an ugly word in the world's vocabulary, but beautiful in God's. We have Jesus as our example. Jesus, God's one and only Son, the Creator of the Universe, submitted Himself to God the Father and came to earth. He lived a simple life, not luxurious. He worked hard and shared God's love and message to all around Him. Jesus also gave His life. He submitted His life to His Father as far as the cross.

In marriage, both husband and wife need to look to Jesus as their example. Husband, you should submit your marriage and your decisions to God, as Jesus submitted Himself and His decisions to God the Father. You also should love your wife as Jesus loved the church. Does your wife feel loved, special, treasured? Jesus loved the Church so much that He died for it. Husband, you need to not only be willing to die for your wife, but also to live with her in joy and love.

Wives, we need to submit to our husbands as Jesus submitted to His Father—in all willingness. Even when that submission seems to send you down a path you'd rather not go down. Pray and let God work in your husband, trusting God is in control.

Submitting is not easy, nor will it be highly regarded by the world, but it is God's way. Who do you need to submit to today?

### Submitted by:

Shirley Ferguson  
Oakridge Community Church  
Clarksville, Maryland

### One-Year Bible Reading

Job 8:1-11:20  
1 Corinthians 15:1-28  
Psalm 38:1-22  
Proverbs 21:28-29

## Winning the War Waged

*Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. 1 Peter 2:11 NIV*

When we put our faith in Christ, we become God's people and citizens of His kingdom. We no longer pledge our allegiance to this world, but to God. As the verse says, we are now "foreigners and exiles" in *this* world since our citizenship is in heaven. However, we have been raised in this world and are ingrained with the world's ways of thinking and living. Not only that, but we still physically live in this world and are surrounded by people engrossed in the world's ways. What a dilemma! We are citizens of one kingdom and have been raised in and still live in another. No wonder we struggle! There is certainly a war waged against our souls.

To win the war that is being waged we must work and rest. Both are important.

We must work to abstain from sinful desires. We need to strive to make choices to live lives fitting our new citizenship, even while we live in the midst of those living by the worldly-kingdom standards.

In the midst of our struggles we also must rest. Since we have been raised in and are currently living in the worldly kingdom, it is no surprise when we struggle with living as members of God's kingdom. As we wrestle to live well, and fall short, we must rest in our true citizenship. No matter how we act, as believers in Jesus we are now members of God's kingdom. We are His people. Our citizenship is not based on our success at waging the war well. It is just who we are now.

To win the war waged we must rest in who we are and work to live accordingly.

### Submitted by:

Steven L. Nelson  
The Rio Church  
El Paso, Texas

### One-Year Bible Reading

Job 4:1-7:21  
1 Corinthians 14:18-40  
Psalm 37:30-40  
Proverbs 21:27

Saturday, August 24

## Shoe Shopping

*Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart sad? I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again—my Savior and my God! Psalm 42:5-6 NLT*

I was shopping for shoes. I asked Barbara, my wife, to stay with me and be my "fashion consultant." In the midst of my trying on shoes, she received a phone call from her mother. She immediately answered the call and walked away from me to a more private place. At first I was angry. I had asked her to help me, but she walked away. I soon realized she had not sinned against me; she had simply not met my expectations. I set my expectation as a higher standard above God's will and Word. When I confessed my anger, I was able to love Barbara rather than sulk or explode. We all have expectations of ourselves, others, even God. These expectations can be grounded in truth, but if we're not careful, they can go beyond truth. Our expectation can be founded in our idea of how the truth should be played out. This shows our hope is not in God; it is in our expectation of how God should work.

Being *downcast*, *sad*, *discouraged*, *mad* or any other synonym you want to use, indicates that you have placed your hope in something other than the Lord. Jesus reproved the Pharisees as they were holding to *their* idea of obedience to the Scriptures. They put their expectation above what God said.

Has someone not met your expectations? Perhaps, like my wife, she may not have sinned against God or you, but she hasn't met your expectations. Are you being like a Pharisee—setting your expectation in your thoughts of how things *should* play out rather than holding to what God actually says?

We all have unmet expectations and disappointments, but we need to remember to deal with the Pharisee in us and put our hope in God.

### Submitted by:

Berk Wilson  
Grace Community Church  
Raleigh, North Carolina

### One-Year Bible Reading

Job 12:1-15:35  
1 Corinthians 15:29-58  
Psalm 39:1-13  
Proverbs 21:30-31

## The Birds

*But the beast was taken prisoner, and along with him the false prophet, who had performed the signs in his presence. He deceived those who accepted the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image with these signs. Both of them were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. The rest were killed with the sword that came from the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh. Revelation 19:20-21 HCSB*

Our small group did a study called "Creation to Christ." We started in Genesis with the story of creation. In my personal quiet time I was reading through Revelation. In the story of creation, God has an order to creation. He creates heaven, then earth, then the seas, the land, the animals, and then man. Everything was created in God's perfect order.

As I read the order in the creation story, I decided to document in my personal quiet time when God's creation was affected in the last days. The sun, the moon, the seas, and all else had a time in the last days when they ceased to be as they were created. As I was nearing the end of Revelation, I realized I had everything documented except the birds. Did God do something to the birds but I missed it?

When I got to Revelation 19:20-21, I rejoiced. It's not that I'm sadistic, and I enjoy the birds eating flesh, but I was excited to see that God's order prevails. Nothing happens to the birds because He has one last task for them to accomplish. He needs them to eat the flesh of those left behind after the final battle.

God has an order and a plan for everything. We may not understand it, but He is faithful to create and take away in His timing and for our benefit.

### Submitted by:

Barbara Wilson  
Grace Community Church  
Raleigh, North Carolina

### One-Year Bible Reading

Job 16:1-19:29  
1 Corinthians 16:1-24  
Psalm 40:1-10  
Proverbs 22:1

Tuesday, August 27

## The Stance of Grace – 2

*Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him. Colossians 2:6 ESV*

My experience of a brand of socks called Stance has even changed what I desire. My wife asks what I want for Christmas and my birthday. I basically say, "From now on, I will always be satisfied with a pair of Stance socks." I would forfeit receiving other gifts if it meant I could have Stance socks. I would save up to get the treasure that is Stance socks. I now have enough pairs of socks to wear a different one each day of the week! The more I experience it, the more I desire it. I wake up looking forward to putting on those socks.

I want to tell anyone I can about Stance socks and how they have impacted my life; my life has been transformed. Because they have made such a difference in my life, I want to tell everyone the good news.

Okay, I know that all sounded a little bit ridiculous because they're *only* socks (and I'm *only* slightly kidding). But what I'm trying to illustrate is what we experience when we walk in grace. When we encounter the freely given, unmerited favor and love of God, our life is changed by it. When we see it and receive it, we come to fully know our desperate dependence on it. We want more of it, and we don't want to step outside of it. The best part is that, unlike socks, we don't have to buy grace—it is a free gift! (See Ephesians 2:8-9).

*"Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word" (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17; Bold added). That's the best stance we could ask for! We will have days when we fail, and we may try walking outside of grace. But, through His grace, the Lord again gives us that amazing hug and brings us back to what is best for us.*

### Submitted by:

Caleb Yetton  
The Rock Church  
Draper, Utah

### One-Year Bible Reading

Job 23:1-27:23  
2 Corinthians 1:12-2:11  
Psalm 41:1-13  
Proverbs 22:5-6

## The Stance of Grace

*The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin. Exodus 34:6-7a*

During the past year, I've come to know that *grace* is a lot like an amazing pair of socks (from a company called Stance). If you have ever worn Stance socks, you know what I am talking about!

For years, I had heard about this particular brand of socks. A few people told me they were the most comfortable socks they had ever owned. Not only that, but they had all sorts of cool designs. I had seen them here and there and even checked out their website; I never bought a pair. Well, everything changed last year.

While at work one day, I realized that I had a big hole in one of my socks. I knew this was going to bother me the rest of the day and that I'd probably get a blister. I decided I would run to the outlet stores on my lunch break and actually buy a pair of Stance socks. I was finally going to see what the hype was all about! I bought a fun pair with great white sharks on them.

From the moment I put the socks on, my feet experienced the *best* hug of my entire life! For the first time, I experienced *true* socks. I suddenly realized that I had been searching for something I didn't even know I was missing. I had been trying to fill my life with socks that would never satisfy—socks that would quickly get holes and wear out, socks that would hurt my feet. On that day, my sock life was transformed. Because I'd experienced what it could be like to be in Stance socks, I didn't want to walk outside of Stance anymore.

Do you see the spiritual analogy here? Check in tomorrow to see if you are right.

### Submitted by:

Caleb Yetton  
The Rock Church  
Draper, Utah

### One-Year Bible Reading

Job 20:1-22:30  
2 Corinthians 1:1-11  
Psalm 40:11-17  
Proverbs 22:2-4

Wednesday, August 28

## Snorkeling and Abiding

*Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. John 14:23 ESV*

Last April I jumped out of a boat into the Mediterranean Sea with flippers and a snorkeling mask, wanting to try something new and to see God's underwater handiwork. Getting my mask sealed from water seeping in proved harder than I thought, until the instructor finally gave me a new mask at our third snorkeling spot. As a newbie, I also found I had to learn how to breathe naturally through my snorkel without letting water into my mouth or clenching my teeth too hard on the mouthpiece. When I got the mask sealed and my breathing regulated, I could deeply enjoy the sea grass, fish, shipwreck, and green and aqua colors. I could avoid the jelly fish and swim fast with those awesome flippers as we went through a tunnel or along a cliff wall.

But I had to get my breathing and vision figured out before I could enter fully into the visual treat. Being led by the Spirit is similar. As a believer, I'm invited to enter into a life of abiding in the Spirit. The Lord promised us in John 14 He would come live and make His home in us. He said, "Abide in me, and I in you" (John 15:4 ESV). However, figuring out how to live aware and surrendered to His Spirit can feel like an evasive goal!

Like my underwater sea adventure, the Christian journey of seeking first the kingdom of heaven often offers glimpses of another world of wonder and beauty. How much I desire not to gasp, sputter, and spit out water spiritually by ignoring or resisting the Spirit. How much joy and peace comes with being at home in the Spirit, listening to Him, reading His Word. I want to use all my faculties to speak to Jesus and enjoy being "at home" with Him, breathing in and out with Him. Like snorkeling, it takes some practice. But, like snorkeling, the joy is worth the effort.

### Submitted by:

Amy Cato  
Coram Deo Ministries  
Brasov, Romania

### One-Year Bible Reading

Job 28:1-30:31  
2 Corinthians 2:12-17  
Psalm 42:1-11  
Proverbs 22:7

## The Great Relief and Satisfaction of Jesus' Resurrection!

*For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. 1 Corinthians 15:16-17*

When you receive your degree after completing college courses, there is a great sense of both relief and satisfaction. When the bank sends you a letter confirming you have made that final mortgage payment on your house, you experience great relief that you owe nothing more and great satisfaction that your home is now truly your own!

In far greater measure, the resurrection of Jesus Christ provides the believer with relief and satisfaction. Because of Jesus' resurrection, the believer knows with utter certainty that God is fully satisfied with the suffering and death of Jesus, in our place, as the full and complete payment for our sin. If Christ were still in the grave, we could not be certain that God's holy and just wrath against sin had been satisfied. The resurrection gives believers the relief of knowing our sins are completely and eternally forgiven and the satisfaction that we are forever reconciled to God.

If a robber were apprehended and sentenced to five years in jail for his crime and the warden showed up five years later, declaring his debt paid, then he would also unlock the cell door and let the man go free. Similarly, the opening of the grave of Christ and His coming forth alive tell us that God the Just is satisfied. All who put their faith in Christ to save us through His death in our place go free. Romans 4:25 tells us: "He was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification."

May I say to you that the resurrection of Jesus Christ will only have great significance to you, producing both relief and satisfaction, if you have first owned your utter rebellion against God and the judgment you deserve for your sin? You can only delight in your rescue if you have first owned your peril and cried out to the One who alone can save!

### Submitted by:

David Brandts  
New Life Church  
Cincinnati, Ohio

### One-Year Bible Reading

Job 31:1-33:33  
2 Corinthians 3:1-18  
Psalm 43:1-5  
Proverbs 22:8-9

Saturday, August 31

## Fitbit

*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing. 2 Timothy 4:7-8*

Getting a Fitbit changed my whole attitude to walking around. The Fitbit is a pedometer which keeps track of my steps and converts them into how many miles I walk a day. It then reports back to me through a hookup with our computer my record for a week at a time. I walk nowhere near as much as my husband John, a veteran walker, who combines an outside walk with his prayer life. But now I am always thankful to walk. I remember last year walking across the entire length of an elementary school before Good News Club with a boy who had left a paper in his classroom. I explained to him it was no problem for me, as my steps were being recorded. Formerly I may have been frustrated at the time loss, but now I was getting "credit" for my trip!

God has built something into us humans that longs for recognition, getting attention or credit, receiving reward. Not only has He built that into us, but He assures us that as we obey Him, we *will* be rewarded. The humble will be exalted, Jesus told us (Matthew 23:12). "But whoever would be great among you must be your servant" (Mark 10:43 ESV). I confess that I do want to be great in God's sight—so I am motivated to serve. The deep desires of our heart are met as we obey and serve God.

However, lately I've been wondering, *is the promise of reward just our training ground to grow into love?* Yes, the rewards are real with God, but perhaps His plan is that we will learn to serve out of love for the other person even more than for the reward. Isn't love the end goal? And then we will throw all our "crowns" at the feet of Christ in heaven (Revelation 4:10)—because we love Him!

### Submitted by:

Dotty Vanderhorst  
Cornerstone Community Church  
Lenexa, Kansas

### One-Year Bible Reading

Job 37:1-39:30  
2 Corinthians 4:13-5:10  
Psalm 44:9-26  
Proverbs 22:13

## Finish Well

*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me but also to all who have loved His appearing. 2 Timothy 4:7-8*

My son ran cross-country his senior year. It's a grueling race to watch, let alone run! It starts with a mass of runners all taking off at the same time on level ground. They pace themselves because they know the course and need to reserve energy for the steep inclines. Parents and coaches run ahead to these points of difficulty to encourage them. The mass has now thinned out to a single file with many yards between runners; the finish line is far out of view. The observers line the way to the finish line, cheering till the last runner crosses it! Some might be 15 minutes after the first runner. Some might be limping across the line. Some might be vomiting all the way to the end point. But they crossed the line, nevertheless. They finished the course!

During this season my friend, Gayle Honeycutt, was diagnosed with a rare terminal cancer. She would soon be "finishing her course." She told me: "I have the golden ticket! I'm going to see Jesus! . . . What has been by faith will soon be sight for me!" She was almost giddy, though at the same time somber. Gayle fought the good fight of faith and finished her course before a "cloud of witnesses." I was one of them.

No matter what trials you are facing today, let me encourage you with the words to this old hymn:

*It will be worth it all when we see Jesus;  
Life's trials will seem so small when we see Christ.  
One glimpse of His dear face, all sorrow will erase;  
So bravely run the race till we see Christ.*

A crown of righteousness is awaiting you!

### Submitted by:

Terry Putthoff  
Open Range Fellowship  
Lone Jack, Missouri

### One-Year Bible Reading

Job 34:1-36:33  
2 Corinthians 4:1-12  
Psalm 44:1-8  
Proverbs 22:10-12