

Hard Work and Time

*I passed by the field of a sluggard, by the vineyard of a man lacking sense, and behold, it was all overgrown with thorns; the ground was covered with nettles, and its stone wall was broken down. Then I saw and considered it; I looked and received instruction. A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.*

Proverbs 24:30-34 ESV

A few summers ago my family and I stayed with one of my wife’s relatives on an Ohio farm, a large farm at over one hundred acres. Early one morning the kids were playing; the farmer asked if we wanted to take a tractor ride while he fertilized the crops. When it came time, I talked to the farmer about how long he’d already been out in his field that day and how much work goes into farming a lucrative crop. Clearly the success of the farm was proportional to the time and work put into it.

How can we apply this to our lives? I’m not a farmer, and neither are most of you. So let’s start with thinking about something we want to be successful in. A healthy, loving relationship with your husband or wife? Raising your kids to be godly men and women? Sharing the gospel? Consider the opening verses from Proverbs 24:30-34. An unwavering faith in God doesn’t just happen. It takes time to read His Word, time to pray.

Over time we get to see God’s work in our lives, and that strengthens our faith. A strong, healthy marriage doesn’t just happen, it takes a lot of work and nurturing: spending time together, communicating with one another, trusting and loving and submitting to one another. Do you want to raise godly children? Your kids need relationship from you—now! They need you to teach them about God’s Word, to love and spend time with them, to teach them right from wrong, and to lovingly discipline them.

All of this takes hard work and a lot of time. Let’s not be sluggards about the things that are important to us!

Submitted by:

Billy Johnson

The Rock Church

Draper, Utah

One-Year Bible Reading

2 Kings 18:13-19:37

Acts 21:1-17

Psalm 149:1-9

Proverbs 18:8

The Principle of Planting Seeds

*Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.* John 12:24 NIV

In 2004, a college student came up with the idea of stealing a book of Audubon’s bird illustrations from his school library. It was worth 12 million dollars. He enlisted the help of other students by appealing to their desire to make a splash with their lives. In the documentary *American Animals*, he said to them, “Did you ever feel like you’re waiting for something to happen, but you don’t know what it is—that thing that could make your life special?” Ultimately, they joined his plot because they didn’t just want to live ordinary lives.

Although I don’t agree with the path these young men took, I can relate to their longing to do something great with their lives. That desire in us may lead to self-serving activities, but God can also appeal to our aspirations in a healthy way. When Jesus called the fishermen, he said, “Come follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” I can’t imagine that they had any idea what he meant, other than that being a fisher of men certainly sounded more important than that being a fisher of fish. Jesus was appealing to their desire to do something big!

If we understand the principle of planting seeds, it will allow us to do great things with our lives. It is not when we aspire to greatness that we accomplish much; rather, when we die to ourselves through loving, serving, and living for Jesus, our lives are multiplied. A seed is just a seed. But a seed that is planted becomes something hundreds or thousands of times greater. The principle of planting seeds leads to our lives having significant impact!

Submitted by:

Steven L. Nelson

The Rio Church

El Paso, Texas

One-Year Bible Reading

2 Kings 20:1-22:2

Acts 21:18-36

Psalm 150:1-6

Proverbs 18:9-10

The Principle of Planting Seeds – 2

*When you put a seed into the ground, it doesn’t grow into a plant unless it dies first.* 1 Corinthians 15:36b NLT

Some seeds are so cool! Think about the dandelion seeds that come equipped with their own parachute, or the maple seeds that fall in a whirl-ybird motion. One of my favorites is acorns. They are the kind of cool that if a little boy finds some acorns under an oak tree, he will irresistibly start stuffing his pockets.

Suppose someone went to plant a little acorn in the ground. Imagine if it could cry out, “Stop! Don’t kill me. Look at how awesome I am! I’m a nice shade of brown. You can spin me on a table. I even have a perfect little hat!”

Even if the acorn were the coolest, biggest, or most unique acorn around, it still wouldn’t be as valuable out of the ground as in the ground. When it gets buried, it dies to what it was and sprouts into something quite different—an oak tree. In a bumper crop year, one oak tree can produce 10,000 acorns. Over the tree’s lifetime perhaps you could plant 50,000 oak trees from its acorns. From those trees, you could make furniture, homes, and ships. You could sit in their shade, build fires, or stuff your pockets to your heart’s delight. However, if the acorn’s life is spared, it remains just an acorn.

Every day, when we make choices to die to ourselves, we are planting seeds. Many of our actions seem unglamorous—being kind, compassionate, or patient—but they plant seeds. Like sprouting seeds, these actions of dying to ourselves produce a crop of unfathomable impact. Our lives have the greatest impact when given, not preserved.

Submitted by:

Steven L. Nelson

The Rio Church

El Paso, Texas

One-Year Bible Reading

2 Kings 22:3-23:30

Acts 21:37-22:16

Psalm 1:1-6

Proverbs 18:11-12

United We Stand

*And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart.* Ecclesiastes 4:12

*I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.* 1 Corinthians 1:10 ESV

*And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.* Colossians 3:14 ESV

The often used phrase, “United we stand, divided we fall,” is partially derived from Aesop’s short fable of a man whose sons often quarrel among themselves. He asks them to break a bundle of sticks. As expected, the brothers cannot break the sticks when they are bundled together. However, they can easily be broken individually. The moral of this story is given as: “My sons, if you are of one mind, and unite to assist each other, you will be as this bundle, uninjured by all the attempts of your enemies; but if you are divided among yourselves, you will be broken as easily as these sticks.”

Satan’s best strategy is the divide-and-conquer method. He is using it right now on our nation and in churches around the world. Recognize and resist the urge to run away and lick your wounds. We could have much to argue and be disunited about from politics to policies. We should not, however, set up camps and ready ourselves for battle within our own nation or within our own church or with other churches in our community.

**We need to stand against our one enemy.**

We still have a job to do and that is to reach the world with the gospel as the Lord commanded in Matthew 28:19-20. We must put aside our personal biases and our opinions about things we cannot change, stay in formation, and win this world for Christ—united, together, and in all the love of our Lord.

Submitted by:

Greg Standing

Glen Arbor Community Church

West Chicago, Illinois

One-Year Bible Reading

2 Kings 23:31-25:30

Acts 22:17-23:10

Psalm 2:1-12

Proverbs 18:13

Brotherly Offense

Therefore, if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering. *Matthew 5:23-24*

Some people feel that this verse only applies to those who know someone has something against them and not if you have something against someone. But you need to keep in mind that this verse is part of the Sermon on the Mount. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus consistently goes one step further than what is usually done. For example, in Matthew 5:27-28 He says, “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery;’ but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” Jesus compares lust with adultery. Most people agree that adultery is wrong. But comparing adultery to lust is mind-blowing. Jesus has taken the common understanding and pushed it further.

So too it is right that if you have something against someone, then you need to go to that person. This is the common teaching, what everyone knows to do. In Matthew 5:23-24, however, Jesus takes this a step further. He says not only if you have something against someone should you talk to that person, but also if you know someone has something against you, you should talk to the offended one.

If we would follow this rule of Jesus, how much more unity and peace would we have in our churches? Search your heart: are you holding something against someone, or vice versa? If so, go speak to that person, forgive, and then you can freely worship God.

Submitted by: Shirley Ferguson  
Oakridge Community Church  
Clarksville, Maryland

One-Year Bible Reading  
1 Chronicles 1:1-2:17  
Acts 23:11-35  
Psalm 3:1-8  
Proverbs 18:14-15

Sunday, July 7

1440

Whatever you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. *1 Corinthians 10:31 NLT*

Recently I was with my friend Sandy Hopler telling her about a phrase that had been influencing my life. She commented that it sounded like the making of a good *Faithwalkers Journal* entry . . . so here we are!

I was listening to an interview with Ohio State University basketball coach, Chris Holtman, who is a man of strong faith. He said that he lived by this motto: *Do today well*. It sounds so simple, yet it is so impactful. Often I try to come up with major goals for my life, and just as often they end up overwhelming me. But this was something I felt that I could do.

Instead of focusing on big aspirations, I have narrowed my goal down to living each day in a way that brings glory to God. I begin every morning asking God, “How can I live today well?” Then I spend some quiet moments listening and jotting down in my journal the things God brings to mind.

*Doing today well* looks different every day. It might start with choosing fruit and oatmeal for breakfast instead of cheesecake or leftover pizza as I endeavor to honor the body God gave me. It could include writing an encouraging note to someone, being patient in traffic, not gossiping at work, faithfully caring for my home, humbly asking for forgiveness. Whatever it may be, this thought gives me purpose and inspires me to use each hour of my day in a way that makes my life a blessing.

Each of us are given 1440 precious minutes in a day that are filled with endless possibilities. What might God prompt you to do if you ask Him how to do today well?

Submitted by: Kelly Lewis  
Grace Point Community Church  
Lewis Center, Ohio

One-Year Bible Reading  
1 Chronicles 4:5-5:17  
Acts 25:1-27  
Psalm 5:1-12  
Proverbs 18:19

His Banner

. . . being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. *Ephesians 4:3-6*

I originally came to Chicago in 1988 as I was asked to move with a group of fellow believers and reach the Chicagoland area for Christ. A few years later I was asked again to go on another church plant. The person asking was a dear friend, and I wanted to be where he was. It was an exciting prospect; it should have been a no-brainer. I said no.

This surprised and shocked several who assumed I would be going with them. The reason I gave was simple: God was not done with Chicago yet. There were people I had begun to build into that, I felt, still needed me. I had come to Chicago to reach it and I felt the Lord wanted me to stay. It would have been emotionally easier to go, but I knew I needed to stay.

Why was this harder still? I did not always get along with the leadership but I knew that they were following my Savior and King and Lord where we were at. Thus, I took the harder road to follow the banner of Jesus and am so grateful I did. The church plant I was invited to go on collapsed in less than a year and in doing so dispersed the people and resources that had been developed. If I had gone with them, I don’t know where I would be today.

The mistake I could have made was to take my eyes off the banner of Jesus and place it on other allegiances such as my natural friendships. We may subscribe to a YouTube channel or a commentator that tickles our opinions, but fail to obey our Commander in favor of the idols of the day or our own ambitions or desires. Let us pursue His banner as He commands in our one Lord and get behind Him who commissioned us.

Submitted by: Greg Standing  
Glen Arbor Community Church  
West Chicago, Illinois

One-Year Bible Reading  
1 Chronicles 2:18-4:4  
Acts 24:1-27  
Psalm 4:1-8  
Proverbs 18:16-18

Monday, July 8

Be Kind

Your kindness will reward you, but your cruelty will destroy you. *Proverbs 11:17 NLT*

As we as a church practiced reading daily through Proverbs, one verse that stuck out to me was the one above. Such a simple but such an impactful verse to obey! Being kind will reward you. Being cruel will destroy you. This can apply to our thoughts, our actions, and our words.

When we are thinking kind thoughts, when we are thinking the best about people, our attitude is completely different during the course of our day. How we interact with people and what we think about them is affected by positive thoughts. The opposite happens when we think cruel thoughts; they eat at us and lead to destructive thinking.

What about our actions? Do we put other people first? Are we serving others? When we take the focus off ourselves, we can show kindness!

Finally, we need to use the right words. Are we building into people with kindness? Or are we tearing them down with bitter words?

When we use a verse like this to filter our day, we can easily see that being kind can bring us life. If we are cruel, it will destroy us.

This week I have two challenges for you. The first is to faithfully read the daily chapter of Proverbs (if it’s the ninth day of the month, read the ninth chapter, and so on), and apply one verse from that chapter to your life. The second is to seek out ways to be kind to someone! Call a friend who is having a rough time—give him or her a word of encouragement. Send a text message to a person you are super thankful for. Buy the drink for the person behind you at Starbucks. Smile at the person who is your checker at the grocery store. Try asking her how she is doing and thank her for helping you!

Submitted by: Tony D’Amico  
The Rock Church  
Draper, Utah

One-Year Bible Reading  
1 Chronicles 5:18-6:81  
Acts 26:1-32  
Psalm 6:1-10  
Proverbs 18:20-21

Do Not Lose Heart

*Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. Galatians 6:9*

When I watch the news or see comments on Twitter and Facebook, I often grow weary of what appears to be the “dark side” winning. Why post anything positive just to be shot down? Will anyone really be affected by it?

When a Christian speaks up on such things as abortion, prayer, or moral issues according to God’s standard in the public domain, grounds for ridicule are fertile. Truths are misconstrued to make a person look backward or foolish.

Be encouraged! “God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise” (1 Corinthians 1:27).

Remember Noah building a huge boat for 120 years, warning people of judgment. Remember Moses stuttering time after time: “Let my people go!” Remember David before Goliath yelling: “You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel.” And even Lot was not taken seriously when he begged his family to leave Sodom: “‘Get up, get out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city!’ But to his sons-in-law he seemed to be joking” (Genesis 19:14). We know the outcomes for those who acted in obedient faith and those who scorned.

Justice Scalia once said: “Have the courage to have your wisdom regarded as stupidity. Be fools for Christ. And have the courage to suffer the contempt of the sophisticated world.”

And Richard De Haan encourages us: “So, let’s keep working to lead people to the safety that can be found in Christ alone. They may ridicule our message, but that doesn’t change the fact that they need Jesus.”

Submitted by: Terry Putthoff  
Open Range Fellowship  
Lone Jack, Missouri

One-Year Bible Reading  
1 Chronicles 7:1-8:40  
Acts 27:1-20  
Psalm 7:1-17  
Proverbs 18:22

Thursday, July 11

You Need to Say Something

*He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.” Mark 16:15 NIV*

Recently I went with other pastors to a pastors’ conference. We heard from many amazing preachers who came together to teach on one central theme—evangelism. We were charged and reminded why we should never neglect the incredible power there is in telling others about Jesus. There are so many reasons why we **must** be people who share our faith.

*Sharing our faith is evidence of our faith.* When we speak to unbelievers about Jesus, we are proclaiming that Jesus is a real and personal God. One who is mighty to save. To share our faith is to verbally express that we believe God can change people’s lives (just like He has changed ours).

*Sharing our faith demonstrates love and compassion.* The world is lost and in darkness. It will be lost forever if people don’t believe the Good News that Jesus has come to rescue sinners. No matter the cultural tension, hostile environments, or religious barriers of His day, Jesus pursued every person He interacted with. Because of His great love, there was no barrier that He would not cross to seek and save the lost. Likewise, we must be known to demonstrate this same love for the lost.

*Sharing our faith proclaims God’s mercy and offers His hope!* Without hearing and believing the Gospel, our lost friends and family have no hope. To really think about that should make all our hearts sink. Yet Jesus is able and willing to save people as sinful as us; He has done the unthinkable in order to do so. How could we **not** want to tell **everybody** about such a great Savior? To quote a famous atheist, “How much do you have to hate someone to not share your faith with them?”

My friends, you and I need to say something! God has called us to be a part of the most incredible mission in the world.

Submitted by: Bryan D. Edwards  
The Rock Church  
Draper, Utah

One-Year Bible Reading  
1 Chronicles 11:1-12:18  
Acts 28:1-31  
Psalm 9:1-12  
Proverbs 19:1-3

Silence Before the Majesty of God

*When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. Revelation 8:1 ESV*

Imagine someone who knew little about music going on and on in criticism of Johann Bach after a concert. Imagine someone who knew little about basketball going on and on telling Michael Jordan how to play the game. Imagine a person who knew little about physics taking over a lecture by Albert Einstein. Yet is this not what we do with Almighty God?

We dare to judge God the Eternal, Absolute King for His decrees. We dare to judge the All-Wise God for His decisions. We dare to question the goodness of the God who has continually demonstrated His grace to all mankind, the apex of which is sending His Son to suffer and die in our place in order to save all sinners who will believe in Him.

When Job declared his own righteousness before God and demanded answers from God for his suffering in Job 29-31, God responded in Job 38-41 by pointing out the great differences between Himself and Job; yet He stopped short of answering Job’s demand “Why?” In the midst of God revealing the glory of His absolute power, wisdom, and control demonstrated in creation, Job sees his own foolishness. Finally he states, “Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer you? I lay my hand on my mouth. I have spoken once, and I will not answer; twice, but I will proceed no further!” (Job 40:4-5 ESV).

In the face of seeing the glory of God, Job goes silent in reverential awe of Almighty God! Habakkuk states: “The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him” (Habakkuk 2:20 ESV). We know we have glimpsed the glory of God when our arguments with and criticism of God cease, and we stand silent before Him in awe and reverence, desiring only to gaze upon Jesus Christ.

Submitted by: David Brandts  
New Life Church  
Cincinnati, Ohio

One-Year Bible Reading  
1 Chronicles 9:1-10:14  
Acts 27:21-44  
Psalm 8:1-9  
Proverbs 18:23-24

Shout It!

*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Matthew 28:19*

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witness both in Jerusalem, and in Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth. Acts 1:8*

The chorus to “All the Poor and Powerless” keeps going through my head: “Shout it, go on and scream it from the mountains. Go on and tell it to the masses, that He is God.” When I hear and sing the chorus, my insides want to push out, my voice wants to yell, “He is God!” I want all the world to know, His Light to shine bright for all to see. Then the song ends, my quiet time is over, my day begins.

God, I want that overwhelming desire to share You with me all the time. Instead of closing my mouth when opportunity arises, I want to open wide and let Your words pour forth. I want my life to scream, “You are God” to the world around me. I don’t want it to be just a nice thought, catchy music, wishful thinking—I want this desire to be my life. I want to see the world through Your eyes; I want the strength and wisdom to share Your love with those around me. Place people in my life that I can reach out and touch with Your hands, Your voice, Your truth, Your love. Lead me to Your harvest and, Lord, let it be a great one. Let me shout it from the mountains, “You are God.”

Submitted by: Shirley Ferguson  
Oakridge Community Church  
Clarksville, Maryland

One-Year Bible Reading  
1 Chronicles 12:19-14:17  
Romans 1:1-17  
Psalm 9:13-20  
Proverbs 19:4-5

The Innocent for the Guilty

He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, for whom they asked, but he delivered Jesus over to their will. Luke 23:25 ESV

The context of today’s verse is Jesus’ trial before His crucifixion and death during the Jews’ Passover feast. Pilate continued a tradition where during the feast he would release a prisoner from custody.

What a clear picture of the gospel! This man, whom we know to be Barabbas, was a bad lot: he led an insurrection (a riot), and he killed at least one person, maybe others. He was the kind of fellow one would see walking down the street and cross over to avoid!

The crowd, blinded by unbelief and the lies of the Jewish leadership council, called for Barabbas to be released and Jesus condemned. “Crucify Him, crucify Him” was the cry of the crowd. The innocent condemned; the guilty freed. Wait, *that’s me*, the guilty set free by the innocent!

Paul, a couple decades later wrote to the Corinthians, “*For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God*” (2 Corinthians 5:21 ESV). How marvelous! Is anyone’s sin too great? Is anyone too far gone? Is God’s arm too short to save even the worst?

The release of the riotous, murderous prisoner shows us **anyone** can be released from God’s judgment on God’s terms—that Jesus takes the guilt of the guilty and replaces it with the righteousness of the Righteous One.

So, don’t stop praying for that child, that neighbor, that co-worker, that friend, who is so far from God. Barabbas went free and so can they.

Submitted by:  
Ed Russ  
Grace Community Church  
Raleigh, North Carolina

One-Year Bible Reading  
1 Chronicles 15:1-16:36  
Romans 1:18-32  
Psalm 10:1-15  
Proverbs 19:6-7

Gentleman Jesus

Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region. As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. Mark 5:17-18

Yesterday we talked about Legion, the Decapolis ex-demoniac who became an ambassador for Jesus. Because of the bewildering events that had occurred, people were alarmed and, as we see in the verse above, begged Jesus to leave their district.

What was Jesus’ response to their strong pleas? Rather than over-riding, debating, or ignoring their request, Jesus obliged them. He got into the boat and, after giving final encouragement and farewell to His new convert, He left. Jesus gave the people distance and space.

Jesus is a gentleman. He does not force His way into people’s lives or try to twist their arms to follow Him. He draws near to those who draw near to Him; to those who reject Him, He gives space and time.

This was true for my husband. As a teenager, Dave wanted freedom to do what he wanted. One day, while experiencing much guilt over some of his recent behavior, Dave told God in no uncertain terms to get out of his life. At once, the guilt disappeared! He went his way, dipping deeper into sinful habits until sickness took him out of college and laid him up in bed.

It was during this low time that Dave started rethinking his decision to exclude God from his life. He began reading the Bible and attending Bible studies. Soon after this, repented of his pride and invited Jesus to be his Savior.

Jesus’ “space” extended to Dave allowed him to see the reality of his hopeless state and led him to faith in the One who “got in the boat,” left, and then later returned!

Submitted by:  
Dawn Bovenmyer  
Stonebrook Community Church  
Ames, Iowa

One-Year Bible Reading  
1 Chronicles 19:1-21:30  
Romans 2:25-3:8  
Psalm 11:1-7  
Proverbs 19:10-12

Decapolis Doors

Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and went through Sidon, down to the Sea of Galilee and into the region of Decapolis. Mark 7:31 NIV

Wait a minute! Does this verse say Decapolis? Isn’t that where Jesus visited earlier and encountered “Legion”? Legion had been a bad dude, a tortured demoniac who lived in the tombs away from society. No one could help him or subdue him. But then Jesus came along and in one short encounter drove the demons from this man into a herd of two thousand pigs and restored him to his right mind.

You would think the locals would be ecstatic to be rid of the problem of Legion. Instead they were terrified. Who was this who had such power that He commanded demons, subdued a wild man, and seemingly instigated a pig stampede into the sea?

They begged Jesus to leave and leave He did, but not before He instructed the transformed man to go home in the region of Decapolis and tell others about all that the Lord had done for him (Mark 5:19-20).

People didn’t know what to do with Jesus at His first visit, but now upon His second we see Him welcomed, healing a deaf man, and leading people to conclude, “He has done everything well.” What caused the difference?

It appears that “Legion the ambassador” had been doing his assignment. His convincing testimony and changed life opened the door for Jesus to return, be received, and to minister to the people of that province. They were now “open” to Jesus.

Just as with this transformed Decapolis ambassador, Jesus uses the testimonies of His people today to open doors for Him. May we be ones eagerly sharing what He has done for us! As we do, we pave the way for Jesus to come and do His work.

Submitted by:  
Dawn Bovenmyer  
Stonebrook Community Church  
Ames, Iowa

One-Year Bible Reading  
1 Chronicles 16:37-18:17  
Romans 2:1-24  
Psalm 10:16-18  
Proverbs 19:8-9

Have You Seen God?

Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you know Me, you will also know My Father. From now on you do know Him and have seen Him.” John 14:6-7 HCSB

Many have argued that John 14:6 binds the gospel of John together as the coherent, uniting main point. Multiple themes converge in the famous “I am” statement. However, I believe the content of this “I am” statement is not the most intriguing thing Jesus says, but rather his next words: “If you know Me, you will also know My Father. From now on you do know Him and have seen Him” (verse 7). A clear vision of the Father is being offered by Jesus to His disciples and to us. Jesus says that He is going to the Father, and the disciples have seen the Father.

One thing is important to understand: the disciples still do not get it. Thomas asks, “Lord, how can we know the way?” Philip queries, “Lord, show us the Father and that’s enough for us.”

The response from Jesus is very direct: “If you know me and if you have seen me, then you know the way and you have seen the Father.” Jesus goes on to share that the disciples have witnessed both the works and words of Jesus, and as a result they know the way to God and have seen God. In fact, the Son’s entire purpose is to reveal the Father so the Father may be glorified in the Son.

So John reveals that we have seen God by seeing Jesus. The four gospels allow us to see Jesus, His words, and works so that we may see God. Belief in Jesus allows us to pray; answered prayer allows the Father to receive much glory in the Son. The distinct persons of the Triune God serve in roles that bring glory to one another—they are not self-seeking.

Take a few moments to examine the Jesus you know. He reveals the Father. What can you pray for that will glorify the Father and the Son?

Submitted by:  
Andrew D. Roberts  
Awaken Church  
Jacksonville, Florida

One-Year Bible Reading  
1 Chronicles 22:1-23:32  
Romans 3:9-31  
Psalm 12:1-8  
Proverbs 19:13-14

Get Back on the Horse

*Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus. Romans 15:5*

On September 1<sup>st</sup> I spent part of the morning watching on TV the memorial service at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., for Senator John McCain. Although eloquent speeches were made by his friends, Democrat Joe Lieberman and former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, as well as presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama, I was especially moved by his daughter Meghan’s eulogy to her father.

Meghan felt, understandably, that her father’s true greatness was not shown mainly in the five and a half years he spent as prisoner of the North Viet Nam regime in Hanoi, or as son and grandson of Navy admirals, sailor, aviator, husband, U.S. representative, U.S. senator, or twice as candidate for president, but as father. Meghan told one story about her dad that was remarkable. She had been learning to ride. In the course of that, she fell off the horse and broke her collarbone. She explained how her dad took her to the doctor and “got me all fixed up” and then drove her home again. At that point one might assume he would put her to bed. Quite the opposite! John McCain took his daughter back out to the scene of the accident. “Get back on the horse,” he told her.

Meghan said that now as a woman she appreciates her father doing that. As a girl she resented it. But it was a matter of obedience, and she got back on the horse and overcame her fear of falling.

Our God is many things to us: Creator, Almighty Ruler of the universe, Judge, King, Priest, Eternally Existing One, Savior. But Jesus taught us primarily to call upon Him as Father. His true nature is love. And as a loving Father, He always calls on us to persevere, not to give into fear or despair. He says to us every day, “Get back on the horse.”

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| <b>Submitted by:</b>         | <b>One-Year Bible Reading</b> |
| Dotty Vanderhorst            | 1 Chronicles 24:1-26:11       |
| Cornerstone Community Church | Romans 4:1-12                 |
| Lenexa, Kansas               | Psalm 13:1-6                  |
|                              | Proverbs 19:15-16             |

Triune Revelation

*And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever. He is the Spirit of truth. John 14:16-17 HCSB*  
*But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit—the Father will send Him in My name—will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told you. John 14:2 HCSB*

In these verses Jesus shares three powerful truths: He asks the Father, showing that He Himself is one who prays. He states that the Father “will give you another Counselor . . . forever,” here implying there is a previous counselor, Himself. And He identifies the Counselor as “the Spirit of truth.” This reveals the Counselor will be a teacher, and primarily a teacher of the words of Christ (He is also sent in the name of Christ).

These truths will remain hidden without obedience to Christ’s commands, we learn from the wider passage. Also, Christ’s commands are only obeyed by the one who loves Jesus: “If you love Me, you will keep My commands” (John 14:15 HCSB). Because Jesus is the door, the way, and the cornerstone, we love Him and begin to obey Him through believing in Him as Lord.

One of the most fascinating things about the Spirit of Truth is His name—*Paracletos*—which can be translated as either Helper or Counselor or Comforter. Legal imagery of a courtroom springs to mind, but when the gavel descends and the verdict is given, the counselor does not leave our side. He reminds us again of the evidence of our innocence, which is the covenant obedience both in words and works of Jesus. The Spirit of truth is an ongoing attorney testifying to us the verdict of *our* innocence.

Spend several minutes recreating the scene of a courtroom in your mind. Who stands against you? What is their evidence? Who witnesses for you? What is His evidence? Who is your Attorney? Who is the Judge? What is the verdict?

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| <b>Submitted by:</b>  | <b>One-Year Bible Reading</b> |
| Andrew D. Roberts     | 1 Chronicles 28:1-29:30       |
| Awaken Church         | Romans 5:6-21                 |
| Jacksonville, Florida | Psalm 15:1-5                  |
|                       | Proverbs 19:18-19             |

All the Time

*The Lord your God is in your midst . . . He will exult over you with joy . . . He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy. Zephaniah 3:17*

I sat in a chair on the patio overlooking my back yard in the cool shade of a summer evening. My grandson, three years old, sat in my lap. He leaned back into my chest. His head rested under my chin, his legs dangled down between mine.

“Papa, have you ever been bit by a wolf spider?”  
“Yes, I have. Not a big deal. Just two small dots and a little round bump.”  
We sat in silence for a moment.  
“Did it hurt?”  
“No, it just itched. It went away in a day or two.”  
“Papa, did you know there are wolf spiders over there under the stairs?”  
I doubted this, but said, “Oh really, better not go over there.”  
We talked about wolf spiders for several more minutes. I was amazed by his quiet focus; he’s normally such an active boy. Finally he ran out of words. We sat quietly. I loved the feel of his small body, the smell of his hair. I loved the crisp air, the twilight colors of the sky, the stillness, this moment.

“Papa, I just want to be with you all the time.”  
I wondered if he thought this was actually possible. I wished it were so.  
We sat quietly some more, and I thought, I have never heard anyone say, “I just want to be with you all the time.” I wondered, is this something God would say—to me? Does He really love to be in my presence?

*Thank you, Lord—Your Word says You most definitely love to be in my presence, You exult over me with joy, You rejoice over me with shouts of joy!*

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| <b>Submitted by:</b>   | <b>One-Year Bible Reading</b> |
| Ken Johnson            | 1 Chronicles 26:12-27:34      |
| Evergreen Church       | Romans 4:13-5:5               |
| Bloomington, Minnesota | Psalm 14:1-7                  |
|                        | Proverbs 19:17                |

On Standby

*Therefore the Lord longs to be gracious to you, and therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you. For the Lord is a God of justice; how blessed are all those who long for Him. Isaiah 30:18*

Michael Collins. Does that name ring a bell? Hmm, probably not. Neil Armstrong. Buzz Aldrin. Heard of them? Most likely, yes. For years those two names have been household words. They were the first men to walk on the moon—fifty years ago today on July 20, 1969. But does anyone remember the importance of Michael Collins?

Collins was the astronaut in the command ship, on standby while the other two stepped onto the lunar surface. Collins circled the moon, waiting to whisk the others back to earth’s safety. Because the Lunar Excursion Module had no heat shield, only the command ship could reenter earth’s atmosphere. So Michael Collins’ job was to wait, all alone, until the other two astronauts (the famous ones) blasted off from the lunar surface and returned to the command ship for docking. If the mission had failed, Michael Collins would have returned to the earth alone.

Never underestimate the importance of being the one who just stands by. Sometimes there’s not much more you can do. You can be ready and available for help. You can pray. But then you just wait, letting others know you are there for them.

And isn’t that like our God? He’s always on standby, ready to help us, available at all times for the rescue, waiting for us to turn to him. The Holy Spirit, our Paraklete, is a Helper, called to our aid. Never underestimate the power of the Holy Spirit on standby for you, listening to your radio static, talking to mission control for you, available night and day to come to your aid. And look forward to the last day when Jesus docks with us to take us home to a new heavens and a new earth!

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| <b>Submitted by:</b>         | <b>One-Year Bible Reading</b> |
| Rita Bergen                  | 2 Chronicles 1:1-3:17         |
| Cornerstone Community Church | Romans 6:1-23                 |
| Lenexa, Kansas               | Psalm 16:1-11                 |
|                              | Proverbs 19:20-21             |

### Slow Down & Wait

*Now he waited seven days, according to the appointed time set by Samuel, but Samuel did not come to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him. I Samuel 13:8*

Saul has the army ready to fight the Philistines. He waits in readiness seven days for Samuel to come. Samuel said he'd be there in seven days and isn't there yet. The men are restless and scared; they start to scatter. This is a disaster—where is Samuel? He should have been here. "If we don't do something soon, we will lose our men," Saul thinks. It's a mess. "We'll miss our chance." Waiting for Samuel . . . We just need God's blessing, and we will be good to go. Need God's blessing! We need it now! Can't wait any longer. If he's not here in five minutes, I'm doing it . . . Can't wait any longer. "Give me that lamb, let's get this altar built. We've got a battle to fight. Can't wait anymore!"

And Saul offers the sacrifice.

As soon as he is done, who shows up but Samuel?

I think God delayed Samuel, so Saul's heart would be revealed. Saul said he wanted God's blessing, but he wanted it in his own time, at his own convenience.

We are so quick to judge Saul. But how often are we in so much of a hurry to do, that we forget to wait for God? I've got to do it, have it, *now!* I can't wait! I've waited so long. It's okay to lie a little, cheat a little, indulge my flesh a little, skip devotions a little. I have more important things to do than to wait for God. Life is calling!

Lord, slow us down. Let us follow You and not try to lead—we only get lost.

**Submitted by:**  
Shirley Ferguson  
Oakridge Community Church  
Clarksville, Maryland

**One-Year Bible Reading**  
2 Chronicles 4:1-6:11  
Romans 7:1-13  
Psalm 17:1-15  
Proverbs 19:22-23

Tuesday, July 23

### Celebrate

*But we had to celebrate and be glad . . . Luke 15:32 NIV*

I've recently been reading the Old Testament, and it made me realize the importance of throwing a party. Really! Listen to these verses.

Moses writes about the Feast of Booths: "Celebrate this as a festival to the Lord for seven days each year. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come; celebrate it in the seventh month" (Leviticus 23:41). And when Solomon dedicated the temple, he threw a party: "So Solomon observed the festival at that time, and all Israel with him—a vast assembly . . . celebrated it before the LORD . . . fourteen days in all. On the following day he sent the people away. They blessed the king and then went home, joyful and glad in heart for all the good things the LORD had done for . . . his people Israel" (1 Kings 8:65-66 NIV).

Wow, that's a huge party! Solomon's example reminded me of three things. First, I should take time to celebrate God's goodness. Second, it's appropriate to bless spiritual leaders. Finally, it's important to remember all of God's blessings. Here are some ideas that can help you celebrate!

Make a list of all the good things God has done for you and spend some time thanking Him. This is a fantastic way to start your day. It will help you focus on the goodness of God.

Thank God for His character. Try not to ask Him for anything, just thank Him that He is good, holy, pure, righteous, loving, kind, compassionate, caring, lovely, faithful, patient, forgiving, and gracious. Thank Him for your spiritual leaders and think of practical ways to bless them. Thank Him for His Creation and for the very breath in your lungs. By thanking Him, we create an atmosphere of celebration that will be like a pleasing aroma to God. I think it would be appropriate to celebrate more, to bless our leaders more, and to remember God's goodness more!

**Submitted by:**  
Bill Young  
The Rock Church  
Draper, Utah

**One-Year Bible Reading**  
2 Chronicles 8:11-10:19  
Romans 8:9-25  
Psalm 18:16-36  
Proverbs 19:26

### Primary Role of the Holy Spirit

*When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth. For He will not speak on His own, but He will speak whatever He hears. He will also declare to you what is to come. He will glorify Me, because He will take from what is Mine and declare it to you. Everything the Father has is Mine. This is why I told you that He takes from what is Mine and will declare it to you. John 16:13-15*

There are so many crucial things the Holy Spirit does, and often we box Him into a giver of spiritual gifts or a comforter to us in hard times. We have neutered the Person and power of the Spirit and settled on a care-bear gumball machine. ***The primary role of the Holy Spirit is truth.***

Here are three ways the Holy Spirit gives truth: He convicts the world about sin because the world does not believe in Jesus; He convicts the world about righteousness regarding the resurrection; He convicts the world about judgment because the ruler of the world has been judged.

**The Holy's Spirit primary role is pointing to the Son**, convincing the world of the truth of the gospel. In this manner, He guides us into all truth. The Holy Spirit is able to guide into all truth because He takes from the Son, and the Son has been given everything by the Father. The Holy Spirit reveals truth from the Word of God; He takes what is from Jesus, the eternally existent Word, and declares truth to us. Thus, we may have assurance about applying Scripture to various contexts and cultures.

The Holy Spirit does **not** contradict Scripture, nor does He declare things contrary to the faithful application of Scripture. For example, a message from a middle-aged man telling his church community that the Holy Spirit told him to divorce his wife is not from the Holy Spirit, nor is it truth. The worship of the Holy Spirit as the Santa Claus of spiritual gifts for this church age is unhealthy. *His role is to glorify and reveal the Son.*

I believe you will experience the presence, power, and Person of the Holy Spirit in your search for truth.

**Submitted by:**  
Andrew D. Roberts  
Awaken Church  
Jacksonville, Florida

**One-Year Bible Reading**  
2 Chronicles 6:12-8:10  
Romans 7:14-8:8  
Psalm 18:1-15  
Proverbs 19:24-25

Wednesday, July 24

### A Divine Time Out

*And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. 1 John 5:14 ESV*

I know that for many of you, you've got this week under control and everything is going off without a hitch. For others, you are so far behind that you've been looking for a reset button since yesterday. Wherever you may be, I want to encourage you and give you three reasons to stop and take a *Divine Time Out*. Stop everything you are doing for a moment and simply pray.

*Pray today to thank God for His great love (Romans 5:8).* The relationship and access we have with God is solely because of His incredible love that was demonstrated for us. As you pray, thank Jesus for saving you from your sins. Thank Him for the life of hope and forgiveness you have because of the great love He has lavished upon you! Praying in response to Jesus' love will flood your heart with deeper affection for Him.

*Pray today with a heart of gratitude (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).* When you pray, express the gratitude that you have for everything He has graciously given you. From eternal life to earthly provisions to friends and family, express your thankfulness for all you have received in this life by His hands. When you pray like this, it demonstrates your trust and dependency on Jesus for the faithful God that He is.

*Pray today so that you can know Jesus more deeply.* There are few things in life as sweet as when my children come to me and ask me questions! My kiddos believe their dad knows the answer to **everything!** Children are always learning, absorbing, and asking questions; we can learn a lot from them. As you pray today, ask for the Lord to help you "turn and become like children" (Matthew 18:3). As you approach God with this heart of wonder and adoration, it expresses your faith and love toward Him.

**Submitted by:**  
Bryan D. Edwards  
The Rock Church  
Draper, Utah

**One-Year Bible Reading**  
2 Chronicles 11:1-13:22  
Romans 8:26-39  
Psalm 18:37-50  
Proverbs 19:27-29

Persistent Faith

*Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, “Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us.” Matthew 15:23 NIV*

She was desperate. Jesus had come to her region, perhaps for a short respite from the crowds that mobbed Him in Galilee. But even in her region, people had heard of the one who could heal the sick, drive out demons, and make the blind see.

Perhaps if she cried out loudly and persistently enough, He would stop for her. Hers was a desperate quest, for her daughter was suffering terribly at home from demon-possession with seemingly no solution or cure.

But as she cried out, Jesus was silent and His disciples were annoyed. Why didn't Jesus do something? Finally, in desperation themselves, they urged Him, “Send her away!”

This was certainly not the response that this woman was hoping for—a silent Healer who was seemingly ignoring her and His unwelcoming companions urging that she be sent away. What should she do?

Desperation drove her, and in a short but remarkable exchange that followed, Jesus not only responded to her plea by healing her daughter, but also commended her for her great faith. Wow! What a turn of events, all because, against the odds, she humbly believed and persisted.

Sometimes in my deep longings and prayers, I can feel the silence of Jesus. Why doesn't He answer? Doesn't He notice? Is there something wrong with me? Should I just give up in despair and hopelessness, figuring He's not going to answer?

The faith of this woman reminds me to “keep asking, keep seeking, and keep knocking” (Matthew 7:7-8). What could have ended with a sad and hopeless woman walking away in disappointment turned instead into a joyful lesson of faith for us all.

**Submitted by:**  
Dawn Bovenmyer  
Stonebrook Community Church  
Ames, Iowa

**One-Year Bible Reading**  
2 Chronicles 14:1-16:14  
Romans 9:1-24  
Psalm 19:1-14  
Proverbs 20:1

Tower Breaker

*Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within him; but the righteous will live by his faith. Habakkuk 2:4*

“Something there is that doesn't love a wall,” starts out a famous poem you may recognize by Robert Frost (1874–1963), once poet laureate of the United States. “Mending Wall” (1914) is the poem, and it was read by the poet with a video of the Berlin Wall as background once.

“Something there is that doesn't love a tower . . .” has been the line going through my head lately. Four little boys have played here in the last six months, and each one of them automatically and instantly knocks down any tower he sees. From our grandsons Martin at six months, to Amos at a year, to a new friend Xavier, nearly two, to Mustafa from Algeria at two, each one of them is death to any tower, whether of colorful boxes, plastic cups, or wooden blocks. Mustafa's dash into the living room on New Year's Eve to whomp a block tower decisively ended a suspenseful game of Jenga, that's for sure! (Do girls do the same?)

This reminds me of God. God hates pride. He tells us so over and over again in the Bible. He “opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble” (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5 ESV)—both quoted from Proverbs 3:34. Habakkuk is clear on this issue as well: “Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within him; but the righteous will live by his faith” (2:4). Jesus says the same thing: “Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted” (Matthew 23:12 ESV). Do you want grace, exaltation, reward? *Serve in humility.*

If you do not, take warning: “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall” (Proverbs 16:18 ESV). If you are walking in pride, be quick to repent. Or prepare for God's **whomp!** Down go the towers!

**Submitted by:**  
Dotty Vanderhorst  
Cornerstone Community Church  
Lenexa, Kansas

**One-Year Bible Reading**  
2 Chronicles 19:1-20:37  
Romans 10:14-11:12  
Psalm 21:1-13  
Proverbs 20:4-6

Faith: the Opposite of Pride

*Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within him. Habakkuk 2:4*

In my past, when someone would have critical input for me, I would judge their motives; I would not trust their assessment of me. I would assume they were “out to get me” in some way so that I could not trust them. In my pride, I wanted praise, not criticism!

Habakkuk 2:4 states, “Behold, as for the proud man, his soul is not right within him, but my righteous one shall live by faith.” Pride and faith are opposites. If we think we know better than the all-wise God of creation, then we will not trust Him or His Word. The apostle Peter in 1 Peter 5:6-7 exhorts us to humble ourselves before the Lord and then calls for us to trust God to take care of all our concerns. The way we humble ourselves before the Lord is to trust everything He says in His Word, the Bible. The first step in humbling ourselves before the Lord is to believe God's assessment of us: we are rebels against Him and deserving of His judgment. The next step is to believe that God made only one way to be reconciled to Him: the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Simultaneously, we humble ourselves by believing that God, in His wonderful grace, loves us though we deserve His rejection. We receive forgiveness and are adopted by God as His children when we humble ourselves to trust that Jesus' sacrifice has paid for all our sins and His resurrection from the dead proves this! Once we are God's child by faith in Jesus as both Lord and Savior, then we continue to humble ourselves every day. We do this by reading His Word and believing everything He says about who He is, about what Jesus accomplished through His death and resurrection and about His will for our lives.

Pride is what makes our souls diseased. Faith in the Lord and His Word is what brings healing and restoration to our souls!

**Submitted by:**  
David Brandts  
New Life Church  
Cincinnati, Ohio

**One-Year Bible Reading**  
2 Chronicles 17:1-18:34  
Romans 9:25-10:13  
Psalm 20:1-9  
Proverbs 20:2-3

Help Me to Trust You

*Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. John 14:1*

God sometimes needs to work hard to grab my attention. One day I admitted to God that I was not trusting Him in a couple areas of my life. Then I read the above verse in John, as well as Proverbs 3:5-6: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.” Both verses talk about trusting God.

A bit later in the day, I am reading Oswald Chamber's *My Utmost for His Highest*, and I read: “‘Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.’ How much evil has begun to threaten you today? What kind of mean little imps have been looking in and saying – Now what are you going to do next month – this summer? ‘Be anxious for nothing,’ Jesus says. Look again and think. Keep you mind on the ‘much more’ of your Heavenly Father.” Trusting God is again the theme. Hmm.

Then in my Bible I am reading about Daniel in the lion's den, and there is a devotional *in* my Bible. Guess what the devotional is about? You've got it, trusting God: “Only when we began to nurture the wait with trust did deliverance come. If, like Daniel, you're waiting in some den of helplessness, won't you spend time as he did, trusting God?” (Sue Monk Kidd).

Believe it or not, the *Faithwalkers Journal* entry that day was also about trusting God.

I don't know—I think maybe God wanted me to trust Him.

Lord, take my worries that consume me. Help me to trust You in my every day.

**Submitted by:**  
Shirley Ferguson  
Oakridge Community Church  
Clarksville, Maryland

**One-Year Bible Reading**  
2 Chronicles 21:1-23:21  
Romans 11:13-36  
Psalm 22:1-18  
Proverbs 20:7

### Trust in the Lord

*Listen to the words of the wise; apply your heart to my instruction.*  
*Proverbs 22:17 NLT*

“Trust in the Lord.” This is an easy thing to say and read, but not always an easy thing to do.

As a young man, I had a baseball glove that I was very dependent upon. Without it, I felt like I couldn’t take the field. When I first bought the glove, however, I didn’t realize how much it would help me. It was stiff and seemed clunky when I tried to field a ball. In fact, I was ready to give up on it and get another one because I had such trouble with it. Eventually, after oiling it and tying a ball in it when I slept (and using it over and over again), it transformed my game. Honestly, it seemed like I was able to stop or grab any baseball that came close to me. I was phenomenal (at least in my own mind!) and I loved to play the game whenever I could.

My baseball glove experience reminds me of trusting in God’s Word. Like a well-worn baseball glove, my Bible greets me each day, ready to help me in whatever comes my way. I can trust God’s Word to help me in everything I do! The more I dig into my Bible and read it, the more I feel like I’m ready to take on this crazy game of life.

Charles Spurgeon once wrote, “A Bible that’s falling apart usually belongs to someone who isn’t.” I like Proverbs 22:17-19, “Listen to the words of the wise; apply your heart to my instruction. For it is good to keep these sayings in your heart and always ready on your lips. I am teaching you today—yes, you—so you will trust in the LORD” (NLT). I am so thankful for God’s Word.

As I apply His truth to my heart, and learn to have it ready on my lips, I am being taught to trust in the Lord. Over and over again, no matter what comes my way, I’m ready.

**Submitted by:**  
Steve McInroy  
The Rock Church  
Draper, Utah

**One-Year Bible Reading**  
2 Chronicles 24:1-25:28  
Romans 12:1-21  
Psalm 22:19-31  
Proverbs 20:8-10

Wednesday, July 31

### Love and Discipline

*For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears; not so that you would be made sorrowful, but that you might know the love which I have especially for you.* 2 Corinthians 2:4

My friend seemed resigned to the students constantly using their cell phones in the high school classroom as the new normal. I was shocked to hear about the pandemonium and lack of discipline. He was doing his best to teach. He said he had given up on many of his pupils and was simply trying to help those who wanted to learn amidst the chaos. It was truly sad and heartbreaking. Discipline had left the building . . . and it didn’t seem like it was ever coming back!

Some of us equate discipline with inhibiting someone’s freedom of expression or infringing on their rights. But as in the situation in this classroom, some may have felt free to text, while the rights of the other students to learn were ignored! Funny how it works that way, isn’t it? Those who complain the loudest about discipline are usually the most inconsiderate of other’s rights.

The apostle Paul had a similar situation where discipline was difficult, but necessary. You see, he loved the Corinthians enough to correct them. Discipline done properly is just that—love! It is not meant to be hateful or disrespectful of anyone’s rights. It is for the good of all! Discipline done God’s way is always a win—win for all. It worked in Corinth, and it can work with you.

Follow God’s loving way of discipline next time you face a trial: receive it with joy and thankfulness because His purpose is always for your good. Ask Him for gentleness and kindness when you need to correct your children for misbehaving, or a friend who has sinned, and for an open and teachable heart when *you* are corrected as well.

**Submitted by:**  
Stephen Scott Nelson  
Atlanta House Church  
Atlanta, Georgia

**One-Year Bible Reading**  
2 Chronicles 29:1-36  
Romans 14:1-23  
Psalm 24:1-10  
Proverbs 20:12

### The Way of Life!

*The way of life winds upward for the wise, that he may turn away from hell below.*  
*Proverbs 15:24 NKJV*

The word of God is living and powerful, “sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit . . . and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Hebrews 4:12 NKJV). Here are some reflections on the Bible from prominent personages of history:

*Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ.* - Jerome

*The Holy Scriptures are our letters from home.* - Augustine

*The Bible is alive, it speaks to me; it has feet, it runs after me; it has hands, it lays hold on me.* - Martin Luther

*We owe to the Scriptures the same reverence we owe to God.* - John Calvin

*The vigor of our spiritual life will be in exact proportion to the place held by the Bible in our life.* - George Mueller

*I believe the Bible is the best gift God has ever given to man.* - Abraham Lincoln

*A thorough understanding of the Bible is better than a college education.* - Theodore Roosevelt

Here is the Bible in fifty words: God made . . . Adam bit . . . Noah arked . . . Abraham split . . . Jacob fooled . . . Joseph ruled . . . Bush talked . . . Moses balked . . . Pharaoh plagued . . . People walked. . . Sea divided . . . Tablets guided . . . Promise landed . . . Saul freaked . . . David peeked. . . Prophets warned . . . Jesus born . . . God walked . . . Love talked . . . Anger crucified . . . Hope died . . . Love rose . . . Spirit flamed . . . Word spread . . . God remained.

Now read your Bible cover to cover, over and over—and fill in the spaces! And you will say, like A. W. Tozer said, “I did not go through the Book. The Book went through me.”

**Submitted by:**  
Tom Dunham  
Cottonwood Community Church  
Grand Forks, North Dakota

**One-Year Bible Reading**  
2 Chronicles 26:1-28:27  
Romans 13:1-14  
Psalm 23:1-6  
Proverbs 20:11