

THE CROSS



"A CHURCH WHERE EVERYBODY IS SOMEBODY AND CHRIST IS LORD OF ALL"



May-June 2024 — Volume 28 Issue 3

PENTECOST SUNDAY Sunday May 19, 2024

"What does the Bible say about procrastination?"

Procrastination is "the act of willfully delaying the doing of something that should be done," and in some people it is a habitual way of handling any task. While the word itself is not found in the Bible, we can find some principles to help guide us.

Sometimes, procrastination is the result of laziness, and the Bible has plenty to say about that. The Bible commends hard work and industry (Proverbs 12:24; 13:4) and warns against sloth and slackness (Proverbs 15:19; 18:9). One cure for procrastination is more diligence, regardless of the task. The Christian should be supremely motivated to be diligent in his work, since he is ultimately serving the Lord. "Whatever you do, work at it with all your
(Procrastination on page 12)

"What is Pentecost Sunday?"

Pentecost Sunday is a commemoration and celebration of the receiving of the Holy Spirit by the early church. John the Baptist prophesied of the first Pentecost when Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire (Matthew 3:11). Jesus confirmed this prophecy with the promise of the Holy Spirit to the disciples in John 14:26. He showed Himself to these men after His death on the cross and His resurrection, giving convincing proofs that He was alive. Jesus told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the Father's gift of the Holy Spirit, from whom they would receive power to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:3-8). After Jesus' ascension to heaven, the men returned to Jerusalem and joined together in prayer in an
(Pentecost on page 13)

"What does the Bible say about diligence?"

Diligence, or steady perseverance in one's effort, results in careful, energetic, and persistent work. Diligent people get the job done. They don't quit until they have given it their all. The Bible uses the word *diligence* in several ways, and it is always in a positive sense.

Diligence is mentioned a couple of times in the book of Proverbs. A proverb is a short saying that expresses a general truth for practical living, and the truth about diligence is that it is good for us:

"Lazy hands make for poverty, but diligent hands bring wealth" (Proverbs 10:4)

(Diligence on page 12)

"What does the Bible say about forgiveness? What does it mean to forgive?"

The Bible never gives a "dictionary" definition of forgiveness, but it shows us many examples of it. The greatest of all examples is the forgiveness of God. Although the following passage does not use the word *forgive*, it describes the concept of God's forgiveness perfectly:

Psalm 103:8-12: The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

(Forgiveness on page 16)



Visit our Facebook page

Visit Our Website:
WWW.crossstreetamezion.org

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Prayers	4	Sunday Church School	10	Daily Confession of Faith	23
Fruit of the Spirit	5	90 Devotions	14	Spiritual Inspiration	24
Name of God	6	The Armor of God	15	The Beauty of Holland	25
Daily Bible Reading	6	How to Pray	19	Joyce Meyer	26
Christian Season	7	Our Daily Bread	20	Bible's Bird's Eye View	27
Liturgical Color	7	Words To Live By	21	Activities	29
Fasting	8	Spirit Lifters	22		

Memo from GOD

Effective immediately, please be aware that there are changes YOU need to make in YOUR life. These changes need to be completed in order that I may fulfill My promises to you to grant you peace, joy and happiness in this life. I apologize for any inconvenience, but after all that I am doing, this seems very little to ask of you. I know, I already gave you the 10 Commandments. Keep them. But follow these guidelines, also.

1. QUIT WORRYING

Life has dealt you a blow and all you do is sit and worry. Have you forgotten that I am here to take all your burdens and carry them for you? Or do you just enjoy fretting over every little thing that comes your way?

2. PUT IT ON THE LIST

Something needs done or taken care of. Put it on the list. No, not YOUR list. Put it on MY to-do-list. Let ME be the one to take care of the problem. I can't help you until you turn it over to Me. And although My to-do-list is long, I am after all ... God. I can take care of anything you put into My hands. In fact, if the truth were ever really known, I take care of a lot of things for you that you never even realize.

3. TRUST ME

Once you've given your burdens to Me, quit trying to take them back. Trust in Me. Have the faith that I will take care of all your needs, your problems and your trials. Problems with the kids? Put them on My list. Problem with finances? Put it in My list. Problems with your emotional roller coaster?

For My sake, put it on My list. I want to help you. All you have to do is ask.

4. LEAVE IT ALONE

Don't wake up one morning and say, "Well, I'm feeling much stronger now, I think I can handle it from here." Why do you think you are feeling stronger now? It's simple. You gave Me your burdens and I'm taking care of them. I also renew your strength and cover you in my peace. Don't you know that if I give you these problems back, you will be right back where you started? Leave them with Me and forget about them. Just let Me do my job.

5. TALK TO ME

I want you to forget a lot of things. Forget what was making you crazy. Forget the worry and the fretting because you know I'm in control. But there's one thing I pray you never forget. Please, don't forget to talk to Me - OFTEN! I love YOU! I want to hear your voice. I want you to include Me in on the things going on in your life. I want to hear you talk about your friends and family. Prayer is simply you having a conversation with Me. I want to be your dearest friend.

6. HAVE FAITH

I see a lot of things from up here that you can't see from where you are. Have faith in Me that I know what I'm doing. Trust Me; you wouldn't want the view from My eyes. I will continue to care for you, watch over you, and meet your needs. You only have to trust Me. Although I have a much bigger task than you, it seems as if you have so much trouble just doing your simple part. How hard can trust be?

7. SHARE

You were taught to share when you were only two years old. When did you forget? That rule still applies. Share with those who are less fortunate than you. Share your joy with those who need encouragement. Share your laughter with those who haven't heard any in such a long time. Share your tears with those who have forgotten how to cry. Share your faith with those who have none.

8. BE PATIENT

I managed to fix it so in just one lifetime you could have so many diverse experiences. You grow from a child to an adult, have children, change jobs many times, learn many trades, travel to so many places, meet thousands of people, and experience so much. How can you be so impatient then when it takes Me a little longer than you expect to handle something on My to-do-list? Trust in My timing, for My timing is perfect. Just because I created the entire universe in only six days, everyone thinks I should always rush, rush, rush.

9. BE KIND

Be kind to others, for I love them just as much as I love you. They may not dress like you, or talk like you, or live the same way you do, but I still love you all. Please try to get along, for My sake. I created each of you different in some way. It would be too boring if you were all identical. Please, know I love each of your differences.

10. LOVE YOURSELF

As much as I love me for one reason of Love. Love Me. Heartache when I are very precious you, how can you not love yourself? You were only ... to be loved, and to love in return. Love your neighbors. But also love yourself. See you so angry with yourself when things go to me. Don't ever forget that!

Created by **I AM**, a God. It makes My wrong, **You**.

With all My heart I love **YOU** ...

God



**GOD CAN TURN AROUND
ANY SITUATION.**



Pastor's Prayer

Rev Robyn M Anderson

Dear Lord, bless our Pastor as she delivers and preaches Your Holy Word;

Lift her spirit as she embraces Your divine call on her life;

Guide her as she ministers to Your flock and walks in Your wisdom;

Teach her the inner meanings of Holy Scripture through divine revelation;

Reward her works as she daily serves You and fulfills the purpose for which she was created.

Lovingly Presented,
The Cross Street Church Family

1 Thessalonians 5

The Day of the Lord

5 Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, **2** for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. **3** While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

4 But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. **5** You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. **6** So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober. **7** For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. **8** But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. **9** For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. **10** He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. **11** Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

Final Instructions

12 Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. **13** Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. **14** And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone. **15** Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else.

16 Rejoice always, **17** pray continually, **18** give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

19 Do not quench the Spirit. **20** Do not treat prophecies with contempt **21** but test them all; hold on to what is good, **22** reject every kind of evil.

23 May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. **24** The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

25 Brothers and sisters, pray for us. **26** Greet all God's people with a holy kiss. **27** I charge you before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers and sisters.

28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.





Revival

Key Scripture: *“For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea”*
Habakkuk 2:14

Key Thought: Earnest prayer paves the way for revival.

Prayer: Lord God, thank you for all the promises of your Word which give me hope for revival. Your Word is alive and dynamic, and it is sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints

and marrow, and it is a discerner of the hidden thoughts and intent of the human heart.¹ Let your word have its work in my life, Father. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.²

I ask you to hasten the day when the earth will be filled with the knowledge of your glory, as the waters cover the sea.³ I know, dear Father, that it is not your will for anyone to perish. You want all people, everywhere, to come to repentance, and I believe your promises of revival.⁴ Therefore, I will patiently watch and wait for your coming as a farmer waits for the fruit of the earth to come forth, after the early and latter rains.⁵ Bring forth the latter rain of the Spirit upon earth, O God.

It excites me to anticipate the day when you will pour out your Spirit upon all flesh. Thank you for that stirring promise, Father. I believe that revival is imminent, and when it happens the young men and women will prophesy, old men will dream dreams, and young men will see visions.⁶ You, Lord God, will make bare your holy arm for all the world to see, and all the ends of the earth will see your salvation.⁷ I seek your promised revival, Lord.

When the revival fires you promise

are ignited, Father, you will do a new thing in our midst. You will make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.⁸ Thank you, Lord God. You will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away. You will bind up that which was broken, and you will strengthen that which was sick. You will decree your judgement upon the people of the earth.⁹

Lord, I ask you to usher in the end-time revival you have promised to your people. I look forward to that glorious revival with zeal and faith. I believe it will cause all the ends of the world to remember you and to turn toward you. All the nations will worship before you, because yours is the Kingdom, Father.¹⁰ My Father in heaven, your name is hallowed. I pray that your kingdom will come, and your will shall be done, on earth as it is in heaven, for yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.¹¹

References: (1) Hebrews 4:12; (2) Psalms 51:10; (3) Habakkuk 2:14; (4) 2 Peter 3:9; (5) James 5:7; (6) Joel 2:28; (7) Isaiah 52:10; (8) Isaiah 43:19; (9) Ezekiel 34:16; (10) Psalms 22:27-28; (11) Matthew 6:9-13.

Bible Prayers for all your needs
Victory House Publishers

OUR SICK AND SHUT-IN NEED YOUR CALLS, YOUR CARDS AND YOUR VISITS...
BUT ABOVE ALL, THEY NEED ALL OF OUR PRAYERS!

Walking in Integrity

Key Scripture: *“The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them”* (Proverbs 11:13).

Key Thought: Christian character includes personal integrity.

Prayer: Dear God, I desire to walk in integrity, and to follow its guidance in my life by always choosing to do what is right. 1 As you help me to be true to what I know is right, I will be able to walk in the integrity of my heart. 2

Therefore, as I endeavor to walk in integrity, I will let the word of Christ dwell in me richly. In all wisdom, and whatever I do in word or deed, I will do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to you, Father, by Him. 3 I realize that this is a key to personal integrity in my life.

O God, keep my soul, and deliver me. Let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in you. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait on you. 4

Show me your ways, O Lord, and teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation, and I wait on you. 5

Your Word is truth, 6 dear Father, and it guides me. Your Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path, 7 and I will walk in the light of your word.

Thank you for upholding me in my integrity. 8

References: (1) Proverbs 11:3; (2) Genesis 20:6; (3) Colossians 3:16-17; (4) Psalms 25:20-21; (5) Psalms 25:4-5; (6) John 17:17; (7) Psalms 119:105; (8) Psalms 41:12.

Bible Prayers for all your needs
Victory House Publishers

Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the Lord our God is holy. Psalm 99:9



The fruit of the Spirit abides in us and it is up to us to cultivate it so that we may experience the blessing and the fullness of the Spirit. God is the husbandman..."He prunes, nurtures, waters and protects His own. The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit will energize and control every faculty of our nature when our will joins the will of God. Then the "beauty of the Lord will be upon us" (Psalm 90:17) and "we shall bring forth fruit unto God" (Romans 7:4)."

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

"But the fruit of the Spirit is LOVE, JOY, PEACE, LONGSUFFERING, GENTLENESS, GOODNESS, FAITH, MEEKNESS, TEMPERANCE: against such there is no law." (Galatians 5:22, 23)

The fruit of the Spirit abides in us and it is up to us to cultivate it so that we may experience the blessing and the fullness of the Spirit. God is the husbandman..."He prunes, nurtures, waters and protects His own. The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit will energize and control every faculty of our nature when our will joins the will of God. Then the "beauty of the Lord will be upon us" (Psalm 90:17) and "we shall bring forth fruit unto God" (Romans 7:4)."

The fruit of LOVE when properly motivated "is pure, far reaching, forgiving. There is no limit to the good that LOVE does. God is LOVE. (I John 4:7)

JOY never fades, it is never destroyed by circumstances, it is unaffected by wealth or poverty, sickness or health. It is found in the presence of God (Psalm 16:11)

PEACE "is a tranquility of mind as a result of a right relationship with God". The PEACE of God in our hearts challenges sin at every turn and deals with it immediately in order to maintain that right relationship. (Ephesians 2:14)

LONG-SUFFERING means steadfastness of the soul under provocation. It means forbearance and patient endurance of ill-treatment, without anger or thought of revenge. (Colossians 3:12, 13)

GENTLENESS is sweet reasonableness, calmness and graciousness. It calms troubled waters, settles turmoil and heals strife. (James 3:17)

GOODNESS does good to others. It is kindness of heart and good deeds. It may not always be a gentle word, but a stern rebuke done for the good of someone else. (Psalm 33:5)

MEEKNESS disarms the stormy, tempestuous person. The qualities of mildness and gentleness in dealing with others. It is not weak. It is a high quality of spiritual strength. (I Timothy 6:11)

FAITH means faithfulness to Christ and His cause. It manifests itself in being a trustworthy steward of God. It is trust and obedience, belief in God's word and promises. (Hebrews 11:1)

TEMPERANCE is power, it is strength, having self-control. It means discipline. It provides balance to the Christian's life. It enables him to praise Him whether in discipline or testing. (Proverbs 11:1) (Information taken in part from World-Wide Keswick publication and Holy Scriptures)

Satan tries to imitate the real thing with an artificial fruit. As you can see, the artificial fruit is very much like the real thing and if we are not careful, we can fall into the trap of expressing limited love, temporary joy, numbness, insensitivity, manipulation, hypocrisy, half-heartedness, false modesty and choosing lesser goals.

THE FRUIT, *The Artificial Fruit,* **The Weed**

LOVE, *limited love*, **hatred**; JOY, *temporary JOY*, **sorrow**; PEACE, *numbness, carelessness*, **anxiety strife**;
PATIENCE, *laziness, insensitivity*, **impatience**; KINDNESS, *manipulation by kindness*, **pride**;
GOODNESS, *hypocrisy*, **evil**; FAITHFULNESS, *half-heartedness*, **infidelity**;
MEEKNESS, *false modesty*, **self-seeking**; SELF-CONTROL, *choosing lesser goals*, **lack of control**
(The Fruit of the Spirit, John W. Sanderson)

READ THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR

MAY

- 1 2 Chronicles 26-29
- 2 2 Chronicles 30-32
- 3 2 Chronicles 33-36
- 4 Ezra 1-4
- 5 Ezra 5-7
- 6 Ezra 8-10
- 7 Nehemiah 1-3

- 8 Nehemiah 4-6
- 9 Nehemiah 7-9
- 10 Nehemiah 10-13
- 11 Esther 1-3
- 12 Esther 4-7
- 13 Esther 8-10
- 14 Job 1-4
- 15 Job 5-7

- 16 Job 8-10
- 17 Job 11-13
- 18 Job 14-17
- 19 Job 18-20
- 20 Job 21-24
- 21 Job 25-27
- 22 Job 28-31
- 23 Job 32-34

- 24 Job 35-37
- 25 Job 38-42
- 26 Psalms 1-4
- 27 Psalms 5-8
- 28 Psalms 9-12
- 29 Psalms 13-15
- 30 Psalms 16-18
- 31 Psalms 19-21

JUNE

- 1. Psalms 22-24
- 2. Psalms 25-27
- 3. Psalms 28-30
- 4. Psalms 31-33
- 5. Psalms 34-36
- 6. Psalms 37-39
- 7. Psalms 40-42

- 8. Psalms 43-45
- 9. Psalms 46-48
- 10. Psalms 49-51
- 11. Psalms 52-54
- 12. Psalms 55-57
- 13. Psalms 58-60
- 14. Psalms 61-63
- 15. Psalms 64-66

- 16. Psalms 67-69
- 17. Psalms 70-72
- 18. Psalms 73-75
- 19. Psalms 76-78
- 20. Psalms 79-81
- 21. Psalms 82-84
- 22. Psalms 85-87
- 23. Psalms 88-90

- 24. Psalms 91-93
- 25. Psalms 94-96
- 26. Psalms 97-99
- 27. Psalms 100-102
- 28. Psalms 103-105
- 29. Psalms 106-108
- 30. Psalms 109-111

JULY

- 1. Psalms 112-114
- 2. Psalms 115-118
- 3. Psalms 119
- 4. Psalms 120-123
- 5. Psalms 124-128
- 6. Psalms 129-132
- 7. Psalms 133-136

- 8. Psalms 137-139
- 9. Psalms 140-144
- 10. Psalms 145-147
- 11. Psalms 148-150
- 12. Proverbs 1-3
- 13. Proverbs 4-7
- 14. Proverbs 8-11
- 15. Proverbs 12-14

- 16. Proverbs 15-18
- 17. Proverbs 19-21
- 18. Proverbs 22-24
- 19. Proverbs 25-28
- 20. Proverbs 29-31
- 21. Ecclesiastes 1-3
- 22. Ecclesiastes 4-6
- 23. Ecclesiastes 7-9

- 24. Ecclesiastes 10-12
- 25. Song 1-4
- 26. Song 5-8
- 27. Isaiah 1-3
- 28. Isaiah 4-6
- 29. Isaiah 7-9
- 30. Isaiah 10-12
- 31. Isaiah 13-15

Name of God	Meaning	Application
JEHOVAH –SHALOM	The Lord is Peace	God defeats our enemies to bring us peace. Jesus is our Prince of Peace. God brings inner peace and harmony.
JEHOVAH – SHAMMAH	The Lord is There The Lord My Companion	God's presence is not limited or contained in the Tabernacle or Temple, but is accessible to all who love and obey Him.
JEHOVAH – TSIDKENU	The Lord Our Righteousness	Jesus is the King who would come from David's line, and is the one who imparts His righteousness to us.
YAH, ORJAH	"I AM" The One Who Is The Self-Existent	God never changes. His promises never fail. When we are faithless, He is faithful. God promises His continuing presence.
YHWH	"I AM" The One Who Is The Self-Existent One	God never changes. His promises never fail. When we are faithless, He is faithful.
ADONAI	The Lord My Great Lord	God is the Master and majestic Lord. God is our total authority.
EL	The Strong One	He is more powerful than any false god. God will overcome all obstacles. We can depend on God.

There are various names of God, many of which enumerate the various qualities of a Supreme Being. The English word "god" (and its equivalent in other languages) is used by multiple religions as a noun or name to refer to different deities, or specifically to the Supreme Being, as denoted in English by the capitalized and uncapitalized terms "God" and "god". Ancient cognate equivalents for the biblical Hebrew Elohim, one of the most common names of God in the Bible, include proto-Semitic El, biblical Aramaic Elah, and Arabic 'ilah. The personal or proper name for God in many of these languages may either be distinguished from such attributes, or homonymic. For example, in Judaism the tetragrammaton is sometimes related to the ancient Hebrew ehieh ("I will be"). In the Hebrew Bible (Exodus 3:14), Yahweh, the personal name of God, is revealed directly to Moses. Correlation between various theories and interpretation of the name of "the one God", used to signify a monotheistic or ultimate Supreme Being from which all other divine attributes derive, has been a subject of ecumenical discourse between Eastern and Western scholars for over two centuries. In Christian theology the word is considered a personal and a proper name of God. On the other hand, the names of God in a different tradition are sometimes referred to by symbols. The question whether divine names used by different religions are equivalent has been raised and analyzed.

CHRISTIAN SEASONS

EASTERTIDE

Eastertide covers a fifty-day period (six Sundays) that challenges persons to reflect on the resurrection of Jesus. Ascension Day is celebrated the sixth Thursday after Easter and commemorates the last manifestation of Jesus to His followers after the resurrection. (Luke 24:50-51 and Acts 1:2-11.) Ascension Sunday is the Sunday following Ascension Day. The season ends with the Day of Pentecost.

Color: White is the appropriate color for the season, with gold as an accent color. White is symbolic of light, joy, purity, glory, and the bright light of truth.

THE SEASON AFTER PENTECOST

The Season After Pentecost covers 10-14 Sundays. The liturgical color is red for the Season After Pentecost.

Trinity Sunday is the first Sunday after the day of Pentecost. This Sunday emphasizes the three-fold manifestation of the Godhead (God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit/Ghost): three and yet one. White is the appropriate color.

Color: Red is symbolic of loyalty, power, witness, Christian zeal, blood, fire, the work and ministry of the Church, and the Holy Spirit.

LITURGICAL COLORS

Liturgy or liturgical comes from the Greek word “leitourgia” that means public service. Thus, liturgical refers to the rites or forms prescribed for use in public worship. Colors add brightness, variety, and visual appeal for the worshiper and Christian believer. But beyond this is the wealth of meaning and theological interpretation wrapped up in the colors used during the various seasons. Below are the prevalent colors and their liturgical interpretations.

Purple (violet or lilac) is the color used to denote royalty, praying, fasting, and penitence. It represents a symbol of the majesty of Christ, and Jesus’ humanity, suffering, and fasting. Advent and Lent are seasons when this color is used.

Green is symbolic of the freshness of nature, hope, life, and growth. It is used during The Season After Epiphany and Kingdomtide. Some denominations use green during The Season after Pentecost.

White is symbolic of light, joy, purity, glory, and the bright light of truth. It is used during Christmas/Christmastide, Epiphany (January 6), Baptism of the Lord Sunday, Transfiguration of the Lord Sunday, Maundy Thursday (if Holy Communion is celebrated), Easter/Eastertide, Ascension Day/Sunday, Trinity Sunday, and Christ the King Sunday. It is appropriately used for Consecrations, Baptisms, Marriages, and Holy Communion.

Red is symbolic of loyalty, power, witness, Christian zeal, blood, fire, the work and ministry of the Church, and the Holy Spirit. It is used on Pentecost, for some The Season After Pentecost, and Church anniversaries, dedications, and ordinations. The color red is appropriate for year-round use if there is no other color available.

Black represents grief, sorrow, mourning, or death. It is used on Good Friday and sometimes for funerals. (Some prefer to use white for funerals to celebrate the homegoing of a loved one.)

Gold is the color denoting worth, virtue, glory to God, and Christian might. It was one of the gifts given to the Baby Jesus by the Magi (Wise Men). The Kingship of the Christ Child and the price Jesus paid on Calvary is also represented in this color.

Other Colors

Blue is an alternate liturgical color that is symbolic of hope. It is often used as an alternate color to purple during Advent by some denominations.

Kente Cloth is being used by many African-American congregations as a parament. It is also used on clergy and choir robes or liturgical stoles. Most of the kente cloth contains several of the liturgical colors. Kente Cloth is a strong woven fabric from the West African country of Ghana. Its name comes from the word “kenten” referring to that which cannot be torn under any circumstances. It is woven in narrow four inch strips and stitched together to make the desired width of the fabric. Traditionally, this cloth carried symbolic designs that indicated a proverb or special message. In addition to the meaning wrapped up in the colors, it also represents the commitment of believers not to allow anything to separate them from the love of God and a reminder to hold on to one’s heritage.

Fasting for Health, Healing and a Heart for God's Vision for the Church

1. The Daniel Fast involves a spiritual commitment to God. "Daniel proposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the Kings delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank." (Daniel 1: 8)

2. Faith is foundational to the Daniel Fast. "Then I set my face toward my God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting" (Daniel. 9:30 "However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting" (Matthew 17: 21)

3. Fast and yield yourself to God as a servant. Daniel said, "as you see fit, deal with your servants" (Daniel 1:13)

4. Schedule your prayer / And end with thanksgiving. Daniel "kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks" (Daniel 6: 10)

5. Begin with confession, (repentance), dedication, and prayer-"Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way of everlasting" (Psalm 39: 23-24)

Remember: The Daniel Fast will lead to spiritual insight. "... to these young men God gave knowledge" (Daniel 1: 17)

Guidelines for Daniel Fast

Foods We May Eat

After answering hundreds of questions about the Daniel Fast on the blog, I developed these food guidelines. My hope is that it will serve as a more complete list. The original list used by many people was issued in a book about fasting. I know the author tried to do the best he could, but that isn't the same as getting hundreds of questions seeking clarification.

Please make sure to READ THE LABEL when purchasing packaged, canned or bottled foods. They should be sugar-free and chemical-free. Keep this in mind as you review this list of acceptable foods. Look for the list of ingredients on the label (not the nutritional value) to make sure all the ingredients comply with the Daniel Fast Guidelines.

Foods to include in your eating plan during the Daniel Fast

All fruits. These can be fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or canned. Fruits include but are apples, apricots, bananas, blackberries, blueberries, boysenberries, cantaloupe, cherries, cranberries, figs, grapefruit, grapes, guava, honeydew melon, kiwi, lemons, limes, mangoes, nectarines, oranges, papayas, peaches, pears, pineapples, plums, prunes, raisins, raspberries, strawberries, tangelos, tangerines, watermelon

All vegetables. These can be fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or canned. Vegetables include but are artichokes,

asparagus, beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, chili peppers, collard greens, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, garlic, ginger root, kale, leeks, lettuce, mushrooms, mustard greens, okra, onions, parsley, potatoes, radishes, rutabagas, scallions, spinach, sprouts, squashes, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, turnips, watercress, yams, zucchini, veggie burgers are an option if you are not allergic to soy.

All whole grains, including whole wheat, brown rice, millet, quinoa, oats, barley, grits, whole wheat pasta, whole wheat tortillas, rice cakes and popcorn.

All nuts and seeds, including sunflower seeds, cashews, peanuts, sesame. Also nut butters including peanut butter.

All legumes. These can be canned or dried. Legumes include dried beans, pinto beans, split peas, lentils, black eyed peas, kidney beans, black beans, cannellini beans, white beans.

All quality oils including olive, canola, grape seed, peanut, and sesame.

Beverages: spring water, distilled water or other pure waters.

Other: tofu, soy products, vinegar, seasonings, salt, herbs and spices.

Note: Unsweetened plant-based milks and juices can be used in recipes or on cereal, but the only beverage on the Daniel Fast is water.

Foods to avoid on the Daniel Fast

All meat, animal, fish and seafood products including beef, lamb, pork, poultry, fish and shellfish.

All dairy products including milk, cheese, cream, butter, and eggs.

All sweeteners including sugar, raw sugar, date sugar, honey, syrups, molasses, cane juice, date honey, and stevia.

All leavened bread including Ezekiel Bread (it contains yeast and honey) and baked goods.

All leavening agents including yeast, baking soda and baking powder.

All refined and processed foods products including artificial flavorings, food additives, chemicals, white rice, white flour, and foods that contain artificial preservatives.

All deep-fried foods including potato chips, French fries, corn chips.

All solid fats including shortening, margarine, lard and foods high in fat.

Beverages including coffee, tea, herbal teas, carbonated beverages, energy drinks, and alcohol.

Remember, **READ THE LABELS** so you are aware of the ingredients in the package.!

Be blessed on your fast

Learn more about the Daniel Fast at <http://Daniel-Fast.com>

"Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5: 17)

10 Practical Guidelines on Fasting By Charles Ng of Singapore

1. Enter into fasting with a positive faith. If you are determined to seek God diligently by fasting, you have a Scriptural right to expect that God will reward you. In Matthew 6:18, Jesus promises to every believer who fasts correctly: “your father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.”

2. Do not wait for an emergency to drive you to fast. It is better to begin fasting when you are spiritually up than down. The law of progress in God’s Kingdom is from “strength to strength” (Ps. 84:7), “from faith to faith” (Rom. 1:17), and from “glory to glory” (2Cor. 3:18).

3. Do not set for yourself too long a period of fasting. If you are fasting for the first time, begin by omitting one or two meals. Then, move on to longer periods such as a day or two. It is better to begin with a short period and achieving it than to do a long period of fasting and not achieving it.

4. During your period of fasting, feed on God’s Word, the Bible. Where possible, read a portion of Scripture before each period of prayer. The Psalms are especially helpful.

5. Avoid boastfulness—apart from special periods of prayer, your life should be as normal as possible.

6. Check on your motives each time you fast. Take time to read Isaiah 58.

7. If you are on regular medication or suffer from diabetes or TB, it is wise to obtain medical advice before entering into any fast.

8. As you enter fast, you might suffer discomfort, unpleasant physical symptoms such as dizziness or nausea. Do not be deterred. Go through with the fast as planned. After the first day or two, these unpleasant physical reactions usually subside.

9. Remember that hunger is purely a

matter of habit. If you hold out, the sensation of hunger will go away. Sometimes you can fool your stomach by drinking a glass of water instead of snacking.

10. Guard against constipation. Before and after fasting, choose meals that will help you in this respect such as fresh fruits, fruit juices, dried figs, prunes, apricots, or oatmeal.

Total Fast: Abstaining from solid foods for 24 hours. Taking only water.

Partial fast: Abstaining from solid foods for an extended part of the day, e.g. from 7:00 am until 7:00 PM. Taking only water.

1 Meal Fast: Sacrificing one full meal a day, e.g. Abstaining from lunch.

Daniel Fast: Abstaining from meals and other delicacies. Taking only small portions of fresh vegetables, fruit and juices.

+ PRAY

COVID-19 RESPONSE

► **PRAY FOR THE VULNERABLE:** Ask God to protect those most vulnerable to the effects of the virus, especially the elderly and those with underlying health conditions.

► **PRAY FOR GOVERNMENT LEADERS:** Ask God to give our local, state, and national leaders wisdom in how to deal with the virus.

► **PRAY FOR MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS:** Ask that God would guide and protect them as they care for the sick.

► **PRAY FOR FAMILIES:** Ask God to comfort and provide for those whose businesses, job stability, and schooling have been affected.

► **PRAY FOR THE CHURCH:** Ask God to help His people have courage, find ways to serve those in need, and continue proclaiming the Gospel.



A Poem of Praise

Father God, I love You so;
You care for me even when I don't know.
I often question Your intent,
Despite those promises You've already kept.
I try to make sense of all around,
yet my eyes focus narrowly on my own.
You forgive my impatience,
and my self-righteous thoughts;
And secured my salvation through Your Son's
death on the cross.
He redeemed all my sins and gave me new life;
an act that cost a most precious price.
With Your help, dear Lord,
I will trust in the perfect plan
that is a gift from Your great hand.
Thank You for each day's new mercies,
and the grace that wipes away all my inequities.
To You, Adonai, is my praise for always;
may my last breath be a whisper
giving You all the glory.

juliesunne.com



Sunday School is a Family Affair

We have classes for all ages – 3 to 103
Virtual Classes (See page 29 for Details)
(For Transportation Needs Please call the Church 860-344-9527)

Come Grow with US!

Reckoned as Righteous/For Our Sake

Devotional Reading: **Genesis 15:1-6**

Background Scripture: **Romans 4**

EXALT!

Declaration: Romans 4:13-25

God's Promise Realized through Faith

¹³ For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴ For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵ For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law, neither is there transgression.

¹⁶ For this reason the promise depends on faith, in order that it may rest on grace, so that it may be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (who is the father of us all, ¹⁷ as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations"), in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and call into existence the things that do not exist. ¹⁸ Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become "the father of many nations," according to what was said, "So shall your descendants be." ¹⁹ He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), and the barrenness of Sarah's womb. ²⁰ No distrust made waver concerning the promise of God. But he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, ²¹ being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. ²² Therefore "it was reckoned to him as righteousness." ²³ Now the words, "it was reckoned to him," were written not for his sake alone ²⁴ but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, ²⁵ who was handed over for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

Affirmation: Help us to grow stronger in our faith, Lord.

ENGAGE

The promise Paul refers to here is the blessing of Genesis 12:1-3, where God promises to make Abraham into a great nation, to bless him, and eventually to bless

the entire world through him.

Paul is writing to a mixed Jew-Gentile church in Rome, and thus, he had to address the question of what defines God's people, particularly, since Jews had been identifying themselves as God's people by adherence to the law of Moses and in using outward identifiers (diet, dress, lifestyle) for centuries.

The gist of Paul's argument is that Gentiles (and Jews) do not need to submit to a checklist of diet, dress, or calendar to be or show themselves to be God's people—even God's true people descended from Abraham (see also 1 Samuel 16:7). Their lived—out faith in God in a broken world is sign and difference enough (1 Peter 3:15).

This passage echoes many of the same themes we find in Hebrews 11:8-18: Abraham's faith was grounded on who God is, not on merit or his own resources.

Revisiting an earlier argument (see Romans 3:20), Paul reminds the church that the Mosaic law was instituted to identify sin, not to resolve the spiritual exile and judgement sin brings (4:15).

Paul's goal for the church has always been unity, since infighting does not reflect God, nor does it move the Kingdom mission forward. He accomplish this by starting both Jews and Gentiles on the same footing in the past (sin; see 3:9) and with the same basis for relationship with God now (faith, not law; see 4:16). See also John 17:11; Ephesians 4:1-6.

Break into small groups. Think about and discuss the following questions:

- 1) Adults like to hear about heroes from the past. Discuss some heroes who have made a difference in your life, your church and/or society.
- 2) Adults wonder if the promises others make to them will be fulfilled. Has anyone ever made a promise to you that was not fulfilled.
- 3) Adults increase in their desire to share the story of Abraham's righteousness as described by Paul. Recount Abraham's story of righteousness. How does it resonate with you?

EDUCATE:

The Promise and the Law (Romans 4:13): This chapter is a continuation of Paul's discussion on justification by faith by versus works of the law. Paul says that since justification is by faith, then no one can boast about obtaining that justification by works of the law.

(Courage on page 11)

Pray for all of our children, teens, young adults in this school years that God's hands will be upon them keeping them from all hurt, harm and danger. Also pray for all of our families, friends, and all of God's children.

(*Courage from page 10*)

Furthermore, he states that it was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring would receive the promise that he would be heir to the world (v. 13a). Paul emphasizes the fact that the promise to Abraham precedes the law, yet, the promise was the foundation of the law. (Standard Lesson Commentary, NIV 2023-24, p.315)

Since all God's relations with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob occurred prior to the giving of the law of Moses, we cannot say they were based on the law. Instead, they were based on God's declaration of Abraham's righteousness through faith. (<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/romans-4>. Cited November 19,2023)

The Law Does Not Save (Romans 4:14-15): Try as we might, there is nothing we can do to save ourselves. No amount of work will guarantee us a spot in the Kingdom. God made a promise to save the ungodly, and salvation from God is the way. If law is the basis of our salvation, then our salvation depends on our performance in keeping the law—and no one can keep the law good enough to be saved by it. A law promise of salvation can never be sure. (<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/romans-4>. Cited November 19, 2023)

The law could define sin's specific contours and clarify what effects it has, but it cannot save. In fact, sin brings wrath and provokes God's anger when humans break His law. (Standard Lesson Commentary, NIV 2023-24, p. 316)

The promise Comes by Faith (Romans 4:16-22): Two important points of note here: God's salvation is for all who are willing to receive salvation by faith; and the promise to bless the world is offered to all who are willing to emulate Abraham's trust in God.

Paul notes the story of Abraham told in Genesis 17:5, where it is promise that he will be the father of many nations. Paul goes on to speak of "God who gives life to the dead." Remember the promise made to Abraham and Sarah? They were past the age of childbearing, possibly thinking that their efforts to bear children were "dead," but God promised them that they would have a child, even in their old age.

To hope is to wait with expectation for something to occur. For Abraham to hope against hope meant he had no reason to believe that he and Sarah would conceive a child. According to Genesis 17:17, Sarah was even postmenopausal. This childbirth would be nothing short of a miracle. Paul makes no mention of the "help" provided to God, when Hagar is offered to Abraham as a "surrogate" mother. He merely focuses on Abraham with

righteousness—not because he had done good deeds or even avoided evil, but because he had staked his and his family's future on the promises of God. (Standard Lesson Commentary, NIV 2023-24, pgs. 316-318)

The price of Justification (Romans 4:23-25): Paul notes that the same righteousness credited to Abraham was not just for Abraham. It would be extended to his offspring because God promised he would be the father of many nations. Paul notes that those of us who believe that Jesus was raised from the dead will also be created as righteous. There is no indication of when this will occur; but we are consider part of God's kingdom (Romans 8:22-25). Paul describes the actions of a true Messiah, One who die on our behalf. Jesus paid it all. His death was a necessary price paid for the redemption of our sins. The price He paid was necessary for our justification. (Standard Lesson Commentary, NIV 2023-24, pgs. 318-319)

ELEVATE:

Discuss the following questions:

1) Summarize the Abram/Abraham story as recorded in Genesis 17. Note that Abraham righteousness, in the sight of God, preceded the establishment of the Jews as a chosen people; thus, Paul speaks of Abram as the ancestor of both Jews and Gentiles. 2) Debate the effect Abraham's faith had on his response to God's promises. What physical circumstances could have led him to doubt? What truths about God may have helped him overcome these circumstances? 3) Mention that Abraham was not sin-free, but he trusted God to do what God had said. How complete is our trust in God? What can we do to show that we believe in God's promise to us in Christ?

iThink:

1. Discuss the role of Sarah in the fulfillment of God's promise. In what way is her trust in God separate from Abraham's faith? How did her responses demonstrate that her faith was not always mature?
2. Encourage participants to write a paragraph or short poem about the righteousness of God manifested in Abraham or in someone whom they know.
3. Since today is Mother's Day, briefly discuss aspects of Sarah's life.

KEY VERSE:

"[Abraham] grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised." Romans 4:20-21.



(Procrastination from page 1)

heart, as working for the Lord, not for men" (Colossians 3:23). If we put our hearts into our work, as this verse says to do, we will probably find it difficult to procrastinate too much.

The Bible says that when it comes to some things, we should never delay. Jesus taught that reconciling with an offended brother should be done immediately upon our remembrance of the situation (Matthew 5:23-24). He also said to "settle matters quickly" with our adversaries (verse 25). However distasteful it may be to pursue peace with an enemy, we must avoid stalling. Similarly, we are instructed, "Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry" (Ephesians 4:26). Dealing appropriately with our anger is a matter of great importance, and we must not put it off until tomorrow, which will give the devil "a foothold" (verse 27).

Christians must not procrastinate when it comes to sharing the gospel with the lost. There is no time to waste. Jesus likened evangelistic efforts to a man inviting people to a great banquet. As he sent out his servants with the invitations, he said, "Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame" (Luke 14:21). The most striking qualities of the invitation are its openness (anyone and everyone was invited) and its urgency (the call to the feast must go out "quickly").

Some people, upon hearing the gospel and knowing their spiritual need, delay in making a response. This is the most dangerous type of procrastination. Life is short, and we do not know what will happen tomorrow (James 4:13-14). The Bible urges us to get right with God today. "See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. As has just been said: 'Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion'" (Heb 3:12-13, 15). To procrastinate and put off getting right with God is to harden one's own heart.

Jesus could return at any time; we do not know when (Luke 12:40). Our Lord illustrated the importance of being prepared for His coming in Matthew 25:1-13. In this parable, ten virgins await the arrival of the bridegroom and the commencement of the wedding feast. Five of the virgins were prepared for his arrival; five did not attempt to prepare until it was too late, and they were left behind. Jesus calls the unprepared virgins "foolish"; one reason they were unprepared may have been that they procrastinated.

So in the matter of our spiritual life, we dare not procrastinate. It is also unwise to delay healing a broken relationship or dealing with anger. And since our service to God motivates all we do, we have no reason to procrastinate. In short, procrastination is a bad habit that can have eternal effects.

www.GotQuestions.org

(Diligence from page 1)

This proverb tells us that those who work diligently will most likely reap a good result, while those who refuse to work with diligence suffer the consequences. Another one:

"A sluggard's appetite is never filled, but the desires of the diligent are fully satisfied" (Proverbs 13:4)

This proverb again contrasts the diligent with the lazy and shows that diligent people have planned ahead, saved, and worked to provide for their needs. In contrast, the lazy, or the non-diligent, never have enough because they don't see a job through to the end. They quit or do shoddy work and reap the results of their lack of diligence.

We are told in Proverbs 4:23 to guard our hearts with diligence because everything we do flows from the heart. If we are not diligent to guard against falsehood, evil thoughts, and lustful desires, our enemy Satan is standing by to take advantage. Diligence implies an intentional action of guarding our hearts, rather than a passive acceptance of everything that enters. Second Corinthians 10:5-6 gives an example of how to guard our hearts by "taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ." As a sentry is diligent in guarding a fortress, so must we be diligent in guarding our hearts and minds.

After outlining specific commands and instructions, Paul urged Timothy to "be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your

progress" (1 Timothy 4:15). The "matters" Timothy was to be diligent in included identifying false teachers (verses 1-5), avoiding myths and fruitless discussions (verse 7), setting "an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity" (verse 12), and devoting himself "to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching" (verse 13). These were not suggestions to be dabbled with but commands to be diligently applied.

Being a follower of Christ is also to be pursued with diligence. The lackadaisical way that some professing believers approach a relationship with God is reflected nowhere in the Bible. Instead, Jesus made it clear that those who wished to be His disciples must be "all in" (Luke 9:57-62). Unless we diligently pursue righteousness and obedience, we will experience failure. The world is too appealing, temptation too abundant. There are too many excuses for turning away. That's why Jesus emphasized that the greatest commandment is to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength" (Mark 12:28-31). In other words, life's ultimate goal is to diligently love the Lord. All actions flow from the posture of our hearts. When we make diligence the common ingredient in everything we do, and we choose to do godly things, we set a standard for ourselves that will propel us toward godliness and a life of excellence.

www.GotQuestions.org

(Pentecost from page 1)

upper room. On the Day of Pentecost, just as promised, the sound of a violent wind filled the house and tongues of fire came to rest on each of them and all were filled with the Holy Spirit. They were given the power of communication, which Peter used to begin the ministry for which Jesus had prepared him. After the coming of the Holy Spirit, the disciples did not stay in the room basking in God's glory but burst out to tell the world. This was the beginning of the church as we know it.

Today, in many Christian churches, Pentecost Sunday is celebrated to recognize the gift of the Holy Spirit, realizing that God's very life, breath and energy live in believers. During this service, John 20:19-23 may be the core of the message about our risen Savior supernaturally appearing to the fear-laden disciples. Their fear gave way to joy when the Lord showed them His hands and side. He assured them peace and repeated the command given in Matthew 28:19-20, saying, "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." Then He breathed on them, and they received the Holy Spirit (John 20:21-23).

The celebration of Pentecost Sunday reminds us of the reality that we all have the unifying Spirit that was poured out upon the first-century church in Acts 2:1-4. It is a reminder that we are co-heirs with Christ, to suffer with Him that we may also be glorified with Him; that the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good (1 Corinthians 12:7); that we are all baptized by one Spirit into one body (1 Corinthians 12:13); and that the Spirit which raised Jesus from the dead lives inside believers (Romans 8:9-11). This gift of the Holy Spirit that was promised and given to all believers on the first Pentecost is promised for you and your children and for all who are far off whom the Lord our God will call (Acts 2:39).

www.GotQuestions.org

"What is the day of Pentecost?"

Pentecost is significant in both the Old and New Testaments. "Pentecost" is actually the Greek name for a festival known in the Old Testament as the Feast of Weeks (Leviticus 23:15; Deuteronomy 16:9). The Greek word means "fifty" and refers to the fifty days that have elapsed since the wave offering of Passover. The Feast of Weeks celebrated the end of the grain harvest. Most interesting, however, is its use in Joel and Acts. Looking back to Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28-32) and forward to the promise of the Holy Spirit in Christ's last words on earth before His ascension into heaven (Acts 1:8), Pentecost signals the beginning of the church age.

The only biblical reference to the actual events of Pentecost is Acts 2:1-3. Pentecost is reminiscent of the Last Supper; in both instances the disciples are together in a house for what proves to be an important event. At the Last Supper the disciples witness the end of the Messiah's earthly ministry as He asks them to remember Him after His death until He returns. At Pentecost, the disciples witness the birth of the New Testament church in the coming of the Holy Spirit to indwell all believers. Thus the scene of the disciples in a room at Pentecost links the commencement of the Holy Spirit's work in the church with the conclusion of Christ's earthly ministry in the upper room before the crucifixion.

The description of fire and wind mentioned in the Pentecost account resounds throughout the Old and the New Testament. The sound of the wind at Pentecost was "rushing" and "mighty." Scriptural references to the power of wind (always understood to be under God's control) abound. Exodus 10:13; Psalm 18:42 and Isaiah 11:15 in the Old Testament and Matthew 14:23-32 in the New Testament are only a few examples. More significant than wind as power is wind as life in the Old Testament (Job 12:10) and as spirit in the New (John 3:8). Just as the first Adam received the breath of physical life (Genesis 2:7), so the last Adam, Jesus, brings the breath of spiritual life. The idea of spiritual life as generated by the Holy Spirit is certainly implicit in the sound of the wind at Pentecost.

Fire is often associated in the Old Testament with the presence of God (Exodus 3:2; 13:21-22; 24:17; Isaiah 10:17) and with His holiness (Psalm 97:3; Malachi 3:2). Likewise, in the New Testament, fire is associated with the presence of God (Hebrews 12:29) and the purification He can bring about in human life (Revelation 3:18). God's presence and holiness are implied in the Pentecostal tongues of fire. Indeed, fire is identified with Christ Himself (Revelation 1:14; 19:12); this association naturally underlies the Pentecost gift of the Holy Spirit, who would teach the disciples the things of Christ (John 16:14).

Another aspect of the Day of Pentecost is the miraculous speaking in foreign tongues which enabled people from various language groups to understand the message of the apostles. In addition is the bold and incisive preaching of Peter to a Jewish audience. The effect of the sermon was powerful, as listeners were "cut to the heart" (Acts 2:37) and instructed by Peter to "repent, and be baptized" (Acts 2:38). The narrative concludes with three thousand souls being added to the fellowship, the breaking of bread and prayers, apostolic signs and wonders, and a community in which everyone's needs were met.

www.GotQuestions.org

TEXTING GOD

Read: Colossians 1:3-12

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. Colossians 1:9

An article in The Washington Post told about a fifteen-year-old girl who sent and received 6,473 cell phone text message in a single month. She says about her constant communication with friends, "I would die without it." And she is not alone. Researchers say that US teens with cell phones average more than 2,200 text message a month.

To me, this ongoing digital conversation offers a remarkable illustration of what prayer could and should be like for every follower of Christ. Paul seemed to be constantly in an attitude of prayer for others: "We have not stopped praying for you" (Colossians 1:9). "Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests" (Ephesians 6:18). "Pray continually" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). But how can we possibly do that?

Missionary Frank Laubach described his habit of "shooting" prayers at people as he encountered them during the course of each day. In a sense, he was "texting" God on their behalf, staying in

constant communication with the Father. Laubach believed that prayer is the mightiest force in the world, and said: "My part is to live in this hour in continuous inner conversation with God and in perfect responsiveness to His will."

Pray continually. Perhaps what Paul urged us to do can be done. David McCasland

Prayer Tips: Remember that prayer is not just personal but also corporate. Read James Bank's book Praying Together to learn more

QUIET TIME WITH GOD

Read: Psalm 23

He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters. Psalm 23:2

The word connected captures our contemporary experience of life. Many people rarely go anywhere without a cell phone, ipod, or laptop. We have become accessible 24 hours a day. Some psychologists see this craving to stay connected as an addition. Yet a growing

number of people are deliberately limiting their use of technology. Being a "tech-no" is their way of preserving times of quiet, while limiting the flow of information into their lives.

Many followers of Christ find that a daily time of Bible reading and prayer is essential in their walk of faith. This "quiet time" is a disconnection from external distractions in order to connect with God. The "green pastures" and "quest waters" of Psalm 23:2 are more than an idyllic country scene. They speak of our communion with God whereby He restores our souls and leads us in His

paths (v. 3).

All of us can make time to meet with God, but do we? In Robert Foster's booklet 7 Minutes with God, he suggests a way to begin: Start with a brief prayer for guidance, then read the Bible for a few minutes, and close with a short time of prayer that includes adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication for others. It's to take time today to connect with the Lord, who is our life. David McCasland

Prayer Tip: Create prayer cards for family members with specific needs.

BAD IDEA

Read: Hebrews 10:22-39

Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings. Hebrews 10:22

The former athlete had neglected his body for too long, so he began an exercise routine. The first day, he did several push-ups and went for a light jog. The next day, more push-ups, a few sit-ups, and a longer run. Day 3: exercises and a mile-and-a-half run. On Day 4, our

ex-athlete in retraining woke up with a sore throat.

Then he did one more exercise: He jumped to the conclusion that exercising was a bad idea. If all he got out of his huffing and puffing was sickness, it wasn't for him.

Let's examine another scenario. A Christian realizing he has neglected his relationship with God, begins a new spiritual routine of Bible-reading and prayer. But after just a few days, some problems arise in his life. What does he conclude? Like the ex-athlete, should he decide that his spiritual quest was a bad

idea and that it didn't do any good? Certainly not.

We don't pray and read the Bible to get a perfect, trouble-free life. Pursuing God is not cause and effect. We do it because it draws us closer in our relationship with the One who is perfect. The pursuit of godliness will not exempt us from trouble (2 Timothy 3:12). But a life dedicated to loving and pursuing God (Hebrews 10:22) is always a good idea—no matter what happens. Dave Branon

Prayer Tip: Create a daily prayer plan: Monday, Thankfulness; Tuesday, Praise; etc.

PASCAL'S PRAYER

Read: Philippians 4:4-13

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it for the glory of God. 1 Corinthians 10:31

Blaise Pascal, the brilliant seventeenth-century intellectual, made significant contribution in the fields of science and mathematics. He established the groundwork for the development of mechanical calculators and modern hydraulic operation.

As a young man, Pascal had a profound encounter with Jesus Christ.

This life-changing experience motivated him to refocus his study from science and math to theology.

Pascal wrote a remarkable prayer that can help each believer in facing the task of life. He prayed: "Lord, help me to do great things as though they were little, since I do them with Your power; and little things as though they were great, since I do them in Your name."

Pascal's supplication is profoundly scriptural. Paul said, "I can do all this through him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13) and admonishes us: "Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). Pascal echoes these admonitions

to depend on God for His power and to view every act as important, since it will reflect on His glory.

The next time you face a huge task, remember that God is your strength. And when you encounter a seemingly insignificant one, determine to do it with excellence to the glory of God. Dennis Fisher

Prayer Tips: Create a prayer prompter for yourself: perhaps a rubber band on your wrist. When you see it, you'll be reminded to pray.

THE ARMOR OF GOD

EPHESIANS 6:10-18

"... Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes." v. 10, 11

The Shield of Faith (Eph. 6:16)

Faith is being sure that God will keep His promises. Faith in God protects you when you are tempted to doubt.



Feet Prepared with the Gospel of Peace (Eph. 6:15)

The Gospel of Peace is being right with God and being contented in troubled times. Jesus said peacemakers were blessed. →

The Helmet of Salvation (Eph. 6:17)

Put on the Helmet of Salvation by believing that Jesus Christ died for your sins and rose again.

The Breastplate of Righteousness (Eph. 6:14)

Righteousness is being honest, good, humble, and fair to others. It means standing up for weaker people.

The Belt of Truth (Eph. 6:14)

Truth keeps us from giving in to the world's beliefs. Compare your beliefs and actions to the truth of the Word of God.

The Sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17)

which is the Word of God. God's Word is our offensive weapon. When we tell others what the Bible says, the Holy Spirit helps people see their bad thoughts and actions, and makes them want to be forgiven.

Ephesians 6:10-20 (New King James Version)

¹⁰ Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, ¹³ against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; ¹⁸ praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints— ¹⁹ and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

It is important to note that forgiveness operates in the realm of sin. In the majority of the passages in the Bible that contain the word *forgive* or *forgiveness*, sin is mentioned. The following are typical examples:

Genesis 50:17: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly. Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father.

Exodus 32:32: But now, please forgive their sin.

Leviticus 4:35: In this way the priest will make atonement for them for the sin they have committed, and they will be forgiven.

1 Samuel 25:28: Please forgive your servant's presumption.

Matthew 12:31: And so I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.

Luke 5:20: When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven."

For a person to find true forgiveness, he or she must admit the sin. This is called confession. If a person tries to pass off sin as a mere mistake, human failing, or temporary lapse of judgment; or if he or she simply denies the sin altogether, it is a barrier to forgiveness.

1 John 1:8–10: If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

God forgives sin, yet this does not mean that He simply "looks the other way" or "sweeps it under the rug." The penalty for sin is death (Romans 6:23), and that penalty must be paid. In the Old Testament, God allowed for a sacrificial animal to take the place of the sinner. Leviticus 5:15–16 says, "When anyone is unfaithful to the Lord by sinning unintentionally in regard to any of the Lord's holy things, they are to bring to the Lord as a penalty a ram from the flock, one without defect and of the proper value in silver, according to the sanctuary shekel. It is a guilt

offering. They must make restitution for what they have failed to do in regard to the holy things, pay an additional penalty of a fifth of its value and give it all to the priest. The priest will make atonement for them with the ram as a guilt offering, and they will be forgiven."

The writer of Hebrews observes, "The law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Hebrews 9:22). However, the blood of sacrificial animals did not actually pay for sin. It simply postponed the judgment until a better sacrifice could be offered to pay the full penalty of sin and make forgiveness possible. Hebrews 10 explains this in depth, but the following excerpts from that chapter outline the flow of the argument:

The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. Otherwise, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins. It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. (Hebrews 10:1–4)

Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. (Hebrews 10:11–12)

"This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds." Then he adds: "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more." And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary. (Hebrews 10:16–18)

In order for God to forgive us, Jesus gave Himself as the sacrifice for sin. Jesus alluded to that sacrifice at the Last Supper when He told His disciples, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26:28). After the resurrection, the apostles carried the message of forgiveness through Jesus Christ throughout the world, preaching to both Jews and Gentiles:

Acts 10:43: All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins

through his name.

Acts 13:38: Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you.

Ephesians 1:7: In [Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.

So God forgives people on the basis of the sacrifice of Christ. The only requirement is that sinful people confess their sin, turn from it, and trust in Jesus Christ as Savior. Once a person has experienced the forgiveness of God, he or she is then able (and responsible) to forgive others. "Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you" (Colossians 3:13). In fact, those who refuse to forgive betray the fact that they do not understand how much of their own sin they need to have forgiven. Christians should be willing to forgive people who have sinned against them. Every person has wronged God far more than they have been wronged by other people. Jesus illustrates the point in Matthew 18:21–35:

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?"

Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

"Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

"At this the servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

"But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded.

"His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.'

(*Forgiveness from page 16*)

"But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

"Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

"This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

We often hear the phrase *forgive and forget*, and this can be misleading. As a rejoinder to this phrase, sometimes we hear, "I'll forgive, but I will never forget." To forgive and forget does not mean that a person who has been wronged develops some kind of sanctified amnesia. A person who has been abused will never forget that it happened. A person who has suffered from an adulterous spouse will always remember that experience. A parent who has had a child abducted will probably think about that crime every day he or she spends on earth. Yet, it is possible for each of these people who have been sinned against to forgive and also to forget, as long as the biblical definition of *forget* is in view.

In the Bible, remembering and forgetting do not have to do with retention of information in the brain. In Genesis 8:1, after the flood, "God remembered Noah." Does this imply that for a while God had forgotten about Noah, misplaced him among the flood waters, and then one day He remembered and thought He had better check on him? No, the biblical concept of remembering has to do with "choosing to act," and *forgetting* means "refusing to act" on the basis of something. When the Bible says God "remembered" Noah, it means that God chose to act on Noah's behalf and sent a wind to help the waters recede more rapidly. God promises that, under the New Covenant, "I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more" (Jeremiah 31:34; cf. Hebrews 8:12; 10:17). God does not forget that people have sinned, but, when He forgives, He chooses not to act on the basis of those sins. It is similar to the sentiment expressed in 1 Corinthians 13:5 where "love keeps no record of wrongs." In the phrase *forgive*

and *forget*, the two terms are really synonyms. Both mean that the person who has forgiven will not continue to hold that sin against the wrongdoer or take it into account in future interactions. A person may remember that it happened, but he or she can choose not to act on it—that is biblical forgetting.

Many wonder about forgiving people who have sinned but have not confessed, repented, or asked for forgiveness. Sometimes in court, the victims of a crime will get to speak to the perpetrator before the sentence is passed. Often the victims will tell how the crime has impacted them and ask the judge to impose the strictest sentence. But, on occasion, the victim will say to the perpetrator, "I forgive you." Is this forgiveness valid if the convicted criminal has not confessed and asked for forgiveness?

The answer is both "yes" and "no." On one hand, the victim often forgives the criminal so that he or she will not be eaten up by hatred for the criminal. The forgiveness granted by the victim in court does not absolve the criminal from any legal penalties, so the state is still right to prosecute. On the other hand, God forgives people when they confess their sin and ask for forgiveness; forgiveness only comes through faith in Christ, which involves a spiritual transformation. In the courtroom example, even if the victim "forgives" the criminal, there can never be the establishment or restoration of a relationship unless the criminal confesses his sin and actually seeks forgiveness.

The goal of biblical forgiveness is not only to benefit the victim but to restore the sinner. This cannot happen without the acknowledgment of sin on the sinner's part. Therefore, in some cases the one who has been sinned against is right not to "let it go" until the sinner has asked for forgiveness. Good parents should be willing to forgive once their wayward child has confessed and asked for forgiveness, but they are right to withhold forgiveness until their child has taken the steps necessary to allow the reconciliation. It would be foolish for a father to simply forgive his teenage son for disobeying his rules (and the law) by drinking and driving if the son does not acknowledge that what he did was wrong. However, the father should be willing to forgive when the conditions are right. In some situations, granting unrequested forgiveness cheapens the concept and ignores the seriousness of the offense.

A person should always be willing to forgive every time forgiveness is requested, as Jesus taught. It goes without saying that on some of those occasions the request may be insincere, or, even if sincere, the person will commit the same offense against us again at a later time. After all, isn't this what we do to God, and isn't that how He forgives us?

In some cases the one who has been sinned against is right to simply "let it go," even if forgiveness has not been requested, and in other cases the one sinned against needs to wait until the offending party has confessed and asked for forgiveness, so that the relationship can be restored. This is the principle behind church discipline, as outlined in Matthew 18:15-17. If the confrontation of the sinner brings about confession, then reconciliation and forgiveness are offered. If the confrontation is unsuccessful, excommunication from the church is the final result. As a general rule regarding petty slights and offenses in the family and in the church, a person should let them go—"turn the other cheek," as Jesus put it (Matthew 5:39). However, if the offense is such that turning the cheek is not possible, the offended party is obligated to go talk to the offender about it. Under no circumstance does one have the right to harbor resentment, nurture bitterness, or gossip about the offense.

Here are some questions to ponder in relation to forgiveness:

- Have I confessed my sin and received God's forgiveness?
- Is there anyone whom I have sinned against and from whom I need to ask forgiveness?
- Is there anyone who has sinned against me and has asked me for forgiveness, but I have refused to forgive?
- Is there anyone I am holding a grudge against for past wrongs?
- If there is an unresolved issue, will I simply "let it go," or will I go talk to the offender about it? (Continuing to hold a grudge is not a biblical option!)
- Would I be willing to forgive if the offender asked me for forgiveness?

www.GotQuestions.org



A Prayer for Our Nation

Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may move every human heart, especially the hearts of the people of this land, that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; that our divisions being healed, we may live in justice and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Adapted from
The Book of Common Prayer

Question: "Is the ACTS formula for prayer a good way to pray?"

Answer: The ACTS formula for prayer has been taught to children and new believers for many years. *ACTS* is an acronym that gives a basic model on how to pray: with Adoration, with Confession, with Thanksgiving, and with Supplication. While prayer formulas can help us learn to pray, they do not necessarily make our prayers more effective or ensure that our prayers will be answered. This model for prayer is loosely based on the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13), except for thanksgiving.

The ACTS model for prayer includes these elements:

Adoration – The *A* in the ACTS model stands for adoration, which means worship—glorying and exalting God. Through adoration, we show our loyalty and admiration of our Father. As we pray, we are called to worship God in adoration. This could be a song of praise to Him, praying a psalm of worship, declaring His attributes, or a myriad of other forms of worship.

Confession – The *C* in the ACTS model stands for confession. The word *confess* means “to agree with.” When we confess our sins, we agree with God that we are wrong and that we have sinned against Him by what we have said, thought, or done. God forgives us and restores our fellowship with Him (1 John 1:9).

Thanksgiving – The *T* represents thanksgiving. Philippians 4:6 says, “With thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God” (ESV). How is thanksgiving different from adoration? The difference is that worship focuses on who God is; thanksgiving focuses on what God has done. We can thank God for many things including His love, salvation, protection, and provision.

Supplication – The *S* stands for supplication, which refers to prayer for our and others’ needs. A supplication is a request or petition. We may pray for mercy (Psalm 4:1), leading (Psalm 5:8), wisdom (James 1:5), and much more. Paul encouraged us to make “supplication for all the saints” (Ephesians 6:18, ESV), which means to pray diligently for our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Is the ACTS formula for prayer biblical? The acronym itself isn’t found in the Bible, but it can serve as a guide, especially when we are learning how to pray. Remember, prayer isn’t a formula, and each prayer doesn’t have to cover every type of prayer. God wants us to talk from our hearts and express ourselves to Him. As we grow in our love for Jesus Christ, we will naturally desire to talk to Him more.



Question: "What is the five-finger prayer?"

Answer: The five-finger prayer is a method to help people remember categories of people to pray for. It is a memory device used as an aid to prayer.

The little finger, or the pinkie, is the smallest finger, and it represents the individual who is praying. We need to pray for ourselves, but in humility we need to remember that we are the least important.

The ring finger this is usually the weakest of our fingers, and it reminds us to pray for the weak and the sick among us.

The middle finger is the tallest finger, and it reminds us to pray for our leaders.

The pointer finger, or the index finger, reminds us to pray for people who point the way—teachers and church leaders.

The thumb is the thickest and strongest digit, and when the hand is at rest, the thumb is the nearest to the rest of the body, reminding us to pray for family and friends—people who are closest to us.

The five-finger prayer has been popularized by Pope Francis. There is nothing specifically Roman Catholic about the five-finger prayer; it is simply one method to help people remember whom to pray for, similar to a prayer list. Since we all have our hands with us, the reminder of those in need of prayer is constant.

© Copyright 2002-2021 Got Questions Ministries. All rights reserved. www.GotQuestions.org

LEAVING A SPIRITUAL LEGACY

I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois your mother Eunice. 2 Timothy 1:5

As teens, my sister and I didn't understand my mom's decision to receive Jesus as her Savior, but we couldn't deny the changes we saw in her. She had more peace and joy and began faithfully serving at church. She had such a hunger for studying the Bible that she attended and graduated from seminary. A few years after my mom's decision, my sister accepted Christ and started serving Him. And a few years after that, I also placed my trust in Jesus and started serving Him. Many years later, my father joined us in believing in Him as well. My mom's decision for Christ created a life-changing ripple effect among our immediate and extended family.

When the apostle Paul wrote his final letter to Timothy and encouraged him to persevere in his faith in Jesus, he noted Timothy's spiritual heritage. "I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also" (2 Timothy 1:5).

Moms and grandmoms, your decisions can affect generations.

How beautiful that Timothy's mom and grandmom helped nurture his faith so he could become the man calling him to be.

On this Mother's Day and beyond, let's honor mothers who've made a decision to follow Jesus.

Let's also leave a spiritual legacy for our loved ones. Nancy Gavilanes

Which godly women can you honor today? What kind of spiritual legacy would you like to leave for others?

Father God, thank You for godly mothers. Please help me to also leave a spiritual legacy for others.

HOPE OF HEALING

At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked. John 5:9

A new cause for hope has emerged for people paralyzed by spinal cord injuries. German researchers have discovered a way to stimulate nerve growth to reconnect the neural pathways between the muscles and the brain. The regrowth has enabled paralyzed mice to walk again, and testing will continue to determine whether the therapy is safe and effective for humans.

What science seeks to achieve on behalf of those who suffer paralysis, Jesus did through miracles. When he visited the pool at Bethesda, a place where many who ailed lingered in hopes of healing, Jesus sought out a man among them who "had been an invalid for thirty-eight years" (John 5:5). After confirming that the man did, indeed, wish to be healed, Christ instructed him to stand up and walk. "At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked" (V. 9)

We've not promised that all our physical ailments will be healed by God—there were others at the pool who weren't healed by Jesus that day. But those who put their trust in Him can experience the healing He brings—from despaired to hope, bitterness to grace, hatred to love, accusation to a willingness to forgive. No scientific discovery (or pool of water) can offer us such healing; it only comes by faith. Kirsten Holmberg

Where are you tempted to look for spiritual healing other than in God? How are you encouraged knowing that one day believers in Jesus will experience complete healing as well?

Thank You, dear God, for curing my greatest ailment—the plague of sin—and restoring my spiritual health through Jesus.

Today's Scripture: Timothy 1:3-5

³ I thank God, whom I serve, as my ancestors did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. ⁴ Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. ⁵ I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.

INSIGHT

Thought Paul affectionately called Timothy "my true son in the faith" (1 Timothy 1:2; see 2 Timothy), he wasn't the one who taught him about Jesus. It was his own mother Eunice and grandmother Lois (2 Timothy 1:5) who "taught [him] the Holy Scriptures from childhood, and ...[gave him] the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting Acts 16:2). He became Paul's intern, traveling companion, and trusted protégé (VV. 3-4; Philippians 2:19-22). That the apostle sent Timothy to deal with the troublesome Corinthian church (1 Corinthians 4:17) and to confront false teachers in the Ephesian church (1 Timothy 1:3) testify to this young man's spiritual maturity and ministry leadership. Visit ODBU.org/NT229 to learn more about the lesser-known women of the Bible. K. T. Sim

Ministries, Grand Rapids, Michigan Reprinted by Permission

Today's Scripture: John 5:1-9

¹ Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals. ² Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. ³ Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. [4] ⁵ One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. ⁶ When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?"

⁷ "Sir," the invalid replied, "I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me."

⁸ Then Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk."
⁹ At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.

The day on which this took place was a Sabbath.

INSIGHT

Because Jesus healed on the Sabbath, "the Jewish leaders began to persecute him" (John 5:16). In response, He told them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working" (V. 17). This so incensed them that "they tried all the more to kill him" (V. 18). In their eyes, Christ deserved death because He wasn't only breaking the Sabbath but blaspheming by calling God His Father. This Sabbath miracle wasn't the only one that had the leaders up in arms. He also drove out a demon (Mark 1:21-28), healed a shriveled hand (Matthew 12:9-13), a crippled woman (Luke 13:10-17), and a man "whose arms and legs were swollen" (14:2 NLT). The Jewish leaders were also angry because Jesus' disciples picked grain on the Sabbath. He told them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even on the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27-28). Alyson Kieda

Ministries, Grand Rapids, Michigan Reprinted by Permission

A Father's Prayer

I thank you, Lord, for giving me the blessing of a family. The greatest joy I've ever had, the joy of being called a Dad. I ask your guidance each new day, to help me know just what to say, To answer all the "how's" and "why's," when I look in their trusting eyes.

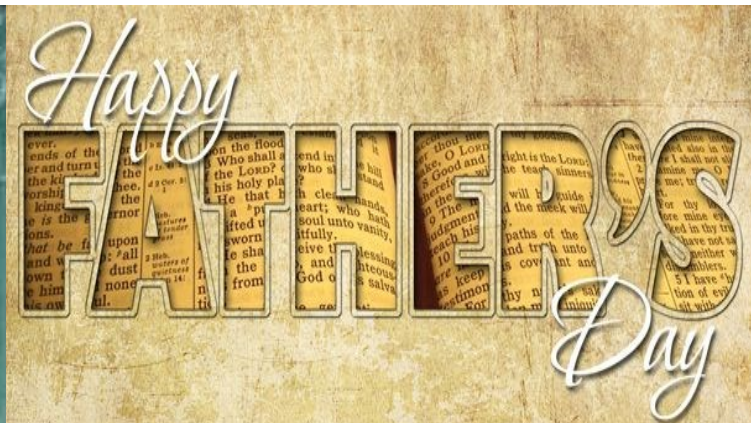
To be there for them when they fall, to mend a glove, to fix a doll, To hold a hand or sing a song, to try to teach them right from wrong. Their childhood flashes by so fast,

I yearn for ways to make it last,

So when they go to bed each night, I give a kiss and hug them tight.

Such timeless treasures sleeping there,

the answer to a father's prayer.



UponThisRock.com

Father's Day Blessings

THE LORD
BLESS YOU AND KEEP YOU;
THE LORD
MAKE HIS FACE SHINE ON YOU
AND BE GRACIOUS TO YOU;
THE LORD
TURN HIS FACE TOWARD YOU
AND GIVE YOU PEACE.

~ NUMBERS 6:24-26



Father's Day Prayer

God our Father,

In your wisdom and love you made all things. Bless those fathers who have taken upon themselves, the responsibility of parenting. Bless those who have lost a spouse to death ... or divorce who are parenting their children alone. Strengthen them by your love that they may be and become the loving, caring persons they are meant to be.

Grant this through Christ our Lord.

Amen

A Prayer For Fathers

God our Father,

In your wisdom and love you made all things. Bless those fathers who have taken upon themselves the responsibility of parenting. Bless those who have lost a spouse to death, separation, or divorce, and who are parenting their children alone. Strengthen all Dads by your love that they may become the loving, caring persons they are meant to be.

Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen!

Defeat Temptation

We become low-spirited when we weakly give into temptation. Such defeat dulls the spirit; you lose that keen sense of happiness you enjoy when in full control.

No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. 1 Corinthians 10:13

The way to overcome temptation is clear: sincerely want God's help. Earnestly ask for it: believe you have it; act as God wants you to act. This will make you happy and high-spirited.

God Has His Eye on You

Let the following words sink deeply into your consciousness, and the experience of God's protection will be yours.

For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. Psalm 91:11.

How your spirit will rise as the amazing truth grips you that nothing in this world can hurt you! God is watching over you to keep you in all your ways. His amazing kindness surrounds you always. You go through life with a high-hearted spirit, know God watches over you.

He Makes You Whole

Depression of spirit is often caused by a haunting sense of incompleteness and by unresolved conflicts. Jesus Christ, the skillful Physician, heals the personality as surely as he heals the body and soul. This described in a wonderful passage: **Wherever He entered, into villages, cities, or the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged Him that they might touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched Him were made well. Mark 6:56**

To experience His healing power, yield yourself to Him willingly. Make the first move, however timidly. He will respond with the miraculous touch that makes you whole in body, mind and spirit. How your spirits will rise as you gain a deep inner sense of wholeness!

Love Life and Have It Good

For anyone who wishes to enjoy life and experience God's goodness-to be happy, respected and, in short, live a full, rich life-read slowly but reflectively and humbly the following verses: **He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit. Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it. 1 Peter 3:10, 11**

In these two verses are listed just a few things that put happiness in your heart.

We are told to curb our tongues from speaking evil about anyone. Simply never say anything to hurt anyone. Moreover, we are to refrain from double talk, from shrewd remarks that are designed to advance our interests at someone else's disadvantage. We are to turn our back upon evil and, in every way possible, do good. We are to help people and bring blessings into their lives. We are to seek peace on earth and in our own hearts, and so live that peacefulness may flow from us to others. We are to become an island of peace in a world of turmoil.

Do the simple, honest Christian things and life will be good-and you will love it

The Cure for "Swamped Fever"

When life become too hectic, when you feel constantly swamped, it's easy to become dispirited. For this unhappy condition, turn to this verse: **He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. Revelation 21:7**

The secret is simply to practice the idea that you are a child of God. As such, God will be your guide; He will lend you His strength to augment your own weakness. You can overcome rather than be overcome. Instead of things flowing away from you, they will flow toward you. You shall indeed "inherit all things." Life will come your way. You will get a great lift of spirit.

No More Doubt—Only Confidence

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

If we do our part—live right and have faith—God will see that all of your real needs are supplied. God has infinite riches, enough for all of us. We can receive these through God's law of boundless supply. Live according to His principles, and you will never look in vain for any necessity. How the spirit rises when you develop confidence and know that you will be cared for, that all will be well, that the future is bright with promise.

Victory in the Battle of Life

Above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Ephesian 6:16, 17.

The shield was used to protect the heart; the helmet was to protect the head. So must we protect our hearts and minds against negativism, pessimism, evil thoughts, hate. The mind must be kept clean. Take the sword of God's word and put to flight those enemies of the good life: wrong thinking and wrongdoing. Thus armed, you can win the battle of life.

“

In Christ I am anointed and a powerful person of God.

I am a joint-heir with Jesus and more than a conqueror.

I am a doer of the Word of God and a channel for His blessings.

If God be for me, who can be against me?

I am blessed coming in and I am blessed going out.

My enemies are fleeing before me.

God has commanded His blessing on my storehouses.

He has opened His Good treasures and I shall lend and not borrow.

I am the head and not the tail.

He has given me power to make wealth.

I dwell in the secret place.

I have His protection and provision.

God is my refuge, my fortress.

I am not afraid of the snare of the fowler.

No Evil shall befall me and no plague shall come nigh my dwelling.

God has given his angels charge over me and they are bearing me up in their hands

lest I dash my foot against a stone, as declared in Psalm 91.

1 Peter 2:9 establishes I am a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation.

I am a peculiar person called out of darkness into His marvelous light.

1 Peter 2:24 states, I have been healed by the stripes of Jesus.

*Cancer, sugar diabetes, heart disease, sickness, afflictions, infections,
or any other disease cannot enter my body.*

I am without spot or blemish, an intercessor,

the righteousness of God, saved, and washed in the Blood of Jesus.

“No weapon formed against me shall prosper, and every tongue which rise against me in judgment You shall condemn.

This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD,

and their righteousness is from Me,” Says the LORD.

I am saved from wrath by Him and justified by the blood of the Lamb.

*Lord I pray that those may prosper that love Jerusalem and that peace will be within them
and prosperity in their houses according to Psalms 122:6-9.*

Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah!

PEOPLE ARE OFTEN UNREASONABLE
AND SELF-CENTERED.

FORGIVE THEM ANYWAY.

IF YOU ARE KIND, PEOPLE MAY
ACCUSE YOU OF ULTERIOR MOTIVES.

BE KIND ANYWAY.

IF YOU ARE SUCCESSFUL, YOU WILL WIN
SOME FALSE FRIENDS AND SOME TRUE ENEMIES

SUCCEED ANYWAY.

WHAT YOU SPEND YEARS BUILDING
SOMEONE CAN DESTROY OVERNIGHT

BUILD ANYWAY.

IF YOU ARE HONEST,
PEOPLE MAY CHEAT YOU.

BE HONEST ANYWAY.

IF YOU FIND HAPPINESS,
PEOPLE MAY BE JEALOUS.

BE HAPPY ANYWAY.

THE GOOD YOU DO TODAY MAY
BE FORGOTTEN TOMORROW.

DO GOOD ANYWAY.

GIVE THE WORLD THE BEST YOU HAVE
AND IT MAY NEVER BE ENOUGH.

GIVE YOUR BEST ANYWAY.

FOR YOU SEE, IN THE END,
IT IS BETWEEN YOU AND GOD.

**IT WAS NEVER BETWEEN
YOU AND THEM ANYWAY.**

-MOTHER THERESA



THE BEAUTY OF HOLLAND

I AM OFTEN ASKED TO DESCRIBE THE EXPERIENCE OF RAISING A CHILD WITH DISABILITY - TO TRY TO HELP PEOPLE WHO HAVE NOT SHARED THAT UNIQUE EXPERIENCE TO UNDERSTAND IT, TO IMAGINE HOW IT WOULD FEEL. IT'S LIKE THIS...

WHEN YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE A BABY, IT'S LIKE PLANNING A FABULOUS TRIP TO ITALY. YOU BUY A BUNCH OF GUIDEBOOKS AND MAKE YOUR WONDERFUL PLANS. THE COLISEUM, THE MICHEL-ANGELO DAVID. THE GONDOLAS IN VENICE. YOU LEARN SOME HANDY PHRASES IN ITALIAN. IT'S ALL VERY, VERY EXCITING!

AFTER MONTHS OF EAGER ANTICIPATION, THE DAY FINALLY ARRIVES. YOU PACK YOUR BAGS AND OFF YOU GO. SEVERAL HOURS LATER THE PLANE LANDS. THE FLIGHT ATTENDANT COMES IN AND SAYS, "WELCOME TO HOLLAND."

"HOLLAND!!!" YOU SAY, "WHAT DO YOU MEAN HOLLAND! I SIGNED UP FOR ITALY. I'M SUPPOSED TO BE IN ITALY! ALL MY LIFE I'VE DREAMED OF GOING TO ITALY."

BUT THERE'S A CHANGE IN THE FLIGHT PLAN. THEY LANDED IN HOLLAND AND YOU MUST STAY. THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT THEY HAVEN'T TAKEN YOU TO A HORRIBLE, DISGUSTING, FILTHY PLACE, FULL OF PESTILENCE, FAMINE AND DISEASE. IT'S JUST A DIFFERENT PLACE.

SO YOU MUST GO OUT AND BUY NEW GUIDEBOOKS. AND YOU MUST LEARN A WHOLE NEW LANGUAGE. AND YOU WILL MEET A WHOLE NEW GROUP OF PEOPLE YOU WOULD NEVER HAVE MET.

IT'S JUST A DIFFERENT PLACE. IT'S SLOWER-PACED THAN ITALY, LESS FLASHY THAN ITALY. BUT AFTER YOU'RE BEEN THERE AWHILE AND CATCH YOUR BREATH, YOU BEGIN TO LOOK AROUND, AND YOU BEGIN TO NOTICE THAT HOLLAND HAS WINDMILLS, HOLLAND HAS TULIPS. HOLLAND EVEN HAS REMBRANDTS.

BUT EVERYONE YOU KNOW IS BUSY COMING AND GOING FROM ITALY, AND THEY'RE BRAGGING ABOUT WHAT A WONDERFUL TIME THEY HAD THERE. AND FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE YOU WILL SAY, "YES, THAT'S WHERE I WAS SUPPOSED TO GO. THAT'S WHAT I HAD PLANNED."

AND THE PAIN WILL NEVER, EVER GO AWAY, BECAUSE THE LOSS OF THAT DREAM IS A VERY SIGNIFICANT LOSS.

BUT IF YOU SPEND YOUR LIFE MOURNING THE FACT YOU DIDN'T GO TO ITALY, YOU MAY NEVER BE FREE TO ENJOY THE VERY SPECIAL, THE VERY LOVELY THINGS ABOUT HOLLAND.

SOURCE UNKNOWN

God's Love Isn't Based on Feelings

And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. Romans 5:5

It's impossible for human love to be unconditional, like God's love. But as believers in Jesus Christ, we have the love of God in us. We can let that love flow freely, without conditions. Our love fails, but God's does not. Our love comes to an end, but God's does not. Sometimes I find that although I can't love a person in my own strength, I am able to with God's love. The true love of God doesn't depend on feelings, it's based on a decision. It's not based on whether or not that

person deserves it. And it is absolutely freeing to be able to love people without stopping to ask if they deserve it. Human love depends on feelings. It loves people because they have been good to us or they loved us first. What kind of love comes and goes. God's love is totally different. It isn't based on anything except God Himself. When we receive Christ as our Savior, the love of God is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Pour out God's love to others today.

Prayer Starter: God's, my love may run out, but Yours never will. I will continue to draw on Your endless love so that I can give it out to others, without being concerned about whether they deserve it or not..

Narrow Is the Road

Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Matthew 7:14

Following God means walking the 'It means facing adversity. Here are several things I've learned that help me to keep going: 1. God's Word is a border for my life. As long as I stay within the guidelines laid out in Scripture, I'll have what I need to do what I need to do. God is faithful and true to His Word. 2. I have to be willing to finish what I start. God uses committed people who aren't led by emotion. It's easy to be excited in the beginning when something is new, but the ones

who cross the finish line are the ones who hang in there when no one else is excited anymore. 3. When no one is there to help me, I get to know Jesus well. The narrow road of living for God and not conforming to the ways of the world is often lonely. But the trad-off of gaining real intimacy with Christ is worth more than anything you could ever get from the world. I believe these truths can help you like they've helped me. Always remember that even though there will be opposition, the rewards of walking the narrow path are absolutely worth it.

Prayer Starter: Holy Spirit, I desire to walk the narrow path—the way of life in Christ. Keep me within Your boundaries and show me how to live so that I can persevere to the end.

Keep God's Temple in Good Shape

What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 1 Corinthians 6:19

Until I turned 64, I'd never exercised in a serious way. I had walked and done a few things to stay in decent shape, but I was not dedicated to exercise. I had reached into my excuse bag many times over the years and come up with all kinds of 'reasons' I could not exercise. But the Lord spoke to me and encouraged me to begin a serious workout program so I could be strong for the last third of my journey through life. I already had good eating habits, and when I obeyed the Lord

and started going to the gym several times a week, I stepped into a new season of life. I looked better, I felt better, and most importantly, I was honoring God by taking good care of the body He gave me. I urge you to trust God and start finding ways to pursue health daily. The Word says that our bodies are temples of God. I don't know about you, but I want to make sure that God likes His temple! Today, make the choice to keep your temple in excellent shape for God.

Prayer Starter: Lord, I commit to a lifestyle of good physical health. Help me to make good choices that will continually improve my health. My body is Your temple, and I want to keep it in excellent shape for You!

Let God Do the Heavy Lifting

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. John 15:5

One of the most important things I have learned is to let God do the heavy lifting. Too many times we see what's wrong with ourselves and try to fix it through our own strength, but this will never be good enough. Jesus said in John 15:5, "Apart from me you can do nothing" (NIV). We may try to be self-sufficient, but we need to let God supply the grace and ability to do what we need to do. Willpower and determination can

get us started, but they've been known to quit in the middle and leave us stranded. We can learn to enjoy the life Jesus died to give us by inviting God to become involved in every aspect of it. Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28 NIV). We are not made to function without God. And with Him, we can break any bad habit or addiction, like overeating, substance abuse, poor time management, anger issues, you name it. Jesus is bigger than any problem you have.

Prayer Starter: God, I know that I'm nothing without You, so I invite You into every area of my life. I'll let You do the heavy lifting, following and trusting You everyday.



When God's leading and directing, you don't have to kick the doors open.

Old Testament

There are 39 books in the Old Testament library. There are four types of writing in the Old Testament: Law, History, Poetry, Prophecy.

It is helpful to know which kind of literature you are reading before you start: is it poetry, or is it history?

LAW

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

The first five books of the Bible are sometimes called the Law of Moses. They give many of God's laws about how to live.

HISTORY

Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1&2 Samuel, 1&2 Kings, 1&2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther.

These 12 historical books cover the occupation of the Promised Land, the time of the Judges, Israel's kings, the fall of the two kingdoms and a return to Jerusalem.

POETRY

Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs.

Nearly one third of the Old Testament is written in poetry. These five poetical books ask profound questions about evil, pain, love, wisdom and God.

PROPHECY

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

The 17 prophetic books account for almost a quarter of the Bible. They are divided into "Major Prophets" (the first five books) and, "Minor

New Testament

There are 27 books in the New Testament library. There are three types of writing in the New Testament: History, Letters, Prophecy.

Before you study a New Testament book it helps to consider what kind of literature you are reading: is it a letter or is it history?

HISTORY

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts

The first four books, called gospels, are not like our modern biographies. But they do give four portraits of Jesus. Acts is part two of Luke, about the early church.

LETTERS

PAUL'S LETTERS

Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon.

We have 13 of Paul's letters. Except for one personal one, Philemon, they were all written to groups of Christians.

OTHER LETTERS

Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude.

We don't know who wrote Hebrews. Tradition states that all the writers of the New Testament, except for John, were martyred.

PHOPHECY

Revelation

Written by the apostle John, this book has seven letters to churches and numerous visions about God.



STAYING THE COURSE IN CHRIST

All you need to say is simply "Yes" or "No"; anything beyond this comes from the evil one. Matthew 5:37

As Gandalf the grey confronted Saruman the White, it became clear that the latter had turned from what he was supposed to be doing—helping to protect Middle-earth from the power of the evil being Sauron. What's more, Saruman had allied with Sauron! In this scene from the film the Fellowship of the Ring, based on J. R. R. Tolkien classic work, the two former friends then engage in an epic good-versus-evil battle. If only Saruman had stayed the course and done what he knew was right!

King Saul also had trouble staying the course. In one account, he rightly "expelled the mediums and spirits from [Israel]" (1 Samuel 28:3). Good move, for God declared that dabbling in the occult was "detestable" (Deuteronomy 18:9-12). But when God didn't answer the king's plea—due to his prior failures—for how to deal with a massive Philistine army, Saul caved: "Find me a woman who is a medium, so I may go and inquire of her" (1 Samuel 28:7). Talk about a complete reversal! Saul failed once more as he went against his own decree—what he knew was right.

A millennium later, Jesus said to His disciples, "All you need to say is simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything beyond this come from the evil one" (Matthew 5:37). In other words, if we've committed ourselves to obeying Christ, it's vital that we keep our oaths and be truthful. Let's stay the course in doing those things as God helps us. Tom Felten

What helps you keep your oaths? Why is it vital that you stay the course in being truthful?

Dear Jesus, please help me stay the course in following
Your ways.

Today Scripture: 1 Samuel 28:3-10

³ Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had mourned for him and buried him in his own town of Ramah. Saul had expelled the mediums and spiritists from the land. ⁴ The Philistines assembled and came and set up camp at Shunem, while Saul gathered all Israel and set up camp at Gilboa. ⁵ When Saul saw the Philistine army, he was afraid; terror filled his heart. ⁶ He inquired of the Lord, but the Lord did not answer him by dream or Urim or prophets. ⁷ Saul then said to his attendants, "Find me a woman who is a medium, so I may go and inquire of her."

"There is one in Endor," they said.

⁸ So Saul disguised himself, putting on other clothes, and at night he and two men went to the woman. "Consult a spirit for me," he said, "and bring up for me the one I name."

⁹ But the woman said to him, "Surely you know what Saul has done. He has cut off the mediums and spiritists from the land. Why have you set a trap for my life to bring about my death?"

¹⁰ Saul swore to her by the Lord, "As surely as the Lord lives, you will not be punished for this."

INSIGHT

First Samuel 28:6 says, "[Saul] inquired of the Lord, but the Lord did not answer him." The reason for God's silence, as the prophet Samuel told him, is that "the Lord has departed from you and become your enemy" (V. 16). This was "because you did not obey the Lord or carry out his fierce wrath against the Amalekites" (V. 18). The Amalekites were descendants of Esau (though they were distinct from his descendants the Edomites). They had a history of attacking Israel, including those who lagged behind during the exodus—in other words, Israel's weakest citizens. God instructed Israel to annihilate Amalek (Deuteronomy 25:17-19), but Israel didn't complete the task. Later, Haman, a descendant of Agag (probably King Agag the Amalekite, See 1 Samuel 15), would seek to commit genocide against God's people, the Jews (Esther 3:5-14). Tim Gustafson

Ministries, Grand Rapids, Michigan,
Reprinted by Permission



Crises/Emergency: Cell phone 860-754-4606

Cross Street Recovery Ministry the "Hope Line" is in operation 24 hours per day.

Please call 860-754-4606

if you, a friend and/or a family member are in need of counseling and/or are in crisis,

PLEASE dial the "Hope Line". All information will be confidential.

CROSS STREET MINISTRY OF RECOVERY

We can't but through God, all things are possible. How might we pull on God's strength to help each other recover?

Let the spirit of God work for you in a Mighty, Mighty Way

For more information contact:

Church office 860-344-9527.or

Rev. Gregory B. Winborne: Days: 860-616-3834

READY TO GO FOR GOD

I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling. Ephesians 4:1

The book Hidden Figures recounts preparation for John Glenn's flight into space. Computers were newfangled inventions in 1962, subject to glitches. Glenn didn't trust them and worried about calculations for the launch. He knew one brainy woman in the back room could run the numbers. He trusted her. "If she says the number are good," Glenn said, "I'm ready to go."

Katherine Johnson was a teacher and mother of three. She loved Jesus and served in her church. God had blessed Katherine with a remarkable mind. NASA tapped her in the late 1950s to help with the space program. She was Glenn's "brainy woman," one of the "human computers" they hired at the time.

We may not be called to be brilliant mathematicians, but God calls us to other things: "To each of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it" (Ephesians 4:7). We're to "live a life worthy of the calling" we've received (V.1). We're part of one body, in which "each part does its work" (V.16).

Katherine Johnson's calculations confirmed the course trajectory. Glenn's launch into orbit was like "hitting a bull's-eye." but this was just one of Katherine's callings. Remember, she was called also to be a mother, teacher, and church worker. We might ask ourselves what God has called us to, whether big or small. Are we "ready to go," exercising the grace-gifts He's bestowed, living "a life worthy of [our] calling" (V. 1)? Kenneth Petersen

What has God called you to do? How has He gifted you?

Dear God, please help me embrace what You've given me and live a life worthy of your calling..

Today Scripture: Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-16

¹ As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ² Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³ Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

⁷ But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.

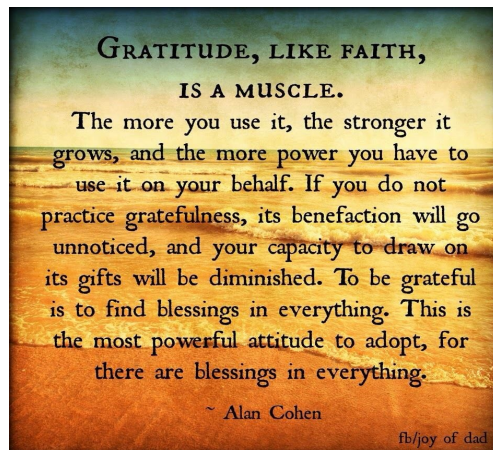
¹¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelist, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

INSIGHT

There are five different listings of spiritual gifts in the New Testament: Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10; 12:28-30; Ephesians 4:11; and 1 Peter 4:11. That no two lists are identical suggests that each one isn't exhaustive. More important, the emphasis is on how the diversity of gifts are to be used "for the common good" (1 Corinthians 12:7) and to "equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12 NLT) in a loving way that unites the church (VV. 13-16). Apostles, prophets, evangelist, pastors, and teachers (V. 11) are people gifted in proclaiming and teaching the Scriptures. K. T. Sim

Ministries, Grand Rapids, Michigan,
Reprinted by Permission



Vision: "Level-Up"

GATHER — CONNECT — GO — GIVE

We are looking forward to the **next level** that God will take us individually and collectively as a church!!!!

As we continue to move forward it is going to take Unstoppable Faith and a Godly Mindset with every fiber of our being to be determined that we are going to a **next level** in Christ!!!

Let's **Level-Up**!!!! **Level Up** Spiritually!!! **Level-Up** as we Grow Numerically and **Level-Up** as we give Financially!!!

Level-Up in allowing God to use the spiritual gifts that God has given us to do ministry!!!

Cross Street let's go to the **next level** together! **Level-Up**!!!

The Vision Statement in four simple words:

These words are expressing the minimum expectations of members

Members are to **GATHER**

Every member should attend faithfully a worship service every week. Christians are commanded to worship the Lord together. Read Acts 2:42-47. not only are we called to worship the Lord, but we are also to encourage one another when we gather together.

Members are to **CONNECT**

That's the word picture to describe locking hands and arms with others. We are called to connect together in a small group (ministry, organizations, class leader system, bible study, Sunday school, and others).

Members are to **GO**

The members should be involved in at least one ministry in the church each year. Many should be involved in ministries that got them involved outside the walls of the church. The Great Commission should be at the heart of what we do as part of the process of discipleship (Matthew 28:19-20).

Members are to **GIVE**

Every member should be a regular and faithful financial giver to the church. Jesus, Himself, said it best: *"wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be"* (Matthew 6:21).

2023-2024

Vision: "Level-Up"

Gather - Connect - Go - Give

Bicentennial Anniversary
Celebrating 200 Years in Ministry

Spiritual Growth in Ministry, Giving and Health and Wellness on Purpose

"So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness." Colossians 2:6-7 (NIV),

It is truly a great blessing to serve as the new Pastor of the Cross Street A.M.E. Zion Church.

As we journey together in this new season at Cross Street it is imperative that we seek to go to the next level in Christ.

God has truly blessed the Cross Street Church!!! We are celebrating 200 years in Ministry!!!

We truly have "Come this Far by Faith" and "We Are Not Tired Yet"!

We are looking forward to the next level that God will take us individually and collectively as a church!!!!

We thank God for the legacy that Presiding Elder Moses L. Harvill and First Lady Eledia Harvill has blessed us with in the last thirty years.

As we continue to move forward it is going to take Unstoppable Faith and a Godly Mindset with every fiber of our being to be determined that we are going to a next level in Christ!!!

Let's Level-Up!!!! Level Up Spiritually!!! Level-Up as we Grow Numerically and Level-Up as we give Financially!!!

Level-Up in allowing God to use the spiritual gifts that God has given us to do ministry!!!

Cross Street let's go to the next level together! Level-Up!!!

Peace and Blessings!



WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Sunday

8:00 a.m. **Church School**
(see Sunday Church School)
10:00 p.m. **Worship Service**
<https://zoom.us/j/959628798>
Meeting ID: 959 628 798
(929) 205-6099, Code: 959628798#

Tell your family and friends from
across the Country.
We can be watched worldwide.

Tuesday

Bible Study

Time: 6:00 P.M.

Join Zoom Meeting Link: <https://zoom.us/j/562367770>
(929)205-6099, Code: 562367770#

Wednesday

Day Of Prayer

Prayer Times: 6:00 A.M. 12:00 P.M. &
6:00 P.M.
Free Conference Call: 1 (727) 731-4561

Sunday Church School

8:00 a.m. – 08:45 a.m.
Adults

Call-in only: 978-990-5105
Code: 204730#
Sister Sylvia Pina / Brother Ken
Simmons

10:00 a.m. – 10:45 am
Children: ages 3-12:

In person, Fellowship Hall
Ms. Carolyn Smith / Rev. Grant.

3:00 pm—3:34 pm
Children: ages 9-12

Call-in: 929-205-6099, Code:
614890401#.

or
Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/614890401#>
Rev. Grant teacher

Any questions call: 860-490-3199
Gloria Malloy, Church School
Superintendent.

We thank you for your generous giving. Ways you can give:

- Online: crosstreetamezion.org
1. Realm, (Realm: <https://onrealm.org/TheCross/-/give/TJXKDEVIXE>)
2. Text 73256 (Thecross)
3. PayPal,
4. CASHAPP: \$TheCross440
5. Mail: P.O. Box 223 Middletown, Ct

- 06457,
6. Drop off on Sunday 11:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.
7. Call the office for someone to pick up
8. Church outside Lockbox

(Note: you can find links on the
website; <http://www.crosstreetamezion.org/Give>)

Sanctuary Guidelines

There will be one service at 10:00 A.M. The doors will open at 9:45 A.M. to begin temperature check-in. As you enter the building, we request you to sanitize your hands.

If you choose to worship in the Sanctuary, there will be one entrance open, the main doors in the front of the building. The committee and I ask that you follow the guidelines for seating. The pews and floor will be marked to help you do this.

We also kindly request all persons attending to wear a mask over their mouth and nose to prevent the possible spread of illness to the most vulnerable among us. Masks are not required for those under the age of two or for persons unable to remove their masks.

I understand that there has been considerable discussion about masks. Since the scriptures are, of course, silent on the matter, I do not think we need to agree on the substance of the question. It is a matter of personal conscience. However, since some of our more vulnerable brothers and sisters would experience a great deal

of anxiety worshipping with a group of people who are not wearing masks, I ask that you consent to wear a mask for their sake (see 1 Corinthians 8-9 for the principle).

Worship Outside: If you prefer to worship outdoors, there will be designated parking and an outside speaker, and you can listen on radio frequency 89.3 F.M. and watch on your phone via zoom, Facebook, or YouTube. During Communion, someone will bring the sacrament to you.

Livestream Worship: Finally, we will continue to live-stream the 10:00 A.M. service so that you can watch from your home. If you are experiencing any signs or symptoms of a new illness, including fatigue, fever, chills, difficulty breathing, cough, or nausea, please make use of the live stream and consider contacting your healthcare provider.

Other Precautions:
Since studies seem inconclusive on whether singing increases the risk for viral spread, and since we want to

exercise an abundance of caution at this point in re-opening, if you choose to join the worship and praise team in singing, please keep on your mask.

Please refrain from shaking hands and embracing one another at this time.

I understand that some of these precautions may feel burdensome. They are temporary, and, even so, I hope you will join me in giving thanks to God for bringing us back together again and ask him to provide us with patience and kindness for each other.

Much Love to All. Faithfully Yours,
Pastor Harvill

Special Note: For now, we will have service in the Sanctuary every other Sunday (First and 3rd) and 2nd and fourth in the parking lot only, along with Live streaming.

Please let us know by phone call, letter, or email what else we can do to help you become comfortable returning to in-person worship.

The Cross Street Journal is published Bi-monthly. It can be found on our website: crosstreetamezion.org & in the front lobby. If you would like a PDF copy sent to you, Email your request to: ken462012@gmail.com. If you have an article or information (word count 1000 - 1500 or less) for current and future publications the deadline for this information is the Monday after the 2nd Sunday of each Month. **You may submit your information in the following ways:** place the information on a CD (Window format) and leave it in the Cross Street office, E-mail Ken Simmons (ken462012@gmail.com), or give it to him. **Praise God!!!**



CROSS STREET A.M.E. ZION CHURCH

Organized in 1823

440 West Street P.O. Box 223

Middletown, CT 06457

Phone: 860-344-9527 Fax: 860-344-1740

crossstreetchurch@snet.net

www.crossstreetamezion.org

Sunday School — See Page 31

Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Rev. Robyn M Anderson

Pastor

Email: revrmanderson@gmail.com

The Rev. Moses L. Harvill,

Presiding Elder

Mrs. D. Diane Proctor

Missionary Supervisor

The Right Reverend Dennis

Proctor

Presiding Prelate

Ministerial Staff

Rev. Robyn Anderson

Rev. William D. Wilson

Rev. Ella Frances Perry

Rev. Karen Nesmith

Rev. James Battle

Rev. Myrtle Turner

Rev. Gregory Winborne

Rev. Joyce Johnson

Rev. Earlene Grants

Sister Felicia Freeman



Vision: "Level-Up"

GATHER — CONNECT — GO — GIVE

"I am a Christian"

By Maya Angelou

When I say ... "I am a Christian"
I'm not shouting "I'm clean livin'."
I'm whispering "I was lost,
Now I'm found and forgiven."

When I say ... "I am a Christian"
I don't speak of this with pride.
I'm confessing that I stumble
And need Christ to be my guide.

When I say ... "I am a Christian"
I'm not trying to be strong.
I'm professing that I'm weak
And need His strength to carry on.

When I say ... "I am a Christian"
I'm not bragging of success.
I'm admitting I have failed
And need God to clean my mess.

When I say ... "I am a Christian"
I still feel the sting of pain.
I have my share of heartaches
So I call upon His name.

When I say ... "I am a Christian"
I'm not holier than thou.
I'm just a simple sinner
Who received God's good grace,
somehow!

The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:9-13 (KJV)

Our Father which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom
come, Thy will be done in earth, as it
is in heaven. Give us this day our
daily bread. And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors. And lead
us not into temptation, but deliver us
from evil: For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory, for
ever. Amen.



Then the Lord answered me and said:
Write the vision and make it plain on
tablets, that he may run who reads it.
Habakkuk 2:2

The Jabez Prayer

And Jabez called on the God of Israel
saying, "Oh, that You would bless me
indeed, and enlarge my territory,
that Your hand would keep me from
evil, that I may nor cause pain!" So
God granted him what he requested.
1 Chronicles 4:10 (NKJV)

"God's Word

*For the word of God is quick, and power-
ful, and sharper than any two-edged
sword, piercing even to the dividing
asunder of soul and spirit, and of the
joints and marrow, and is a discerner of
the thoughts and intents of the heart"*
Hebrews 4:12

Prayer: Forever, O Lord, your Word is
settled in heaven. I bless you because
you have given me rest according to
all that you have promised to me. Not
one word of all your good promises
has ever failed. In light of this truth, I
will walk in your Word at all times.
I love your Word, Father, it is a lamp
unto my feet, and a light unto my
path. All of your words are pure, O
God, and you are a shield to me. Lord

God, your way is perfect, and your
Word is tried. You are a shield and a
mighty buckler to me as I trust in you.
With your Word you made the heav-
ens, O Lord. all of your promises are
yes in Christ, unto your glory, O God.
You have spoken through your Word
since ancient times, in order to give
light to those who sit in darkness, and
you guide my feet in the way of peace.
Your Word is quick, alive, and power-
ful, and sharper than any two-edged
sword. It pierces even to the dividing
asunder of my soul and spirit, and of
my joints and marrow, and is a dis-
cerner of the thoughts and intents of
my heart.
Father, I am thankful for your Word,
and I will endeavor to walk in the light
of your Word all the days of my life.

If you were to die today, do you know where you will spend eternity ???

Doxology

Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.
Jude 24-25