

January-February 2023 – Volume 27 Issue 1

200th Year Church Anniversary Celebration



From The Pastor's Desk

Dear Church Family,

Greetings In the Name of Our Lord and Savior,

As we reflect on the past year, we can tell others how the Lord brought us through seen and unseen danger. We have made it through another pandemic year. We had all hoped to advance from the pandemic to a new horizon. We can press forward with hopeful hearts for the next normal.

Take a spiritual test and see whether you are taking a step up, stagnant, or stepping backward. The Holy Spirit has spoken to me and encourages us to step up to Christ. If we step up, Christ will lift us to extraordinary places of hope and prosperity.

It's the season to step up to Christ and go beyond what is necessary. The Lord desires to do a new thing in the next normal.

The word of the Prophet speaks volumes of possibilities.

Isaiah 43:19 (NKJV) Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; Shall you not know it? I will make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

I still believe we serve a mighty God who longs to do "new things" in our lives. Yet, these things God wants for us most come from our willingness and cooperation.

I encourage you to step up for Christ to do "a new thing" in your heart, marriage, job, church, school, and community! While we all will continue to go through times of changes and challenges, we serve a God who is faithful and will bring us through as we trust and serve Him!

Let's believe Big in 2023 and watch God work wonders and miracles.

We love you at the Cross Street Church and will continue to pray for God's richest blessings in your life! YOU are highly valued and greatly appreciated!

Taking a Step Up to Christ,

Presiding Elder Moses L. Harvill, Pastor



Visit our
Facebook page

Visit Our Website:
WWW.crossstreetamezion.org

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.**

INNER PEACE

I turn within to the presence of God and find true peace.
Numbers 6:26

"What does the Bible say about inner peace?"

The world places a priority on inner peace, and it offers thousands of suggestions to those who seek "peace of mind and soul." Usually, the gurus of inner peace point to oneself as the source of peace. There is much talk of meditation, finding an "inner light," and chakras. If we need any help from outside of ourselves, worldly wisdom says, it will come in the form of a "spirit guide" or perhaps some crystals or herbs. The problem with such advice, besides the obvious endorsement of witchcraft, is that it completely ignores the source of true peace—the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible has a lot to say about peace. Jesus is called the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). Paul refers to "the God of all peace" (Romans 15:13, 33; Galatians 6:16). The term *peace* is often used as a greeting and a benediction (see Luke 24:36). So what exactly is peace, and how can we

(Inner Peace on page 15)

If No Excuses—Let Us Love One Another

It is quite natural for you and me to think of the events of this year as been downright awful and relatively despicable, considering what we have had to deal with. This includes every single one of us. We have faced stuff that we used to read about only in historical contexts. Yes epidemics come and epidemics go. Life continues and God continues to rule our lives. What can we do?

People in authority all over the globe are doing the best they can to control the situation as best as they can. As we usher in a fresh new year, it would almost seem as if we are getting a new lease on life. As if things might change overnight and our situation might be better than it has been these past months. We know absolutely that nothing is guaranteed to us. We have to be aware that nature has no calendar. The human clock of time and space has no consequence to nature. So, what we think of

(Love on page 18)

What does Jesus mean when He says, "Peace I leave with you" (John 14:27)?"

Customary greetings and partings in Eastern cultures usually include a word of peace (Ephesians 1:2; Luke 10:5; John 20:19; 2 Thessalonians 3:16). But in John 14:27, as Jesus prepared the disciples for His departure, it was no ordinary "go in peace" farewell that He imparted: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (John 14:27).

Rather than a routine, transient, worldly kind of peace, the spiritual peace that Jesus offers to His followers is a permanent gift. The New Living Translation renders John 14:27 like so: "I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid." Jesus knew that the earthly journey awaiting His disciples and all future believers would not be easy. Many trials and sorrows lay ahead, so He left them with this assurance: "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this

(Peace on page 17)

How to Find Inner Peace

You're not the first person looking for inner peace. Many have searched for a solution and the results all read about the same. But there's an empty space inside of each of us and some people believe they can fill it with various things to satisfy their needs. They believe their lives will be full of contentment, happiness and peace once they fill that internal void. Solomon was the great king of Israel... His income was staggering. Nobody that ever lived in history could compare with Solomon in financial worth. Anything he could dream of, he had it. We know how many wives he had? Seven hundred, but that didn't satisfy...Every pleasure at his beck and call. He thought it would bring the peace that he longed for and then he said, 'But as I looked at everything I had worked so hard to accomplish, it was all so meaningless. It was a bubble that burst. It didn't satisfy me. Something beyond it satisfies. What is it? People have tried to find inner peace through experiences, fame, achievements, money, and everything under the sun. There is a much better answer to the question because deep in our heart, something is missing. We don't know

(Find on page 16)

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200th Year Church Anniversary Celebration

1823-2023



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**

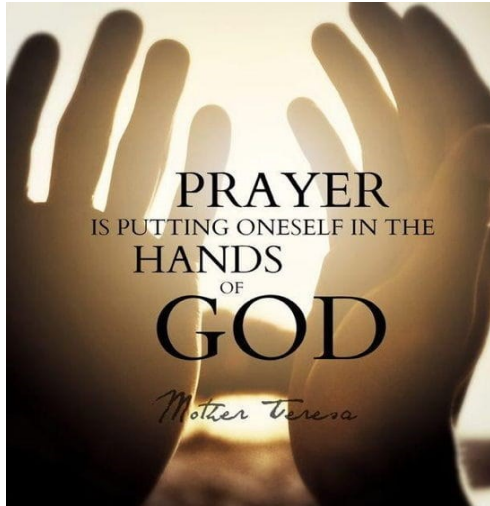
The members should be involved in at least one ministry in the church each year. Many should be involved in ministries that got them involved outside the walls of the church. The Great Commission should be at the heart of what we do as part of the process of discipleship (Matthew 28:19-20).

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).

PRAYERS



When You Need Peace of Mind

Key Scripture: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27)

Key Thought: The believer has peace that the world can't give, and the world can't take it away.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for your peace which surpasses all understanding and keeps my heart and mind through Christ Jesus. 1 You always keep me in perfect peace when I keep my mind stayed on you in an attitude of complete trust in you. 2 Peace of mind is very precious to me, Lord, so I ask you to help me to trust you always.

Father, help me to follow the guidance your peace in my heart brings to me. 3 Thank you for ordaining peace for me, 4 and giving me peace like a river, 5 because I love your word. 6

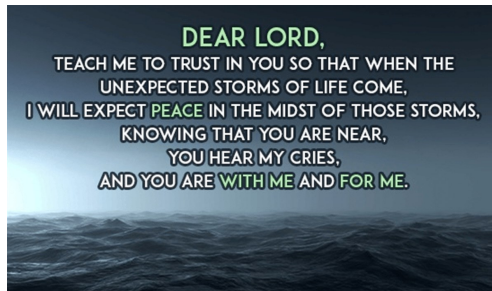
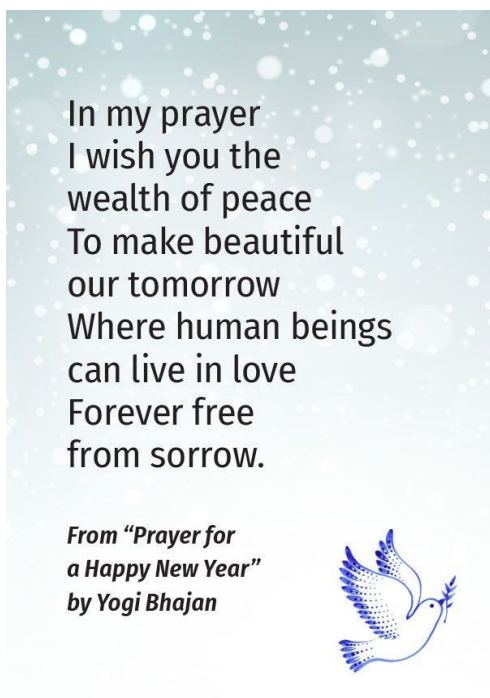
I will always have peace with you, Father, through my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 7 I delight myself in abundant peace you give to me. 8

Thank you for the fruit of peace you give to me through your Holy Spirit. 9 I receive His provision of peace as I pray. 10

God of all hope, I praise you for filling me with your joy and peace that come through believing your word. I now abound in hope and peace through the power of your Holy Spirit. 11 I receive your promise of peace of mind, Lord. Thank you for your blessing of peace in my life.

References: (1) Philippians 4:7; (2) Isaiah 26:3-4; (3) Colossians 3:15; (4) Isaiah 26:12; (5) Isaiah 48:18; (6) Psalms 119:165; (7) Romans 5:1; (8) Psalms 37:11; (9) Galatians 5:22; (10) John 14:27; (11) Romans 15:13.

Bible Prayers for all your needs
Victory House Publishers



The World Peace Prayer

Lead me from death to life
From falsehood to truth

Lead me from despair to hope
From fear to trust

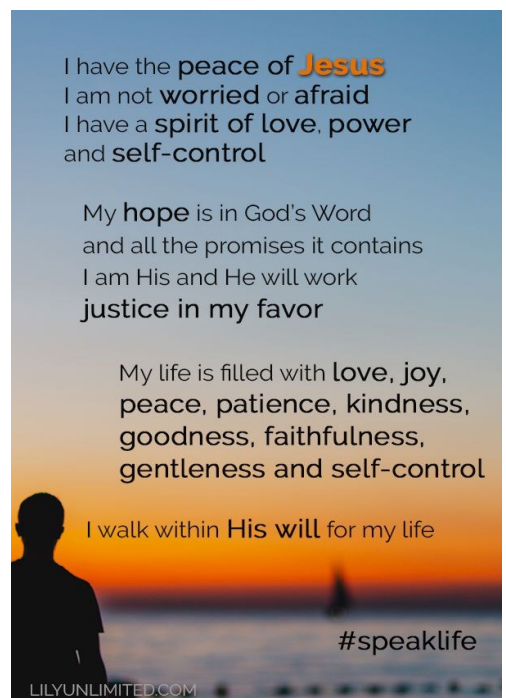
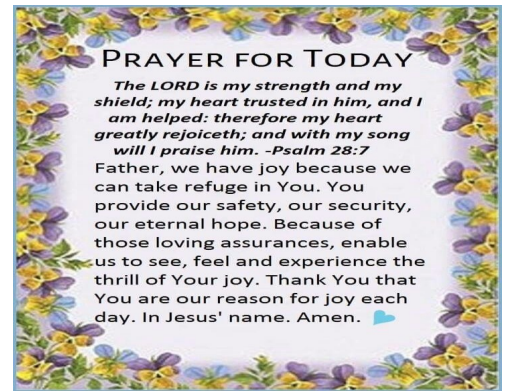
Lead me from hate to love
From war to peace

Let peace fill our hearts,
Our world, our universe



A PRAYER FOR INNER PEACE

Lord, please put Your peace in my heart.
I'm worried and anxious.
My mind races and obsesses.
I can't help thinking about my problems.
And the more I think about them,
the more depressed I become.
I feel like I'm sinking down in quicksand
and can't get out.
Calm me, Lord.
Slow me down, put Your peace in my heart.
No matter what problem I have, Lord,
You are bigger.
You are more powerful than it is.
So I bring my problem to You.
I know what I want.
I know my will.
I do not know Yours.
I do not know how You will use this problem for my salvation.
I do not know what good You will workout from this evil.
But I trust You.
I trust Your goodness and Your wisdom.
So I place myself in Your hands.
Please fill my heart with peace.
Amen.



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. (1 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. (1 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

JANUARY

- 01) Genesis 1-2
- 02) Genesis 3-5
- 03) Genesis 6-9
- 04) Genesis 10-11
- 05) Genesis 12-15
- 06) Genesis 16-19
- 07) Genesis 20-22

- 08) Genesis 23-26
- 09) Genesis 27-29
- 10) Genesis 30-32
- 11) Genesis 33-36
- 12) Genesis 37-39
- 13) Genesis 40-42
- 14) Genesis 43-46
- 15) Genesis 47-50

- 16) Exodus 1-4
- 17) Exodus 5-7
- 18) Exodus 8-10
- 19) Exodus 11-13
- 20) Exodus 14-17
- 21) Exodus 18-20
- 22) Exodus 21-24
- 23) Exodus 25-27

- 24) Exodus 28-31
- 25) Exodus 32-34
- 26) Exodus 35-37
- 27) Exodus 38-40
- 28) Leviticus 1-4
- 29) Leviticus 5-7
- 30) Leviticus 8-10
- 31) Leviticus 11-13

FEBRUARY

- 1 Leviticus 14-16
- 2 Leviticus 17-19
- 3 Leviticus 20-23
- 4 Leviticus 24-27
- 5 Numbers 1-3
- 6 Numbers 4-6
- 7 Numbers 7-10

- 8 Numbers 11-14
- 9 Numbers 15-17
- 10 Numbers 18-20
- 11 Numbers 21-24
- 12 Numbers 25-27
- 13 Numbers 28-30
- 14 Numbers 31-33
- 15 Numbers 34-36

- 16 Deuteronomy 1-3
- 17 Deuteronomy 4-6
- 18 Deuteronomy 7-9
- 19 Deuteronomy 10-12
- 20 Deuteronomy 13-16
- 21 Deuteronomy 17-19
- 22 Deuteronomy 20-22
- 23 Deuteronomy 23-25

- 24 Deuteronomy 26-28
- 25 Deuteronomy 29-31
- 26 Deuteronomy 32-34
- 27 Joshua 1-3
- 28 Joshua 4-6

MARCH

- 1 Joshua 7-9
- 2 Joshua 10-12
- 3 Joshua 13-15
- 4 Joshua 16-18
- 5 Joshua 19-21
- 6 Joshua 22-24
- 7 Judges 1-4

- 8 Judges 5-8
- 9 Judges 9-12
- 10 Judges 13-15
- 11 Judges 16-18
- 12 Judges 19-21
- 13 Ruth 1-4
- 14 1 Sam. 1-3
- 15 1 Samuel 4-7

- 16 1 Samuel 8-10
- 17 1 Samuel 11-13
- 18 1 Samuel 14-16
- 19 1 Samuel 17-20
- 20 1 Samuel 21-24
- 21 1 Samuel 25-28
- 22 1 Samuel 22-24
- 23 2 Samuel 1-4

- 24 2 Samuel 5-8
- 25 2 Samuel 9-12
- 26 2 Samuel 13-15
- 27 2 Samuel 16-18
- 28 2 Samuel 19-21
- 29 Samuel 22-24
- 30 1 Kings 1-4
- 31 1 Kings 5-7A

Name of God	Meaning	Application
JEHOVAH	"I AM", The One Who Is The Self-existent One	God never changes. His promises never fail. When we are faithless, He is faithful. We need to obey Him.
JEHOVAH- JIREH	The Lord Will Provide	Just as God provided a ram as a substitute for Isaac, He provided His son Jesus as the ultimate sacrifice. God will meet all our needs.
JEHOVAH- MEKADDISHKEM	The Lord Who Sanctifies	God sets us apart as a chosen people, a royal priesthood, holy unto God, a people of His own. He cleanses our sin and helps us mature.
JEHOVAH-NISSI	The Lord is My Banner	God gives us victory against the flesh, the world and the devil. Our battles are His battles of light against darkness and good against evil.
JEHOVAH –RAPHA	The Lord Who Heals	God has provided the final cure for spiritual, physical, and emotional sickness in Jesus Christ. God can heal us.
JEHOVAH - ROHI	The Lord is My Shepherd	The Lord protects, provides, directs, leads, and cares for His people. God tenderly takes care of us as a strong and patient shepherd.
JEHOVAH – SABAOTH	The Lord of Hosts The Lord of Armies	The Lord of the hosts of heaven will always fulfill His purposes, even when the hosts of His earthly people fail.

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

Epiphany

Epiphany or The Season After Epiphany (4-9 Sundays) is a time for remembering the various times and ways Jesus was revealed to humans, particularly to the Gentiles (non-Jews) through the Magi (Wise Men) who represented other nationalities. It is a reminder of the universality of Jesus, the Savior of persons in every land. The first Sunday after Epiphany Day (January 6) is known as Baptism of the Lord referring to 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11, Luke 3:21-22, and John 1:29-34. This is an excellent time for baptism and renewal of the baptismal covenant. Appropriate symbols are water, the baptismal shell or font, a descending dove, and a cross standing in water. The emphasis for the remainder of the season is on the beginning of Jesus' ministry, the miracles performed, and Jesus' works and teachings.

Color: Green is symbolic of the freshness of nature, hope, life, and growth.

Lent

Lent is the period of time to reflect on the events that led Jesus to Calvary. It begins with Ash Wednesday and covers a period of forty days (excluding Sundays) culminating with Holy Week (including Passion/Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday). Lent is a time of fasting, sacrifice, and preparation.

Color: 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.

A guideline given by some money managers is as follows: Give 1/10 (tithe of your income to God). Put 1/10 in savings. Put 1/10 in an emergency account until three months of pay is set aside. Live on the remaining 7/10 with freedom to work towards giving as much as possible to God's work.

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 King-tide. 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.

juliesanne.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!

Mary Marvels at God's Choice/Open to Being Chosen

Background Scripture: Luke 1:46-55

EXALT!

Declaration: Luke 1:46-55

46 And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord," **47** and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, **48** for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant. Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed, **49** for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name; **50** indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. **51** He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. **52** He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly; **53** he has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty. **54** He has come to the aid of his child Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, **55** according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

Affirmation: We emulate Mary's attitude of humility in accepting God's call.

ENGAGE

People may be chosen to serve based on their power, wealth, and authority. How should we view those who are chosen to serve? According to Luke, Mary was chosen to become the mother of Jesus because of her humble servant attitude.

Break into smaller groups and discuss the following questions: 1) Does being chosen for a specific job or task tend to inspire meaning and purpose in our lives? Why or why not? 2) How might we avoid succumbing to exalting the powerful and rich and, rather, rooting for the underdog? What do we lose or gain either way? 3) How might one be able to express strength and courage when confronted with something that is both good and bad news?

EDUCATE

Luke 1:46-50: Mary's Song, traditionally called the Magnificat, recalls "Hannah's song" in 1 Samuel 2:1-10, which she sang at the dedication of her son Samuel. As one commentary puts it, "This song of praise, called the Magnificat from its opening word in Latin, is revolutionary in its concern for the poor and despised of this world, and its rejection of the rich and proud" (Ibid.). Mary, herself, identifies with the lowly. It is her "lowliness" as a "servant" that attracts the Lord's favor. The word "lowliness" (Greek: tapeinosis) is a term that relates to the "poor," who receive special attention in Luke Gospel. Many advocates of liberation theology use Luke's Gospel, and especially Mary's song and other passage with such themes, as evidence of Jesus as Liberator of the poor and dispossessed. Compare, for instance, Luke 4:16-19. liberation theologians, using such passages, promote the theme of Jesus' "preferential option for the poor."

Luke 1:51-55: The Magnificat celebrates the fact that "he has filled the hungry with good things, / and sent the rich away empty" (v.53). This foreshadows Luke's beatitudes, which exalt the poor and hungry, and woes, which condemn those who are rich and comfortable (Luke 6:20-26). Matthew's version only expresses the blessings, not the woes. Mary's description of God having shown "strength with his arm," recalls God's saving activity in leading God's people out of captivity and bondage through the Exodus. Exodus 6:1 speaks of God's "mighty hand"; and in Exodus 6:6, God promises to redeem his people with an "outstretched arm." most significantly, in Moses' Song, Moses attributes the defeat of the Egyptians to "the might of your [God's] arm" (Exodus 15:16).

Mary's "lowliness" is contrasted with God's "strength," demonstrating a relationship of dependence and trust. This appeal to God's activity in the Exodus recalls the "Divine Warrior" dimension of God's character; yet it is strikingly juxtaposed with the portrayal of God as being characterized by "mercy" (vv,50,54). God defends those who cannot defend themselves. To borrow a term from Catholic social teaching, Mary envisions God as showing a "preferential option for the poor."

(Necessary Courage on page 12)

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.

ELEVATE

Break into smaller groups and discuss the following questions and issues: What is the meaning and impact of God's having different standards than the world that God loves? Give some examples of this as evidence seen throughout the Bible. Discuss the meaning of God's choosing the lowly to confound the powerful. What should be our dispositions in these regards if we are to be like God and Jesus? How should we practice the spiritual gift of humility, for instance? In praising God in song, how should we characterize God?

iTHINK

1. As a fun opener, ask people to share with the class their "go to" song of celebration (invite them to sing a few bars, if they would like).
2. Read Mary's Magnificat and identify the feelings she might have felt. Play the song "Breath of Heaven" from Amy Grant's album, Home for Christmas. How do the feelings expressed in this song compare with Mary expresses?
3. Review The Song of Moses (Exodus 15:1-18), and Hannah's Prayer (1 Samuel 2:1-10). Discuss the similarities and differences between those and Mary's song.
4. Discuss: As you reflect on Mary's Magnificat, how have you responded to the good news/bad news in your life? With whom did you share your feeling? How was God included in your response? How do you find praise and joy even in the most stressful situations?
5. As a class, compile a list of God's attributes as noted in Mary's song. What is one that you are particularly thankful for this Christmas?
6. Develop sign language-type gestures for the different expressions in Mary's song. Divide the song into sections: verses 46-49; 50-53; 54-55, assigning each section to one or more persons.

KEY VERSES: Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior." Luke 1:46-47

From The Young People-Adult Quarterly
(Ages 18 and up) International Sunday School Lessons for Christian Teaching

REVELATION 21:4

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.

Word of today:

Today's Scripture says that one day, there will be no more tragedies, sickness, or pain. But in the meantime, God is counting on us to wipe away those tears. Are you taking time to help somebody in need? It's important to go to church and celebrate, but our real assignment begins when we leave the building. Look around and find the discouraged.

You may not hear them with your ears, but you can hear them with your heart. You see when somebody is down. Suddenly, you feel compassion flowing out to them. You think, I need to go encourage them. Don't put it off. That's God wanting you to bring healing.

Your hugs can cause people to get better. A phone call, giving someone a ride, taking them out to dinner, or encouraging them in their dreams can put them back on their feet. A simple act of kindness can be life-giving. There are miracles in you waiting to happen.

Today's Prayer:

Father, thank You that I am full of miracles because You live in me. Help me to be sensitive to the needs of others and allow Your compassionate heart to flow out of me to them. I will make it my business to let them know that I care in Jesus' name. Amen.

Thank you for your ability to just listen.

Kwame.

MIRACLE RAIN

Read: 1 Kings 18:1, 41-45

*I am God, and there is no other.
Isaiah 46:9*

Life is hard for the villagers who live on a hilly terrain in the Yunnan Province of China. Their main sources of food are corn and rice. But in May 2012 a severe drought hit the region and the crops withered. Everyone was worried, and many superstitious practices were carried out as the people attempted to end the drought. When nothing worked,

people started blaming the five Christians in the village for offending the spirits of the ancestors.

These five believers gathered to pray. Before long, the sky darkened and thunder was heard. A heavy downpour started and lasted the whole afternoon and night. The crops were saved! While most of the villagers did not believe God sent the rain, others did and desired to find out more about Him and Jesus.

In 1 Kings 17 and 18 we read of a severe drought in Israel. But in this case, we are told, it was a result of God's judgement on His people (17:1). They had begun to worship Baal, the god of

the Canaanites, believing that this deity could send the rain for their crops. Then God, through His prophet Elijah, showed that He is the one true God who determines when rain falls.

Our all-powerful God desires to hear our prayers and answer our pleas. And though we do not always understand His timing or His purposes, God always responds with His best for our lives. Poh Fang Chia

Prayer Tip: Set aside a specific time to pray.

GOD IS LISTENING

Read: Psalm 5

In the morning, Lord, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait expectantly. Psalm 5:3

The day before Billy Graham's interview in 1982 on The Today Show, his director of public relations, Larry Ross, requested a private room for Graham to pray in before the interview. But when Mr. Graham arrived at the studio, his assistant informed Ross that Mr. Graham didn't need the room. He said, "Mr.

Graham started praying when he got up this morning, he prayed while eating breakfast, he prayed on the way over in the car, and he'll probably be praying all the way through the interview." Ross later said, "That was a great lesson for me to learn as a young man."

Prayerfulness is not an event; it is a way of being in relationship with God. This kind of intimate relationship is developed when God's people view prayerfulness as a way of life. The Psalms encourage us to begin each day by lifting our voice to the Lord (Psalm 5:3); to fill our day with conversations with God (55:17); and in the face of

accusations and slander, to give ourselves totally to prayer (109:4). We develop prayer as a way of life because we desire to be with God (42:1-4; 84:1-2; 130:5-6).

Prayer is our way of connecting with God in all of life's circumstances. God is always listening. We can talk to Him any time throughout the day. Marvin Williams

Prayer Tip: "We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will" (John 9:31).

ACCESS TO GOD

Read: 1 John 5:6-15

Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Hebrews 4:16

Technology is a blessing in so many ways. Need a bit of information about a health problem? All you have to do is access the Internet where you instantaneously get a list of options to guide your search. Need to contact a friend? Just send a text, e-mail, tweet, or

Facebook post. But technology can also be frustrating at times.

The other day I needed to access some information in my bank account and was asked a list of security questions. Unable to recall the exact answers, I was blocked from my own account. Or think of the times when an important conversation is cut off because of a dead cellphone battery, with no way to reconnect until you find a plug to recharge it.

All of this makes me delighted with that reality that when I need to access God in prayer, there are no security questions and no batteries required. I

love the assurance that John gives when he says, "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us" (1 John 5:14).

God is always accessible, for He never slumbers nor sleeps! (Psalm 121:4). And thanks to His love for us, He is waiting and ready to listen. Joe Stowell

Prayer Tip: Keep track of prayer requests and answers.

THE SQUEAKY WHEEL

Read: Luke 18:1-8

The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. James 5:16

"The squeaky wheel gets the oil" is a popular proverb. As a child I rode my bicycle for long distances between home and school, and the squeaky sounds of the wheels drew my attention to the need to lubricate them.

In Luke 18, the widow's persistent request to the judge for justice against

her adversary made her sound like a "squeaky wheel" until she got the result she needed. Luke explains that Jesus told this story to teach us the need to pray continually and not to give up, even if it appears that the answer to our prayer is delayed (vv. 1-5).

God is certainly not as unjust judge who must be harassed before He responds to us. He is our loving Father, who cares about us and hears us when we cry to Him. Regular, persistent prayer draws us closer to Him. It may feel like we are a squeaky wheel if we keep going to Him, but the Lord welcomes our

prayer and encourages us to approach Him with our cries. He hears us and will come to our aid in ways we may not expect.

As Jesus teaches in Matthew 6:5-8, constant prayer does not require long periods of "babbling." Rather, as we bring our needs before God "day and night" (Luke 18:7) and walk with the One who already knows our needs, we learn to trust God and wait patiently for His response. Lawrence Darmani

Prayer Tips: Sometimes pray short, one-sentence prayers.

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.

(Bible Say page 3)
have “inner peace”?

A word often translated “peace” in the Bible actually means “to tie together as a whole, when all essential parts are joined together.” Inner peace, then, is a wholeness of mind and spirit, a whole heart at rest. Inner peace has little to do with external surroundings. Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” He had also told His followers that “in this world you will have many troubles. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). So peace is not the absence of trouble; it is the presence of God.

Peace is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22). When the “God of all peace” comes to live inside a believing heart (1 Corinthians 6:19), He begins to produce His own characteristics in that life. Inner peace comes from knowing that circumstances are temporary and that God is sovereign over all (Isaiah 46:9–11). Peace comes from exercising faith in the character of God and His Word. We can have peace in the midst of challenges when we remember that “all things work together for the good to

those who love God and are called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28). We can choose peace rather than give way to fear and worry. Inner peace resulting from a relationship with God allows us to keep things in proper perspective. We can accept difficult situations on earth by remembering that our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20).

We are commanded to “live in peace” with others, as far as it is up to us (Romans 12:18; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Hebrews 12:14). To live at peace means we interact with those around us in accordance with our own wholeness of mind. Our reactions to circumstances can bring peace to an otherwise chaotic situation. Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God” (Matthew 5:9). And James 3:18 says, “Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.” God’s desire is that we who know Him learn to live in peace within ourselves first. Then we can radiate that peace to others, bringing calmness and wisdom to tense situations, and in so doing be lights in the world (Matthew 5:14; Philippians 2:14–15).

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What is the peace that passes all understanding?

In Philippians 4:7 we have a wonderful promise: “The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” It is important to note the context of this promise, because that’s where we find the condition: “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God” (verse 6). God’s peace is promised to guard those who pray—with thanksgiving—about everything. This peace will transcend our ability to understand it.

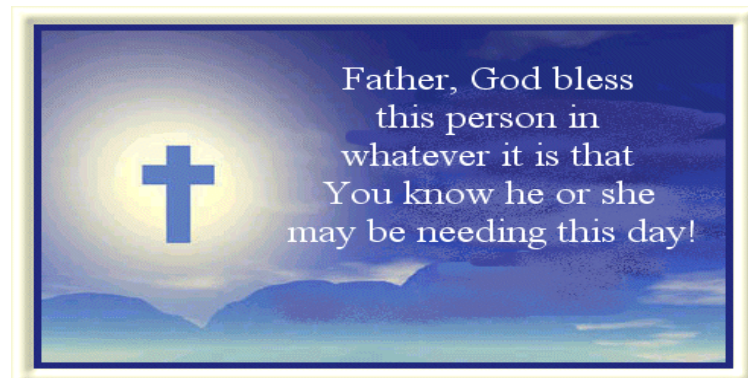
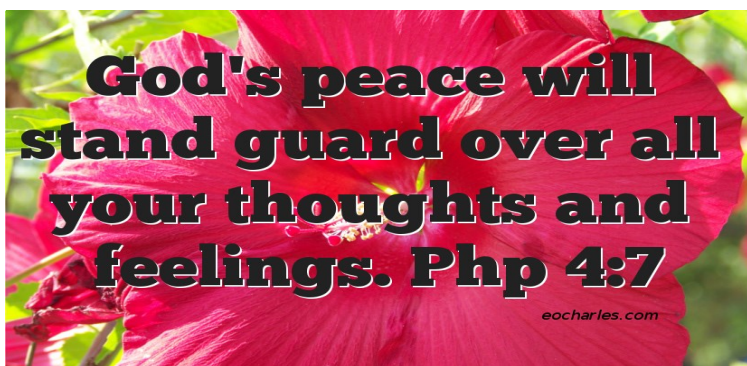
There are other gifts of God that are not fully comprehensible to us. The gift of salvation is “incredible” (2 Corinthians 9:15). The complexity and wisdom of God’s plan is inscrutable (Isaiah 55:8–9). According to Ephesians 3:19, the love of Christ is something else so great we will never fully understand it. Likewise, human reasoning is incapable of fully comprehending the peace of God.

The believer who places his or her full confidence in a loving God and is thankful in every circumstance will possess a supernatural peace. An inner calm will dominate the heart. The faithful believer will know peace—his heart and mind are “guarded” by it—despite the tempest raging without. No one, especially those outside of Christ, will be able to fathom that peace. To most, it will remain a mystery how someone can be so serene in the midst of turmoil.

The peace that comes from being in a right relationship with God is not the peace of this world. The world’s peace depends on having favorable circumstances: if things are going well, then we feel peaceful; when things go awry, the peace quickly dissipates. Jesus made the distinction between His peace and the world’s vacillating peace: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives” (John 14:27).

God’s supernatural peace surpasses natural understanding. A cancer patient who experiences a remission of the disease may proclaim, “I am so thankful to God!” That is praise. A cancer patient who is dying and in pain may calmly say, “Everything is all right. I claim Romans 8:28, and I have peace in my heart.” That is “the peace that passes all understanding.”

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(Find from page 3)

what it is. The thing that's missing is that personal relationship with Christ. God loves us and wants us to experience peace and eternal life. The Bible says in Rom. 5:1 says, "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. John 10:10 says, I (Jesus) have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly, Amen.

Let us ask ourselves What keeps us from having the life God planned for us? God created us in His image. He gave us a will and the freedom of choice; we choose to disobey Him and go our own way--which is called sin. This separates us from God. The Bible says in Rom, 3:23 says, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Rom 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord, Amen.

See, our choice to sin separates us from God. We all have tried many ways to bridge this gap between ourselves and God. Prov. 14:12 says, "There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death, Isaiah 59:2 says, "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear, Amen. No bridge reaches God... except one. Jesus Christ died on the cross and rose from the grave. When He did He paid the penalty for our sin and bridged the gap between us and God. 1 Timothy 2:5 says, "For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus." 1 Peter 3:18 says, "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God, Amen. God has provided the only way back to Him.

However, inner peace is something we all seem to be looking for, no matter where we're from and what situation we're in. Let's start with a definition of the term. Inner peace is the state of calm we feel within ourselves. It's an achievable state of mind that has everything to do with how we feel inside, instead of what's happening around us. Peace is actually our most natural state of being. If we do not return regularly to our hearts, and to the stillness within, we would most likely be permanently overstimulated, hyperactive, exhausted, or even burnt

out. The world around us could be stress-inducing and chaotic, but if we try to keep our calm no matter what, inner peace will more likely be our default modus. What can we do to find more inner peace? The first step towards inner peace is to be open to it. To believe it's possible we can achieve it, even though we might think we can't because our mind keeps spinning around. Simply trust that every action we take will bring us a (little) step further. Here are eight tips that will help you on your way.

1. Meditation

Meditation is about mental silence. It's the exercise of calming your mind in order to connect with the present moment and to observe and accept whatever is going on in and around you. In everyday life, our minds are always thinking. To-do lists, what to eat for dinner, things we have done and could have done differently We're never not thinking about anything. And even though meditation is not about stopping your thinking, it is, in fact, an efficient way to allow yourself a break from the outside world and observe what's going on inside you, pleasant or unpleasant. In a state of mental and emotional calm, you learn to simply observe and acknowledge things as they are, which helps to achieve some sense of peace in your life.

2. Take a break from social media

This may sound like a no-brainer, yet most of us are glued to our screens all day long. If there's one big cause that disrupts inner peace, it is social media. Social media can cause a fear of not living our best lives when comparing ourselves to friends or famous people's stories and posts. This alone will disrupt your inner peace. Moreover, research shows that being present on social media for extended amounts of time can cause physiological changes in the brain. It lowers our ability to maintain our attention on any one selected topic, and it makes us addicted to our screens, by causing our bodies to release dopamine (the happy hormone) each time we post or get a notification from an app. Studies show that the brain scans of heavy social media users look very similar to those addicted to drugs or gambling. So, trying to say bye to your phone more often is a great idea if you'd like to keep your inner peace high.

3. Practice breathwork

See your breathing as the remote control of your autonomic nervous

system. By changing the way you breathe, you change your state of mind in just a few seconds! Feeling stressed or anxious? Controlled, slow breathing triggers the relaxation response of our bodies, slowing down your heart rate, relaxing your muscles, calming your nerves, and soothing your thoughts. Just sit down, close your eyes and breathe slowly in and out from the belly for a while. You will soon notice a calmness coming over you. Breathing is one of the fastest and most effective ways to achieve inner peace. Need help? We're here to guide you, as moonbird is specifically designed to guide you in doing slow breathing exercises in order to find more inner peace.

4. Be kind to the world around you (and to yourself)

When you're consciously making an effort to be kind to those around you, you will always feel better. If you focus on the good, the good will come back to you, and you'll quickly realize that you're more at peace since your mind pays less attention to the things causing you distress. If you're going through stressful times, try performing acts of kindness on a daily basis. Help others, but don't forget yourself in the process! In general, the world becomes more peaceful if you are kind to yourself. Do things that make you happy and lift your spirit. Love, for yourself and for others, is the key to living a life with more inner peace.

5. Take a walk in nature

Nature is such a beautiful thing. Not only because it is literally beautiful, but also because surrounding yourself with nature instantly improves your well-being. Our relationship with nature - how much we notice, think about, and appreciate our natural surroundings - is a critical factor in supporting good mental health and preventing distress. Research shows that people who are more connected with nature are usually happier in life and more likely to report feeling their lives are worthwhile. You can take a daily walk in the woods or by the water, but if that's not available, a short walk in the park around your house also helps to lower your stress levels and curb your anxiety. Whatever you do, spending time outdoors is always a quick and easy way to achieve inner peace.

6. Laugh as much as you can
Laughing is the best medicine, as it works for basically anything. Laughter boosts immunity, lowers stress

(Find on page 17)

(Find from page 16)

hormones, decreases pain, relaxes your muscles, prevents heart disease, adds joy and zest to life, eases anxiety and tension, relieves stress, improves mood, strengthens resilience, strengthens relationships, promotes group bonding, and helps defuse conflict. Inner peace will never be achieved when you're taking your life too seriously. Yes, life can be stressful, challenging, and take unexpected turns, yet the invitation is to keep finding the joy and beauty of it. If you're having a hard time and your mind is putting you to the test, find things that make you smile. A funny movie, a night out with friends, dancing around in your living room: whatever works for you.

7. Express yourself

Inner peace is both the foundation and the sustenance of creativity.

Expressing yourself and making art of all kinds improves your well-being. It's one of the most mindful things you can do, as you only focus on what you do, pay attention to every detail and get into the flow state where you don't notice time passing by. Whether it's making music, drawing a picture, or painting a chair: being in the creative process puts your mind at ease and shifts your attention from pain and

anxieties to something beautiful. Do you think you're not creative? Guess again. Every person is intrinsically creative. And you don't have to become a Picasso to make art. Just do it and trust the process (not the outcome).

8. Practice everyday mindfulness

Mindfulness is a state of clear presence or peace of mind that enriches your life. This can be achieved through shifting your focus within, through meditation. You don't have to necessarily close your eyes and sit still to practice mindfulness. Why not try to be mindful with your eyes open, as much as you can? At any moment during your day, you can bring your attention back to the present moment. A mind that is at peace is in the here and now and is not thinking compulsively about the past and the future. What can you do?

Every time you feel a thought or feeling coming up, try to shift your attention to for example your breathing, your bodily sensations, or the thing you are doing at the moment (like sipping your coffee). Try to be as attentive as you can be and allow your mind to find harmony with the present moment. True peace always arises in the now.

We must make a choice. We must trust and receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The Bible says in John 1:12 "Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." Rom. 10:9 says, "If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

So which side are you on? The side with Christ or without Him? Well here's how you can accept Christ into your life: Admit your need. (I am a sinner), Be willing to turn from your sins. (Repent), Believe that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross and rose from the grave. (Be saved by faith), Through prayer, invite Jesus Christ to control your life through the Holy Spirit. (Receive him as Lord and Savior), The you say this prayer:

"Dear God, I know I'm a sinner, and I ask for your forgiveness. I believe Jesus Christ is Your Son. I believe that He died for my sin and that you raised Him to life. I want to trust Him as my Savior and follow Him as Lord, from this day forward. Guide my life and help me to do your will. I pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen."

(Peace from page 3)

world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

Shalom, translated as "peace," is perhaps the most widely known word in the Hebrew language and conveys various meanings in Scripture. "Success," "prosperity," "completeness," "wholeness," "well-being," and "welfare" are just some of its uses. In the *Holman Treasury of Key Bible Words*, we find this explanation: "When *shalom* is best translated as 'peace,' this peace is more than the mere absence of war or strife. It describes a peace that is positive; a time, place, and condition that features love, righteousness, calmness, political and moral uprightness and much more. It is a word reserved for those who walk with God in a positive relationship" ("Peace," Carpenter, E. E., & Comfort, P. W., Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000, p. 135).

The Greek word for "peace" carries many meanings as well, including the traditional welcome and farewell. It can be used to describe the end of war and conflict, inner tranquility, and calm. But Jesus came to bring a different kind of peace on earth. At His birth, the angels declared, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests" (Luke 2:14).

The prophet Isaiah foretold the coming of this Prince of Peace, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

When the Messiah came, He brought with Him God's kingdom peace. This same otherworldly peace was Jesus' parting gift to His disciples. The ultimate endowment of peace was granted to us in God's gift of salvation purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ through His sacrifice on the cross. By way of Christ's death, we have been granted access to the throne of God and restored fellowship with our Heavenly Father: "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:1-2, ESV; see also Isaiah 53:5).

Paul told the Philippians to take their anxious thoughts and worries about this life to God in prayer, "and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7, ESV). By the power of God's Holy Spirit dwelling inside us, our minds are now governed by God's peace (Romans 8:6).

(Peace on page 18)

(Love from page 3)

as a new calendar year is nothing but another rotation of the earth on its axis. There has to be something we can do and need to do.

Be that as it may, it is worthwhile for us to gather ourselves together, look into ourselves and try to make adjustments to our attitudes and behavior towards one another. Even though we may not know exactly what the Lord God has in plan for us mortals, there are a couple of things that are within our control. I am thinking of how we treat and how we relate to each other. Thank God for the free willing spirit in each and every one of us. We have the choice to face each day with bright, cheerful optimism or gloomy, downright, negative pessimism. It is a choice that every one of us faces every time. From the events of the past couple of Years, (2020-2022), it has become abundantly clear to me, that we have very little choice but to look up and be positive. Stay in fervent prayer, keep hope alive and listen to the advice and caution from our professionals.

Anyone who has not paid attention to the collective plight of the entire population of the human race is either living on a different planet or has chosen not to care. 'We are in this together' has become a political statement of

choice to get each other's attention. And there is good reason to pay attention and be aware. We are in an epidemic of 'novel' proportions. Even the trained and seasoned professionals have no definitive and immediate solutions. All across the globe people have lost their lives and the living, have had their usual customs and habits drastically altered. It may come as a surprise to many, but those of us who follow the precepts of Jesus the Christ and his ideals have one tool that we still have in our control. That is the capacity to **love** one another.

In time of turmoil and havoc, maybe we can lessen the level of anxiety and chaos by first and foremost putting our trust in the Lord and next, counting on each other for comfort and assurance. Love each other. Practice some level of random act of kindness and care. Show compassion to the needy. Show love to the afflicted. Open your heart to those who are hurting. Lend a hand (in various ways) to support efforts to ease the burden on those who are bearing the brunt of the current situation. Send messages, reach out and give of your heart. Changing with the calendar would give us something to give to each other that does not cost us much – **love** one another.

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A Cry of Peace
A PRAYER FOR THE WORLD DAY OF PEACE

Father of Jesus,
 You who sent your angels to herald your Son's coming with cries of peace,
 Hear our cry now
 That your peace may touch all corners of our world.
 Peace to the smallest child, still in the womb.

Peace to the most vulnerable of our elderly, who long to see your face.
 Peace to the migrant fleeing war, persecution, hunger and poverty.
 Peace to the citizens of those nations to which migrants flee.
 Peace to the those touched by violence and disaster,
 By storms and quakes and droughts and floods,
 Who struggle to find safety and mercy in the very world you made for us.

You whose Son called all peacemakers blessed,
 Help us forge peace in your name.
 Peace among nations.
 Peace among neighbors.
 Peace among families.
 When we look back on this time
 May we recall it as the time we all heard the angels' cry
 And worked together to reveal that peace to all.
 A peace worthy of God, born into the world

Amen

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 CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES

Photo by Charlie David Martinez for CRS

(Peace from page 17)

Jesus left us with His peace in another sense, as well, that we would become peacemakers for His kingdom (Matthew 5:9; Romans 12:18; 1 Peter 3:10-11) and dwell in harmony with our brother and sisters in Christ: "Make every effort to live in peace with everyone" (Hebrews 12:14; see also Colossians 3:15).

God's peace reflects His divine character, strength, love, goodness, sovereignty, dominion, and power. It emanates from His presence in our lives (Isaiah 26:12; 2 John 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 3:16). The Lord dispatches His peace to us like a troop of armed forces sent to stand watch over our hearts. Although we cannot fully fathom this peace with our human minds, it is real and obtainable in Christ. Still today, to anyone who believes in Jesus and commits to following Him, He says, "My peace I leave with you."

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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.

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CHOOSE JOY

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!
Philippians 4:4

Keith was feeling down as he trudged through the produce aisle. His hands trembled from the first signs of Parkinson's disease. How long before his quality of life began to slide? What would this mean for his wife and children? Keith's gloom was shattered by laughter. Over by the potatoes, a man pushed a giggling boy in a wheelchair. The man leaned over and whispered to his son, who couldn't stop grinning. He was noticeably worse off than Keith, yet he and his dad were finding joy where they could.

Writing from prison or under house arrest as he awaited the outcome of his trial, the apostle Paul seemingly had no right to be joyful (Philippians 1:12-13). The emperor was Nero, a wicked man who had a growing reputation for violence and cruelty, so Paul had reason to be concerned. He also knew there were preachers who were taking advantage of his absence to gain glory for themselves. They thought they could "stir up trouble" for the apostle while he was imprisoned (V. 17).

Yet Paul chose to rejoice (VV. 18-21), and he told the Philippians to follow his example: "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice" (4:4). Our situation might seem bleak, yet Jesus is with us now, and He's guaranteed our glorious future. Christ, who walked out of His tomb, will return to raise His followers to live with Him. As we begin this new year, may we rejoice! Mike Wittmer

What personal suffering or injustice causes you to languish in your sorrow? How might the truth of Jesus bring you joy?

Father, please raise my eyes above my circumstances.
 I look to You alone for joy.

Today's Scripture: **Philippians 1:12-21**

MADE FOR ADVENTURE

Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.
Genesis 1:28

I recently made a wonderful discovery. Following a dirt path into a cluster of trees near my home, I found a hidden homemade playground. A ladder made of sticks led up to a lookout, swings made from old cable spools hung from branches, and there was even a suspension bridge slung between boughs. Someone had turned some old wood and rope into a creative adventure!

Swiss physician Paul Tournier believed that we were made for adventure because we're made in God's image (Genesis 1:26-27). Just as God ventured forth to invent a universe (VV. 1-25), just as he took the risk of creating humans who could choose good or evil (3:5-6), and just as He called us to "be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it" (1:28), we too have a drive to invent, take risks, and create new things as we fruitfully rule the earth. Such adventures may be large or small, but they're best when they benefit others. I bet the makers of that playground would get a kick out of people finding and enjoying it.

Whether it's inventing new music, exploring new forms of evangelism, or rekindling a marriage that's grown distant, adventures of all kinds keep our heart beating. What new task or project is tugging at you right now? Perhaps God is leading you to a new adventure.

How else do you see God being adventurous in Scripture? How can His adventures inspire our own?

Adventurous God, send me on a new adventure out of love for You and others!

Today's Scripture: **Genesis 1:21-28**

²¹ So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it,

¹² Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. ¹³ As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. ¹⁴ And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.

¹⁵ It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. ¹⁶ The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. ¹⁷ The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. ¹⁸ But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, ¹⁹ for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. ²⁰ I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. ²¹ For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

INSIGHT

Paul's letter to the church at Philippi is much loved because of its emphasis on joy. Considered by many to be the apostle's most practical letter, it nevertheless contains one of the most theological segments in the New Testament. The declaration in Philippians 2:5-11, believed by some to have been a part of an ancient hymn, explores what Christ left behind to come to earth as a human being. It also explores His ultimate mission—and the glory that will be His one day, when "every knee [will] bow" and "every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord" (VV. 10-11). Bill Crowder

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according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²² God blessed them and said, "Be Fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth." ²³ And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.

²⁴ And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animal, each according to its kind." and it was so. ²⁵ God made the wild animals according to their kinds, livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶ Then God said, "let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

²⁷ So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

INSIGHT

Scripture declares that God created all things. The Hebrew verb *bara'* rendered created in Genesis 1, always has Him as the subject. Thus, God first created everything out of nothing (V. 1) and then created living beings from this created material (VV. 21, 27). Job 38-41 is without parallel in its depiction of the creative genius of God Almighty. With jaw-dropping brilliance, God gave Job a crash-course in things created and display in the heavens, the earth, and seas—leading him to humbled silence (40:4-5; 42:5-6).

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IT DEPENDS ON WHOSE HANDS IT'S IN!

A basketball in my hands is worth about \$19.

A basketball in Michael Jordan's hands is worth about \$33 million.

It depends on whose hands it's in.

A baseball in my hands is worth about \$6.

A baseball in Mark McGwire's hands is worth \$19 million.

It depends on whose hands it's in.

A tennis racket is useless in my hands.

A tennis racket in Pete Sampras' hands is a Wimbledon Championship.

It depends on whose hands it's in.

A rod in my hands will keep away a wild animal.

A rod in Moses' hands will part the mighty sea.

It depends on whose hands it's in.

A sling shot in my hands is a kid's toy.

A sling shot in David's hand is a mighty weapon.

It depends on whose hands it's in.

Two fish and 5 loaves of bread in my hands is a couple of fish sandwiches.

Two fish and 5 loaves of bread in God's hands will feed thousands.

It depends on whose hands it's in.

Nails in my hands might produce a birdhouse.

Nails in Jesus Christ's hands will produce salvation for the entire world.

It depends on whose hands it's in.

As you see now it depends on whose hands it's in.

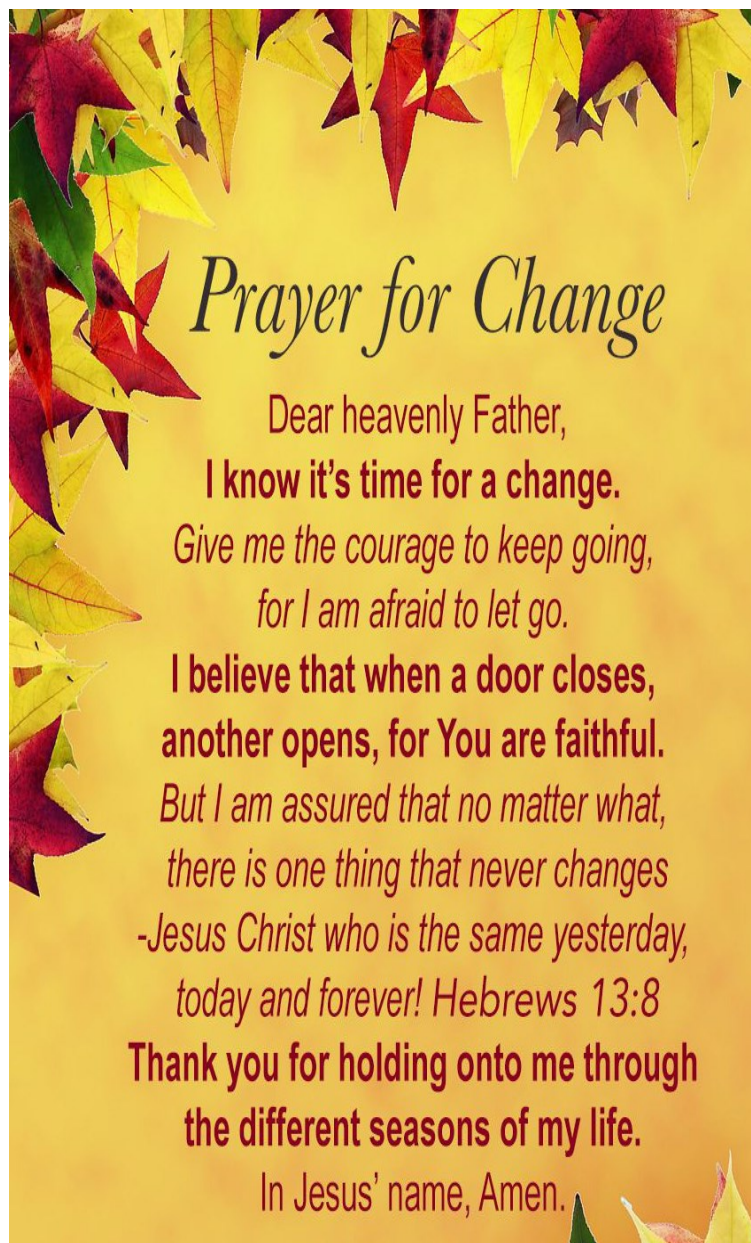
So put your concerns, your worries, your fears, your hopes, your dreams, your families and your relationships in God's hands because -

It depends on whose hands it's in. »

"Prayer to Renew Our Trust in God"

Psalm 9:10 says, **"Those who know your name trust in you, for you, O Lord, do not abandon those who search for you."** Amen Hallelujah Thank You Jesus.

Let's pray: Dear Lord, Lately, we've been discouraged because we don't have the answers. We don't see how our situation will work out. We get confused and frustrated over closed doors. Today please forgive us for not trusting You in all things, help us renew our trust in You. See we know You are present with us in our pain, and You are also working things out according to Your perfect will even when we can't see it, You are working on our behalf. Today we proclaim our faith in You, God. Let the words of Rahab in Joshua 2:11 be our battle cry when we struggle to trust, "For the Lord Your God is the supreme God of the heavens above and the earth below." thank You for Your guiding hand in our life, its In Jesus' name we ask and pray. Amen, Amen, Amen. Hallelujah Thank You Jesus.



Healing of Sorrow

Sorrow over the death of a loved one is a heavy weight upon the spirit. It often causes the one who mourns to feel that life will never again be filled with high and joyful attitudes.

But life goes on---and one must live it. The passage the follows has probably brought more healing to the human soul and given more lift to the spirit in sorrow than any other passage in all the literature of the world.

I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. John 11:25

What a glorious message! Jesus Christ is alive, and those who believes in Him live, also. So our loved one whom we though dead isn't dead at all, but lives and shall forever touch our lives with the same love and tenderness.

This gives a lift to the spirit that one wants to shout from the housetops the glorious fact that through faith in Jesus Christ, we live. So when sorrow comes, repeat over and over this wonderful passage. And presently the shadows will flee away, and the light of a new day will dawn for you.

Joy of Spiritual Fellowship

For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them. Matthew 18:20

One effective way to get your spirits lifted is to arrange for periodic times of spiritual fellowship---to think and talk and pray with a few people who, like yourself, are seeking a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. This practice will bring you one of the most glorious experiences in life. You will be aware that Jesus Christ is in the midst of such a group, and the warmth and uplift this knowledge will bring to your heart is impossible to describe.

Faith, Hope and Love

The best three-point formula for living is in this immortal statement: **And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. 1 Corinthians 13:13**

Here are three powerful Spirit Lifters: Faith, the greatest power in this world; Hope, the attitude of expectancy---the best is yet to be; and Love, one of the greatest qualities of all---a heartfelt of compassion and understanding. Christian love gives deep joy. Let these three shine like stars in your life, and your spirit will be uplifted always.

Realize the Power Within You

Realize the power that is within you, and you will no longer be the victim of a depressed spirit.

And what is this inner power? Simply the God-given ability to believe.

To the extent to which you develop this faculty, you will master the defeats in your life.

The great issue is to learn to believe.

This is stated in one of the most important of all Scripture passages: ***Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes."* Mark 9:23**

Learn to believe. Learn to cast out doubt. This is done by the practice of affirmation.

Affirm faith, think positively, visualize achievement. Never think doubt. Always think faith.

This text affirms that when you learn to believe, the area of the impossible is vastly reduced and the area of the possible is greatly increased.

If you set this text firmly at the center of your thought patterns, you will never again be a victim of low spirits.

What Christ Can Do for You

We read in the Bible of the marvelous things Jesus did for people---and wish that the same experience might be ours. Through faith in Jesus Christ, they were able to accomplish the most astonishing achievements, or were rescued from sad plights or gained tremendous new power over difficulties.

Rather sadly we ask, "Why can't that happen to me?"

It can, and as proof I urge you to meditate upon this tremendous Spirit Lifter: ***Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Hebrews 13:8***

The simple truth stated here is that Jesus Christ never changes. He is an invariable factor in a variable world. He is just the same now as when He walked the shores of Galilee. He has the same kindness, the same power to heal and change men's lives. He is the same restorer of courage, the same transformer of people's souls.

Any things that He ever did for anyone throughout all history, He can do for you. It all depends upon how completely you surrender yourself Him---and how sincerely you believe.

Greatest Blessings

How can you obtain the things that make life rich and filled with peace, material necessities and right relationships? Jesus tells us how: **But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Matthew 6:33**

We are told to have God's righteousness or rightmindedness. Develop a right thought pattern. Right thinking, governed by intelligence, is positive not negative, unselfish not self-centered, creative not destructive, kindly not hateful. Employ these attitudes and everything that you need for the good life will be multiplied for you.

“

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 judgement 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!

Agreeing with God

**“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.”
1 Timothy 6:12**

Let us pray, "We thank You, Father, that we can boldly declare in faith who we are in Christ. Thank You that You created us as one of a kind and You love

me dearly. Today, we choose to believe that we are Your workmanship, Its in Jesus name we ask and pray, Amen, Amen, Amen.

See we have to take a step of faith and no matter how we feel, agree with God that He loves us. We are wonderfully made and have many talents and strengths. We are valuable, and as a believer in Jesus, we are the righteousness of God in Him. We have

rightness before God instead of wrongness—be thankful for that amazing gift! Fight for yourself! Fight the good fight of faith and refuse to live below the level at which Jesus wants you to live. His kingdom is righteousness, peace, and joy. Don't settle for anything less. Begin to speak out against feelings of insecurity and say, "I belong to God, and He loves me!" Start saying something good and drown out the other voices that condemn you, Amen.

Pray in Agreement, Live in Agreement

“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.” Matthew 5:9

Let us pray, God, thank You for the power that is released when we pray. We thank You that right now, incredible power is being released in my life, Amen.

The prayer of agreement is only effective when those who agree in prayer

are living in agreement in their natural, everyday lives. See living in agreement does not mean never having our own opinions, but it does mean that there is harmony, mutual respect, and honor in our relationships. It means an absence of the things that cause division and strife—like selfishness, anger, resentment, jealousy, bitterness, or comparison. Living in agreement like everyone works together, supports, and encourages each other, believes in, and trusts each other as they all pursue the same goal and

share the victory. The prayer of agreement is very powerful, but it can only be used effectively by those who make the effort to live in agreement. There is no power in agreeing occasionally; we must live in agreement. Live with others respectfully and peacefully. Adapt and adjust ourselves to people and things in order to be a maker and maintainer of peace. So maintaining unity and harmony does require effort, but the power released when people pray who live in agreement is worth it,

Help for the Weary

“I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: Mine eyes fail while I wait for my God. They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: They that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: Then I restored that which I took not away.” Psalm 69:3-4

Let us pray, "Lord, when I am weary, give me the grace to hope in You, trusting You to renew my strength,

Amen.

Clearly, David the psalmist was weary when he penned the words of today's scripture. He actually said, "I am worn out". See when we are weary, we need our strength restored, and the Bible says that God will help us: But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint, Amen. I believe we can make ourselves weary through the way we think and talk. But

the Holy Spirit is available to help, strengthen, and restore us. He will not help us complain or be negative about the pressures we face, but He will help us think and speak about them according to God's Word. He will give us wisdom to deal with our problems effectively. He will give us grace and make things easier than they would otherwise be. He will strengthen us in faith, and He will help us hope in the Lord, which, according to Isaiah 40:31, is where we will renew our strength.

Time for Renewal

“And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.” Mark 6:31

Let us pray, "Lord, give me wisdom to know when I must rest and be

renewed. Help me to adjust my schedule when I need to be refueled, Amen.

Frequently we complain and live silently angry lives while at the same time we continue to do the very things that make us angry. But we cannot blame others for what is ultimately our own responsibility. See many of God's most precious and well known saints have suffered from weariness and burnout

with a tendency toward depression. We must learn that not all of our problems are spiritual; some of them are physical. We often blame the devil for things that are our own fault. We must learn to say no and not fear the loss of relationships. We have come to the conclusion that if we lose a relationship its because we tell someone no, we really never had a true relationship at all, Amen

Good Things Are on the Way

“The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him.” Lamentation 3:25

Let us pray, "Father, anytime we feel discouraged or weary, help us to remember that there is always hope. Help us be filled with hope in You and positive expectation. You are good, and

we believe You want to be good to us, its in Jesus name we ask and pray, Amen, Amen, Amen.

Sometimes when we've had a long series of painful or disappointing things happen, we can get to a point where we are just expecting more of what we've already had. But if we are expecting something bad to happen, those expectations will steal our joy and make

it almost impossible to live a victorious life. Instead of expecting the worst, choose to expect the best. The next time you are having a bad day, examine your expectations, and if you find they are not what they should be, you can quickly make an adjustment that will bring God's reassuring peace and uncontainable joy back into your life, Amen.



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

Where You Are Weak, He Is Strong

And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strenght is made perfect in weakness. Most glagly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 2 Corinthian 13:9

Weak or strong? If you had to pick one of those words to describe yourself, which one would it be? I think most of us would probably say 'weak.' But did you know that we don't

have to remain defeated by our weakness? The only way to overcome your weakness is to rely on God's strength. To do that, you have to stop focusing on your weaknesses. You cannot look at everything you are not. You must look at everything God is. Focus on His strength and all He is willing to do for you. The weaknesses of the world are not your inheritance. Jesus did not come to earth, die on the cross, and rise again on the third day for you to be weak and defected. He went through all that to give you an inheritance, authority in this life and

His strength to rule over your circumstances. In any area where you stumble, God is ready and willing to provide you with His strength. So the next time you find yourself confronted by you weakness, remember and declare that where you are weak, He is strong!

Prayer starter: God, I declare and confess that where I am weak, You are strong. So I will not worry about, or remain defeated by, my weakness. Instead, I put my faith in Your strength.

God's Perfect Plan for You

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:6

"God has perfect a plan for your life!" We've all heard that phrase, but I don't think many of us, really believe it. Maybe it's the word "perfect" that troubles us. For most of us, perfection isn't even remotely involved. Perfection seems impossible. And

guess what? It is! God's plan isn't perfect because we're perfect. The plan is perfect because God is the One who designed it. The perfection comes from Him and Him alone. He knows us better than we know ourselves, and He has designed and set into action a plan specifically engineered for our lives. Paul tells us in Philippians 1:6 that God saved us and started a good work in us, and His work in us will come to full completion. As we think about God at work in us, we must remind ourselves that as imperfect as we are, God is

perfection. Nothing we can ever do will be good enough to satisfy God's perfection. Only Jesus, the Perfect One, is good enough. And because we are in Christ, God's perfect plan is possible for us!

Prayer Starter: Dear Lord, I know that I am not perfect, but thankfully Your plan for me depends on Your perfection, not mine. Thank You so much for developing a good work within me. I trust You to complete it.

How to Fight the Good Fight

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. 1 Timothy 6:12

We are to "fight the good fight of faith" against the enemy-but what does that look like practically? Here are six key strategies: 1. Think aggressively. Plan and calculate, like a general preparing for battle, how to engage and defect the enemy. 2. Pray

fervently. Hebrews 4:16 instructs us to approach God's throne confidently. Step forward with confidence and tell Him what you need. 3. Speak fearlessly. First Peter 4:11 (AMP) says, "Whoever speaks, [let him do it as one who utters] oracles of God." you and I are to have a spiritually commanding voice against the forces of evil. 4. Give abundantly. The way we give is the way we receive (see Luke 6:38). Live a life of generosity. 5. Work intently. Whatever we put our hand to, we need to do it aggressively (see Ecclesiastes 9:10). Stir yourself up in the Holy Spirit

and get the job done. 6. Love unconditionally. As children of God, we much love others as God loves us, unconditionally and sacrificially. Take these steps, and when the enemy comes, you'll be filled with God's power and unbeatable.

Prayer Starter: Lord, I don't want to sit back and miss the fight You've called me to. As I move forward, show me how to apply these six strategies in my fight against the enemy.

Praying in His Name

And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. John 16:23-24

When our youngest son was still in school, we had people who stayed with him when Dave and I traveled. In order for those who were caring for

him in our absence to get medical treatment for him if it was needed, we had to sign a legal document stating that they had the right to use our name on our son's behalf, literally, to make decisions in our place. That is what Jesus did for His disciples and, ultimately, for all who would believe in Him. He said that God would answer when we pray using His name. This is the authority you and I have been granted in His name. His name takes His place, His name represents Him. When we pray in His name, it is the same as if He were praying. This

privilege seems almost too wonderful to believe! But we can bekieve it because we have Scripture to back it up. So use the authority of Jesus' name and put that power to work to overcome evil and bring the blessings of God to this world.

Prayer Starter: God, I pray to You boldly in the name of Jesus, knowing that You are listening and ready to answer. Thank You for the wonderful privilege of praying in Your Son's name.

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.



CHRISTMAS-CARD PERFECT

Today Scripture: **John 7:1-9**

Even his own brothers did not believe in him. John 7:5

The Barker family Christmas video was perfect. Three robe-clad shepherds (the family's young sons) huddled around a fire in a grassy field. Suddenly an angel descended from the hilltop—their big sister, looking resplendent, except for the pink high-top sneakers. As the soundtrack swelled, the shepherds stared skyward in amazement. A trek across a field led them to a real baby—their infant brother in a modern barn. Big sister now played the role of Mary.

Then came the “bonus features,” when their dad let us peek behind the scenes. Whiny kids complained, “I’m cold.” “I have to go to the bathroom right now!” “Can we go home?” “Guys, pay attention,” said their mom more than once. Reality was far from Christmas-card perfect.

It’s easy to view the original Christmas story through the lens of a well-edited final cut. But Jesus’ life was anything but smooth. A jealous Herod tried to kill Him in infancy (Matthew 2:13). Mary and Joseph misunderstood Him (Luke 2:41-50). The world hated Him (John 7:7). For a time, “even his own brothers did not believe in him” (v.5). His mission led to a grisly death. He did it all to honor His Father and rescue us.

The Barkers’ video ended with these words of Jesus; “I am the way the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (14:6). That’s a reality we can live with—forever. Tim Gustafson

How do you try to appear to be perfect? How can you better acknowledge your need for Jesus perfect strength?

Father, thank You for sending Your Son to provide a way for me to be reconciled to You forever.

¹ After this, Jesus went around in Galilee. He did not want to go about in Judea because the Jewish leaders there were looking for a way to kill him. ² But when the Jewish Festival of Tabernacles was near, ³ Jesus’ brother said to him, “Leave Galilee and go to Juda, so that your disciples there may see the works you do. ⁴ No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world.” ⁵ For even his own brothers did not believe in him.

⁶ Therefore Jesus told them, “My time is not yet here; for you any time will do. ⁷ The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that its works are evil. ⁸ You go to the festival. I am not going up to this festival, because my time has not yet fully come.” ⁹ After he had said this, he stayed in Galilee.

INSIGHT

The “Festival of Tabernacles” (John 7:2), also called Sukkoth or the Feast of ingathering/Feast of Booths, is one of Israel’s fall feasts. Its purpose was to remind the Israelites of the time their ancestors had spent in “booths” (tents or shelters) during the forty years of wilderness wanderings that followed the exodus from Egypt. Sukkoth was one of the three feasts (along with Passover and First-fruits) prescribed as “pilgrimage feasts”—when observing Jews traveled to a communal celebration as a nation. In Exodus 23:14-17, God listed these three feasts as the times that the people of Israel were to come and stand before Him, which meant a journey to the temple in Jerusalem once it had been built. Israel celebrated a total of seven annual feasts—four in the spring and three in the fall—but only the three feasts listed in Exodus 23 carried the expectation of pilgrimage (See Deuteronomy 16:16; 2 Chronicles 8:13). Bill Crowder

Ministries, Grand Rapids, Michigan,
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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

Hello Readers,

I pray that all is well with you and your families and friends. I pray that God's Grace, Mercy, Blessings and Healing power continue to rain down on all of you, your families and friends. It is in Jesus Christ name I pray. Amen!!!

As we begin this New Year of 2023, I pray that it will draw you to have a closer walk with God through your relationship Jesus Christ.

This is why I chose for the January-February newsletter theme to be "Inner Peace.

"Christian Today" defines peace as having "multiple connotations but in general terms it evokes thoughts of tranquility, contentment and freedom from distress. It's a word that features frequently in our everyday vocabulary. For example, we talk of "peace of mind" - the state of being free from worry, "peace and quiet" - the state of not being bothered by noise and interruptions, "world peace" - the end to conflict between nations, "being at peace"- in reference to those who have passed away or as a description of having worked through the internal conflict of a decision.

But how many of us regularly experience true peace? If we look at current trends, we could come to the conclusion that the answer is very few. In recent years there's been a new wave of interest in mindfulness and meditation. A lot of the time the context in which we use the word points to the absence of something - noise, worry, war - but when we look at the word in a biblical setting, we discover that peace isn't just the absence of something but it is a presence in its own right.

The Bible has a lot to say about peace and how it can be a very real and present part of our lives.

Inner peace

This is the type that we commonly associate with freedom from worry or troubles. It doesn't necessarily mean that we are free from problems, but rather the problems don't have power over us. Inner spiritual peace is alluded to in Isaiah 26:3: "You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you."

This verse illustrates that this inner peace stems from the power of our relationship with God, and more specifically our trust in him. By trusting in God we can experience his peace and we no longer need to divert unnecessary attention to worrying.

This sentiment is echoed in Philippians 4:6-7 where the incomprehensible peace of God is received as trust is placed in him: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Romans 15:13 again presents the idea that to be filled with peace is a hope that can only truly be fulfilled by God: "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

So if we're not feeling peaceful today, do a mind check: where are you looking for your peace? Have you asked God to give you peace? Are you focusing on your problems or your God?"

Peace is one of the fruits of the Spirit. Peace "is a tranquility of mind as 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 said "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us."

When you're at peace with yourself and your life, you might experience a deep sense of mental, spiritual, and emotional harmony or serenity. Being at peace doesn't mean your life will be free of turmoil or distress, but it will likely help you stay grounded and strong throughout difficult experiences. Inner peace can support your ability to feel content with whatever comes your way in life, good or bad. When you experience inner peace you may feel more alive, aware, conscious, and attuned to the present moment.

In closing, let your relationship with God be made new or renewed, so that your walk with Him will be closer and stronger. That your inner peace will help you get through what ever comes your way. It is in Jesus Christ name I pray.

God bless,

Ken

200th Year Church Anniversary Celebration



1829-1929

The original church was built in 1829. The members purchased land from a Mr. Henry Paddock and the church was constructed on Cross Street, which at this time faced Mt Vernon Street currently the site of the Science Center of Wesleyan University



2007-Now

In May of 1993, the Rt. Reverend George W.C. Walker, Sr., appointed the Reverend Moses L. Harvill as the Pastor of the Cross Street Church. Under his leadership the Church continues to grow spiritually, numerically, and financially. The Church and parsonage mortgages have been liquidated

On December 23, 2007, we rejoice in the miracle on West and Wadsworth Street by opening the doors to the New Cross Street A.M.E. Zion Church.

On April 20, 2008, Cross Street celebrated the 185th Church Anniversary and the dedication Celebration of the New Cross Street A.M.E. Zion Church.

The Right Reverend George E. Battle, Presiding Bishop and Mrs. Iris Miller Battle, Missionary Supervisor was so very thankful that God has afforded us the opportunity to share and participate in this auspicious occasion. Look at what God has entrusted to the members of this Church; to the community in the City of Middletown; to the State of Connecticut; and especially to the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. My heart and I pray that your hearts cannot fully express the gratitude we feel for how God has provided and for how He has worked through all of us to meet the needs of those we now serve and the many who will come that we will assuredly serve in the future.



1929-2007

In 1929, the church was moved to its present site due to the realignment of Cross Street. It was during this move that the church was named Cross Street. Under the leadership of 12 ministers, many renovations were accomplished. However in 1978, the 1867 church structure was torn down and a new building constructed on the same site under the leadership of Reverend Douglas Lawrence.

CROSS STREET PASTORS: 1823 TO PRESENT

JEHIEL E. BEAMON
WILLIAM JONES
H.W. HUTCHINGS
MOSES MONZINGO
G.H.S. BELL
WILLIAM J. SMITH
I.T. BATTLE
SAMUEL ROBERSON

J.C. LODGE
J.B. SMALL
S.W. WELLER
E. HORTON BROWN
E. GEORGE BIDDLE
GEORGE F. GREEN
MARSHALL M. SMITH
REV. COLEMAN

THOMAS RIDDICK
WILLIAM DAVAGE
DAVID FOGG
GEORGE C. BATTLE
HEZEKIAH WILLIAMS
N. ROOSEVELT SCOTT
DOUGLAS LAWRENCE
MOSES L. HARVILL

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Sunday

8:00 a.m. **Church School** (see Zoom Meeting)

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 School ZOOM Meetings

8:00 a.m.- Contemporary Sunday School: Adults

Voice Only Call: (929) 205-6099;
Code: 140827210#
Web-link for Video Call: <https://zoom.us/j/140827210>

8:30 a.m.- Dr. Long's Sunday School Class

Voice Only Call: (929) 205-6099;
Code: 734629713#
Web-link for Video Call: <https://zoom.us/j/734629713>

9:30 a.m.- Beginners Sunday School: Ms. Carolyn Smith

Voice Only Call: (929) 205-6099;
Code: 233007146#

Web-link for Video Call: <https://zoom.us/j/233007146>

11:00 a.m.- Primary Sunday School: Rev. Earlene Grant

Voice Only Call: (929) 205-6099;
Code: 614890401#
Web-link for Video Call: <https://zoom.us/j/614890401>

11:30 a.m.- Juniors Sunday School: Rev. Greg Winborne

Voice Only Call: (929) 205-6099;
Code: 856361645#
Web-link for Video Call: <https://zoom.us/j/856361645>

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

- Online: crossstreetamezion.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.crossstreetamezion.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: crossstreetamezion.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

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Sunday School — 8:45 a.m.
Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Rev. Moses L. Harvill, M. Div.,
Pastor
Email: mharvill@snet.net

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



The Vision Statement in Four Simple Word: Members are to **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