

DEVOTIONAL

**A REFUGE
in TIMES of
TROUBLE**

By

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Dear Saints in Christ Jesus,

These notes were taken from the weekly Sunday bulletin and based upon the teaching of each week.

If the Holy Spirit can use these simply truths to draw you closer to Jesus Christ and develop a more mature love of God the Father, then this booklet will have accomplished its task.

May the blessing of God be shed upon you as you receive, with meekness, His engrafted Word.

Selah,

Pastor Ray

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DAY 1

SEEING THE BIG PICTURE

Adversity is no stranger to any follower of Jesus Christ. Not only should we not be surprised by it,¹ but we are told that it will be an inevitable part of our lives.² By simply living the way God would have us live³ will result in persecution in some way, shape or form.⁴

Light and darkness can never co-exist.⁵ Truth and error can never come to terms of peace.⁶ Those promoting and ardently following the world's system hate Jesus⁷ because they love darkness rather than light.⁸ Since we follow Jesus, the light of this world,⁹ the world will hate our stand for Christ.¹⁰

How are we to respond to those who oppose us? Jesus said with love.¹¹ Despite the opposition, we are ambassadors for Jesus,¹² and looking for Jesus.¹³ It is not always easy, but we endure as we 'see' Him who is invisible.¹⁴

May we be faithful to Jesus and live for His glory!¹⁵

1-1 Peter 4:12; 2-Acts 14:22; 3-1 Peter 1:14-16; 4-2 Tim 3:12;
5-2 Cor 6:14; 6-1 John 4:6; 7-John 3:20; 8-John 3:19; 9-John 8:12;
10-John 15:20; 11-Matt 5:43-48; 12-2 Cor 5:19,20; 13-Titus 2:13;
14-Heb 11:25-27; 15-Matt 5:13-16.

DAY 2

THE RIGHT PERSPECTIVE

The young body of saints in Thessalonica experienced persecution because of their faith in and love for Jesus Christ. On top of that, their faith and hopes were shaken by the spurious letters supposedly written by Paul and Silvanus.

Paul wrote a second epistle to them to comfort their troubled minds. When our faith is being stretched, we can go to the Lord in prayer³ and find comfort.

My flesh doesn't like opposition or difficulty. It's like a jack when my faith is being stretched, or a long journey to a planet far away. But, "EUREKA! THE LORD",⁵ for He always provides the sustenance to endure.⁶

Having the right perspective helped them to endure. Let it help you and me as well. So tune in,⁷ look up, and praise the throne!⁹

1-1 Thess 1:6, 2:14-15; 2-2 Thess 2:2; 3-1 Thess 5:1-6;
5-Psalm 113:2; 6-2 Cor 12:9,10; 7-Rom 12:1-2

DAY 2

THE RIGHT PERSPECTIVE

The young body of saints in Thessalonica had endured severe persecution because of their faith in and loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ.¹ On top of that, their faith and hopes were attacked by false prophecies and spurious letters supposedly written by Paul.²

Paul wrote a second epistle to them to calm their hearts and comfort their troubled minds. When our faith is being attacked or challenged, we can go to the Lord in prayer³ and find comfort in His Scriptures.⁴

My flesh doesn't like opposition or difficulty. I don't do jumping-jacks when my faith is being stretched, or when it seems to have taken a long journey to a planet far away. But, "Blessed be the name of the LORD"⁵ for He always provides the sustaining grace that I need to endure.⁶

Having the right perspective helped the Thessalonians, and it will help you and me as well. So tune in,⁷ look up,⁸ for the Lord is still on His throne!⁹

1-1 Thess 1:6, 2:14-15; 2-2 Thess 2:2; 3-Heb 4:16; 4-Rom 15:4;
5-Psalm 113:2; 6-2 Cor 12:9,10; 7-Rom 10:17; 8-Col 3:1-3; 9-Rev 19:6.

DAY 3

WHERE WILL YOU SPEND ETERNITY?

One of the foundational doctrines in Scripture is the doctrine of eternal judgment.¹ Scripture is clear about this fact. Every single soul steps into eternity the moment he or she breathes their last breath on earth, and steps into either eternal life² or eternal damnation.³

All human effort to explain away the torment and punishment of hell does not change the truth of Scripture. The words of Jesus regarding the eternal position of the rich man and Lazarus are a sobering revelation of the irreversible state of our souls once we leave this earth.⁴ There is a time for each person to be born, and a time to die,⁵ and then comes our judgment.⁶

Herein is the grace of God, in that what I deserved to be paid as a sinner⁷ is death, but what God offers to me is the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ.⁸ Jesus did not come to this earth for the self-righteous, but to call sinners, like myself, to repentance,⁹ and with that repentance, to remission of sins.¹⁰

What if I don't believe what the Bible says about eternity? Our unbelief does not change the truth of God.¹¹ To enter the Kingdom of God you must be born again.¹² The alternative is everlasting destruction.¹³ My advice? "Repent, and believe in the gospel."¹⁴

1-Heb 6:1-2; 2-Matt 19:16; 3-Mark 3:29; 4-Luke 16:19-31; 5-Ecc 3:2; 6-Heb 9:27; 7-Rom 3:23; 8-Rom 6:23; 9-Matt 9:13; 10-Luke 24:47; 11-Rom 3:3,4; 12-John 3:3,5,7; 13-2 Thess 1:9; 14-Mark 1:15.

DAY 4

THE SPIRIT OF AN

The age that we now live in is ruled by the devil.² In fact, Paul referred to the fallen world as "the world of this world," acknowledging the devil's influence in this world.³ And John taught that the evil spirit that permeates fallen society is antichrist.⁴

The Bible teaches that there is a person who is the antichrist, also called "the son of perdition."⁵ He is mentioned in the book of Revelation.⁶ However, John also taught that the spirit of antichrist is present in the world.⁷

This word "antichrist" not only means a person who is a substitute for Christ, but also a spirit of antichrist. Now no true Christian should be deceived by the person of Antichrist, but we need to be aware of the spirit of antichrist. John broke down for us the signs of this spirit of antichrist.⁸

The gospel, or 'good news', is that through Jesus Christ we are delivered out of this world of darkness into the Kingdom of God¹⁰ and abstain from fleshly lusts,¹¹ which the world overcomes and the spirit of antichrist.

Follow Jesus Christ, saints!¹³ Set your hearts on things above, not on things on earth. Do not accept or allow any substitutes!

1-2 Cor 4:4; 2-Luke 4:5,6; 3-Eph 2:1-2; 4-1 John 2:18; 5-Rev 6:2; 6-1 John 4:3, 2:22; 7-2 John 1:7; 8-1 John 2:18; 9-1 John 4:8; 10-1 Peter 2:11; 11-1 John 2:18; 12-1 John 2:18; 13-1 John 2:18; 14-Col 3:2.

DAY 4

THE SPIRIT OF ANTICHRIST

The age that we now live in is ruled by the god of this world,¹ the devil.² In fact, Paul referred to the fallen world system as the “course of this world,” acknowledging the devil’s influence, especially on the unsaved.³ And John taught that the evil spiritual influence which permeates fallen society is antichrist.⁴

The Bible teaches that there is a person known as Antichrist, who is also called “the son of perdition”.⁵ He is the first rider on a white horse in the book of Revelation.⁶ However, John also referred to “the spirit of the Antichrist”.⁷

This word “antichrist” not only means against, but also ‘in place of’ or ‘a substitute for’. Now no true Christian would ever bow the knee to the person of Antichrist, but we need to always be on guard against the spirit of antichrist. John broke down for us the very basis of the world, or this spirit of antichrist.⁸

The gospel, or ‘good news’, is that through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ we are delivered out of this world of darkness.⁹ As we draw near to God¹⁰ and abstain from fleshly lusts,¹¹ we walk in the victory that overcomes the world and the spirit of antichrist.¹²

Follow Jesus Christ, saints!¹³ Set your heart on heavenly things.¹⁴
Do not accept or allow any substitutes!

1-2 Cor 4:4; 2-Luke 4:5,6; 3-Eph 2:1-2; 4-1 John 2:18; 5-2 Thess 2:3;
6-Rev 6:2; 7-1 John 4:3, 2:22; 2 John 1:7; 8-1 John 2:15-17; 9-Col 1:13;
10-James 4:8; 11-1 Peter 2:11; 12-1 John 4:4,5:4; 13-Matt 4:19;
14-Col 3:2.

DAY 5

PRACTICALLY PROPHETIC

I find it interesting when I see the beautiful balance in God's Word. We have been looking at end times prophecy in Paul's letters to the church at Thessalonica, and here, at the very end of Paul's inspired words to these saints, he gets downright practical.¹ Yes, Jesus may come at any moment, but that doesn't mean that we drop out of society. Jesus Himself tells us that we are to shine as lights in this world,² using the talents that He has given to us for His glory.³

Whatsoever we do, we are to do it to bring glory to God.⁴ We are called to work hard,⁵ as unto the Lord.⁶ Our faith in Jesus is meant to be on display, not apart from, but in the midst of a lost world.⁷ Our lives are to be living epistles⁸ of what we believe to be true. Believing that "the Lord is at hand" (or, "near")⁹ will always inspire us to action.¹⁰ We are Christ's ambassadors on this earth¹¹ until He calls us home.

Be not weary in well-doing, saints!¹² Seize every opportunity you are given¹³ to glorify the King. Remember, a faith that is not verbal¹⁴ and visible is no faith at all.¹⁵

1-2 Thess 3; 2-Matt 5:14-16; 3-Matt 25:14-30; 4-1 Cor 10:31, Col 3:17; 5-Eph 4:28; 6-Col 3:23; 7-Phil 2:15,16; 8-2 Cor 3:3; 9-Phil 4:5; 10-Heb 11; 11-2 Cor 5:17-20; 12-2 Thess 3:13; 13-Gal 6:10; 14-Rom 10:15; 15-James 2:14-26.

DAY 6

THE TRUTH

John the Apostle was changed from a man of love² by virtue of his relationship with Jesus both while Jesus was on earth, and after His death. Yet, nobody would write more about the truth than John. In his short epistle of 2nd John, he makes reference to the fact that, in any matter is, you cannot have real love without the truth. In other words, you cannot really love.

Jesus Himself is "the truth", personified. He is the truth and freedom to all those who continue in His truth. His wrath of God is against those who suppress the truth into a lie.⁷

True love rejoice in the truth.⁸ John the Apostle says, "Whoever does not receive the truth, you are either on the right side or the left side of the truth."⁹ Paul, on the other hand, withstood the truth, because that was causing others to stumble. If you love the truth, you are either on the right side or the left side of the truth.

Scripture speaks of men with corrupt hearts who love the world more than God's Word - and no other religious book. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the only truth that matters. If you love not God's truth, there is only damnation.

So listen to Jesus, saints, for He will reward you.

1-Luke 9:54; 2-1 John 4:7,8; 3-1 John 1:7; 4-1 John 2:18; 5-Rom 1:18; 6-Rom 1:25; 7-1 Cor 13:6; 8-1 Cor 13:6; 9-1 Tim 3:8; 10-2 Tim 4:4; 11-John 17:17; 12-2 Thess 2:10-12; 13-John 10:4-11.

DAY 6

THE TRUTH

John the Apostle was changed from a man with a fiery temper¹ into a man of love² by virtue of his relationship and fellowship with Jesus Christ, both while Jesus was on earth, and after His Ascension into heaven.³ And yet, nobody would write more about the truth than John. Five times in the short epistle of 2nd John, he makes reference to the truth. The fact of the matter is, you cannot have real love without truth, and without truth, you cannot really love.

Jesus Himself is “the truth”, personified;⁴ and He has promised freedom to all those who continue in His truth.⁵ On the other hand, the wrath of God is against those who suppress the truth,⁶ or change the truth into a lie.⁷

True love rejoice in the truth.⁸ John rejoiced to see people walking in the truth.⁹ Paul, on the other hand, withstood Peter for not walking in the truth, because that was causing others to stumble.¹⁰ When it comes to the truth, you are either on the right side or the wrong side.

Scripture speaks of men with corrupt minds who resist the truth.¹¹ It also warns of those who would turn away their ears from the truth.¹² God’s Word - and no other religious book - is absolute truth.¹³ The gospel of Jesus Christ is the only truth that can save sinners.¹⁴ For all who love not God’s truth, there is only damnation to look forward to.¹⁵

So listen to Jesus, saints, for He will never lead you astray.¹⁶

1-Luke 9:54; 2-1 John 4:7,8; 3-1 John 1-3; 4-John 14:6; 5-John 8:31,32;
6-Rom 1:18; 7-Rom 1:25; 8-1 Cor 13:6; 9-2 John 4; 10-Gal 2:11-14;
11-2 Tim 3:8; 12-2 Tim 4:4; 13-John 17:17; 14-1 Tim 2:3-7;
15-2 Thess 2:10-12; 16-John 10:4-11.

DAY 7

NOW WHAT?

The Christmas season has gone by; now what do we do? The answer to that question is contained in God's Word.¹ There is tremendous value in setting aside a time of the year to ponder the claims of Christ's birth,² and all of the related implications.³ But now that we have done that, it is time to allow those truths to permeate our lives.⁴ You see, Incarnation minus application equals desperation.⁵

After all the packages have been opened, after all the parties have been attended, what are we left with? When you look at that man (or woman) in the mirror, what is that person's life really all about?

To start this new year, we will hear from the Apostle Peter some very challenging but encouraging words about walking with Christ in a Christ-rejecting world.⁶ Peter's letters will help us obtain an eternal, spiritual perspective in life, as opposed to a temporal, carnal philosophy for living.

The birthday of Jesus has indeed passed, but the Christ of Christmas is with us!⁷ Emmanuel!⁸ He is what life is truly all about.⁹

1-Psalm 19:7-11; 2-Matt 1:18-25; 3-Luke 1:31-33; 4-Psalm 1:2;
5-James 1:22; 6-1 Peter 1:1-7; 7-Matt 28:20; 8-Matt 1:23; 9-Phil 1:21.

DAY 8

REDEEMED TH

According to Webster the word "redeem" means "to free from harm or captivity". However, redemption has always been. For God has given us the gift of redemption — a life-changing, liberating, and life-giving liberty — and still the devil tells people to believe in him and bum them out. Nothing could be more true.

This new life that we have in Christ is a life of freedom, but it is also a life of struggle. We are intrigued by. However, to enjoy the blessing of Jesus we need to be sober-minded and alert, not easily led by enemy-inspired thoughts. This requires a constant vigilance.

Saints, the faith that we have been given is a faith that is protecting. May each of us, like young Samuel, have open ears and tender hearts to hear what the Lord has to say.

1-John 8:44; 2-Col 1:14; 3-Acts 26:18; 4-1 Peter 1:13; 5-2 Cor 10:4-5; 6-Rom 12:2; 7-1 Samuel 3:10.

DAY 8

REDEEMED THINKING

According to Webster the word “redeem” means, “to purchase in order to free from harm or captivity”. However, the devil is truly a liar and always has been.¹ For God has given to mankind this glorious gospel of redemption² — a life-changing, liberating message of forgiveness and liberty³ — and still the devil tells people that living for Jesus will restrict them and bum them out. Nothing could be further from the truth!

This new life that we have in Christ is something that the angels are intrigued by.⁴ However, to enjoy the blessings of this fellowship with Jesus⁵ we need to be sober-minded and alert.⁶ This requires pulling down of enemy-inspired thoughts.⁷ This requires transformed thinking.⁸

Saints, the faith that we have been given is precious⁹ and worth protecting. May each of us, like young Samuel of long ago,¹⁰ have open ears and tender hearts to hear what the Lord is saying to us today.

1-John 8:44; 2-Col 1:14; 3-Acts 26:18; 4-1 Peter 1:12; 5-1 John 1:3;
6-1 Peter 1:13; 7-2 Cor 10:4-5; 8-Rom 12:2; 9-1 Peter 1:7;
10-1 Samuel 3:10.

DAY 9

FAMILY LIFE

The new birth¹ places within each and every believer the ability to live² and love³ like never before. The key that unlocks this revelation is God's incorruptible Word.⁴ As we drink⁵ and chew⁶ on Scripture, we begin to understand how God intends for us to live. We see how He desires us to dwell together as a church family.⁷ But we will see this morning, Lord willing, that effort is required on our part for the church to function the way God intends it to.⁸

There are specific attitudes and ways of speaking that must be laid aside.⁹ There are attitudes which, like old clothing, must be put off, and new virtues put on.¹⁰ Since we are forgiven,¹¹ we are to exercise that love which will "cover a multitude of sins."¹² This new life in Jesus drives my selfish, excuse-making flesh crazy!

My dear brothers and sisters, because of the new birth, we are a family,¹³ so love one another.¹⁴ Never allow how you feel determine how you act towards others. Walking in love pleases God. That's all we need to know, isn't it?¹⁵

1-James 1:18; 2-2 Cor 5:17; 3-Rom 5:5; 4-1 Peter 1:23; 5-1 Peter 2:2;
6-Heb 5:14; 7-1 Cor 12:19-21; 8-1 Peter 1:22; 9-1 Peter 2:1;
10-Col 3:8-14; 11-Eph 4:32; 12-1 Peter 4:8; 13-Gal 6:10; 14-1 John 4:7;
15-1 John 3:23.

DAY 10

THE SOLID F

Because of a private interpretation of what was taught that Peter is the rock of the church. In my study of Peter's first epistle this morning, I realized that the rock of the church (which he isn't), either somebody forgot to tell him.

Any serious student of Scripture knows that the church is the living, resurrected Lord Jesus Christ, not that He was this rejected stone.² If you reject Him, you break your heart and make you whole; however, if you are whole, you will be ground into powder.³

There is salvation in none other than the Christ prophesied of the Rock to come,⁶ and he who was himself called Jesus his God and Savior.⁷ It is not in any religious system, or in the risen Lord?⁸ If you trust from Peter, it is to trust in Jesus, not in his "Lead My sheep", not 'Lead My sheep'.¹⁰

Peter built his life on Christ, the solid foundation on His word,¹¹ because that's what Jesus said. What are you building your life on?

1-Psalm 118:22,23; 2-Matt 21:33-42; 3-Mark 11:19;
5-Acts 4:11,12; 6-Isaiah 28:16; 7-2 Peter 1:6;
9-1 Peter 2:6-8; 10-John 21:15-17; 11-Mark 11:19.

DAY 10

THE SOLID ROCK

Because of a private interpretation of Matthew 16:13-20, some have taught that Peter is the rock of the church. Oh really? As we continue our study of Peter's first epistle this morning, it is pretty obvious that if he was the rock of the church (which he isn't), either he didn't realize it, or somebody forgot to tell him.

Any serious student of Scripture knows that the solid rock of the church is the living, resurrected Lord Jesus Christ.¹ Jesus Himself taught that He was this rejected stone.² If you receive Him as your Lord, He will break your heart and make you whole; however, if you reject Him, you will be ground into powder.³

There is salvation in none other than this Rock,⁴ Jesus Christ.⁵ Isaiah prophesied of the Rock to come,⁶ and he wasn't talking about Peter! Peter himself called Jesus his God and Savior.⁷ Do you? Is your faith in a religious system, or in the risen Lord?⁸ If there is anything we can learn from Peter, it is to trust in Jesus, not in him.⁹ Jesus told Peter, "Feed My sheep", not "Lead My sheep".¹⁰

Peter built his life on Christ, the solid Rock. That is, he built his life on His word,¹¹ because that's what Jesus taught Peter for three years.¹² What are you building your life on?

1-Psalm 118:22,23; 2-Matt 21:33-42; 3-Matt 21:44; 4-1 Cor 10:4;
5-Acts 4:11,12; 6-Isaiah 28:16; 7-2 Peter 1:1; 8-Rom 9:33;
9-1 Peter 2:6-8; 10-John 21:15-17; 11-Matt 7:24-25; 12-John 17:13-17.

DAY 11

THE WAR WITHIN

Paul couldn't make it clearer than he did in Romans chapter 7: Until we get our new bodies and go to be with Jesus, there is going to be a vicious battle against temptation¹ and fleshly lusts.² This is known as the flesh and Spirit conflict.³

Temptation is something that we all have in common.⁴ Paul tells us that we are to refuse giving in to these fleshly lusts.⁵ Jesus tells us that the battle is won or lost in our hearts.⁶ These lusts are corrupting and deceitful.⁷ They rob a Christian of joy and peace. They destroy fellowship, marriages, and ministries.

Though the devil is the tempter,⁸ who seeks "those whom he may devour"⁹, we can never blame him for our sin.¹⁰ Our victory in this battle lies in a firm commitment to Jesus Christ¹¹ and in a readiness to face this combat every single day at any given moment.¹²

These fleshly lusts¹³ are nothing to mess with, saints.¹⁴ Whether you give in to your flesh or resist it, there will be a price to pay. Choose to win! Choose, "It is written"¹⁵. Look to Jesus in the heat of the battle and by faith walk in His victory.¹⁶

1-James 1:12-15; 2-1 Peter 2:11; 3-Gal 5:16-25; 4-1 Cor 10:13;
5-Rom 13:11-14; 6-Matt 5:27,28; 7-Eph 4:22; 8-Matt 4:3; 9-1 Peter 5:8;
10-Psalm 51:3-5; 11-Rom 12:1,2; 12-Eph 6:11-18; 13-Gal 5:19-21;
14-James 4:1-4; 15-Matt 4:4,7,10; 16-1 John 5:4,5.

DAY 12

JESUS, THE GOOD

One of the most tender titles given to Jesus is Shepherd.¹ Jesus Himself declared that He is the "Good Shepherd".²

Sadly, there are religious systems and leaders who do not know the place of Jesus in the lives of those who follow Him. There are many individuals who have positions of authority over our Shepherd,⁴ but they are thieves and robbers who do not feed our Shepherd,⁶ but they are thieves and robbers who do not feed His flock like a shepherd.⁶ Jesus leads us by the way, and drives us home. Because sheep are by nature hard-headed, Jesus uses His rod and staff⁸ to correct us,⁹ and guide us.

A most amazing thing about our Shepherd is that He laid down His life on the cross for our sins. He is the Good Lamb who was slain,¹² "the just for the unjust" for God".¹³ "For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls." and you are healed.¹⁵

There is only one Shepherd,¹⁶ beloved by all, who died for you; now live for Him!¹⁷

1-Heb 13:20; 2-John 10:14; 3-Matt 15:7-9; 4-John 10:1; 5-Isaiah 40:11; 6-John 10:3-5; 7-Heb 12:5-11; 8-Psalm 32:8; 9-John 10:11; 10-1 Peter 3:18; 11-1 Peter 2:25; 12-1 Peter 1:19; 13-1 Peter 3:18; 14-1 Peter 2:25; 15-1 Peter 2:25; 16-1 Peter 2:25; 17-2 Cor 5:14,15.

DAY 12

JESUS, THE GOOD SHEPHERD

One of the most tender titles given to Jesus Christ is the one of Shepherd.¹ Jesus Himself declared that He, and He alone, is “the good Shepherd”.²

Sadly, there are religious systems and organizations that have taken the place of Jesus in the lives of those who are bound by their rituals.³ There are many individuals who have posed themselves to be the Christ, our Shepherd,⁴ but they are thieves and robbers.⁵ Jesus is the one who feeds His flock like a shepherd.⁶ Jesus leads His sheep;⁷ we are not driven. Because sheep are by nature hard-headed and stubborn, Jesus uses His rod and staff⁸ to correct us,⁹ and guide us.¹⁰

A most amazing thing about our Shepherd Jesus is the fact that He laid down His life on the cross for our sins.¹¹ Yes, the Shepherd is also the Lamb who was slain,¹² “the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God”.¹³ “For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”¹⁴ It is by His stripes that we are healed.¹⁵

There is only one Shepherd,¹⁶ beloved, and He is Jesus Christ. He died for you; now live for Him!¹⁷

1-Heb 13:20; 2-John 10:14; 3-Matt 15:7-9; 4-Matt 24:5,24;
5-John 10:1; 6-Isaiah 40:11; 7-John 10:3; 8-Psalm 23:4c;
9-Heb 12:5-11; 10-Psalm 32:8; 11-John 10:11; 12-John 1:29;
13-1 Peter 3:18; 14-1 Peter 2:25; 15-1 Peter 2:24; 16-John 10:16;
17-2 Cor 5:14,15.

DAY 13

BLESSED SUBMISSION

One powerful principle in the kingdom of God is the principle of submission, which we see throughout Scripture. We see it taught in marriage,¹ as it pertains to government,² work,³ and in the local church.⁴ All Christians are called to live a life of submission in the fear of God.⁵ Jesus Himself is our example of submission.⁶

Submission recognizes God-ordained authority, which Jesus associates with great faith.⁷ God-ordained submission is never to be understood by anybody in a position of authority as a ‘power trip’, but as that which is designed by God for functional purposes and order.⁸ How lovely it is when the people of God have the mind of Christ,⁹ and are clothed with humility.¹⁰ What freedom there is when the only will that matters is: “Thy will be done.”¹¹

A proper understanding of Biblical submission eliminates confusion¹² and it recognizes the importance of every member of the body.¹³ Each and every person who is part of this fellowship is so by Divine design.¹⁴ So are you contributing to the whole, or picking it apart?¹⁵

As a local church which understands the principle of submission we will be blessed,¹⁶ because we realize that there is only one Head¹⁷ who died for us, that we might live, not for ourselves,¹⁸ but for Jesus Christ.¹⁹

1-Eph 5:22; 2-1 Peter 2:13, Rom 13:1-7; 3-Eph 6:5-9; 4-Heb 13:17;
5-Eph 5:21; 6-1 Peter 2:21,23; 7-Matt 8:8-10; 8-Col 2:5, 1 Cor 14:40;
9-Phil 2:5-8; 10-1 Peter 5:5; 11-Matt 6:10; 12-1 Cor 14:33;
13-1 Cor 12:12-17; 14-1 Cor 12:18; 15-Gal 5:13-15; 16-Psalm 133:1-3;
17-Eph 1:22; 18-2 Cor 5:15; 19-Phil 1:21.

DAY 14

THE FOUNDATION OF SUBMISSION

Marriage, as designed by God and revealed in Scripture, is not a power struggle or the ‘Battle of the Sexes.’ It is a covenant relationship² that is entered into in the sight of God.³

There are distinct role differences in a marriage, which are for the purposes of order and function.⁴ How lovely it is where both the husband and his wife are in submission to each other, both being “born again”⁵ and Spirit-filled. We will find mutual submission one to another in the love that means that the wife submits to her husband as the church. The husband loves his wife as Christ loves the church, with His own self-denial, which Jesus taught.⁹

However, not all Christians are married, and the principle is also addressed in Scripture.¹⁰

I can only obey for myself, and the same principle applies regardless of the marital state you are in to Jesus. ‘Lord Jesus, where I am out of line, change my role, show me.’ Then believe that He will change you.

As we hear God speaking to us today, let us choose to determine to simply submit to God’s wisdom and love Him.

1-Gen 2:24,25; 2-Malachi 2:14; 3-Matt 19:6; 4-1 Cor 11:8-12; 5-John 3:3-7; 6-Eph 5:1-2; 7-1 Cor 12:12-17; 8-1 Peter 3:1-7; 9-Luke 9:23; 10-1 Peter 3:1-7, 1 Cor 7:10-12; 11-2 Tim 3:16,17.

DAY 14

THE FOUNDATION OF SUBMISSION IN MARRIAGE

Marriage, as designed by God and revealed in Scripture,¹ is not a power struggle or the ‘Battle of the Sexes.’ The marriage union is a covenant relationship² that is entered into by both a man and a woman in the sight of God.³

There are distinct role differences in a marriage that are laid out for the purposes of order and function.⁴ However, the ideal marriage is one where both the husband and his wife are in love with Jesus more than with each other, both being “born again”⁵ and Spirit filled.⁶ In that context you will find mutual submission one to another in the fear of God.⁷ This means that the wife submits to her husband as unto the Lord, and the husband loves his wife as Christ loves the Church.⁸ Both roles require self denial, which Jesus taught.⁹

However, not all Christians are married to believers. That situation is also addressed in Scripture.¹⁰

I can only obey for myself, and the same holds true for you. So, regardless of the marital state you are in today, your prayer needs to be, ‘Lord Jesus, where I am out of line, change me. Where I am uncertain of my role, show me.’ Then believe that He will do so.¹¹

As we hear God speaking to us today from His Word,¹² may we determine to simply submit to God’s wisdom, and leave the results to Him.

1-Gen 2:24,25; 2-Malachi 2:14; 3-Matt 19:6; Eph 6:5-9;
4-1 Cor 11:8-12; 5-John 3:3-7; 6-Eph 5:18; 7-Eph 5:21; 8-Eph 5:22-31;
9-Luke 9:23; 10-1 Peter 3:1-7, 1 Cor 7:10-14; 11-James 1:5;
12-2 Tim 3:16,17.

DAY 15

THE SUBMISSIVE HUSBAND

By a 'submissive husband' I mean a husband who is submitted to the Lord Jesus Christ.¹ When a person truly submits to Christ, he or she will be submissive to His Word.² Thus, for a Christian couple to be submitted to God requires both husband and wife to be submissive to the Word of God.³

It is interesting that God only tells the husband that his prayer life will be hindered if he is not dwelling with his wife according to knowledge.⁴ Whose knowledge is Peter talking about here? God's knowledge.⁵ Thus it becomes clear to me that if I am serious about following Jesus and loving my wife as He loves me, I had better not only listen, but also do what He says.⁶

Men, God tells us to treat our wives certain ways because He understands how women respond! We are foolish to toss aside God's wisdom and substitute it with 'how I feel' or 'That's how my Italian Dad ran the house.' (Yeah, right into the ground!) By following the Lord's instructions, we can be confident that our prayers will be heard, not hindered.

Brothers, are you and I leading our wives to Christ, or driving them to Him?

1-Rom 12:1,2; 2-Matt 7:24-27; 3-Eph 5:21; 4-1 Peter 3:7;
5-Prov 24:3,47; 6-James 1:22-25.

DAY 16

WHATEVER HAPPENED

When we come to the Lord's table, m... bread and the cup reverently.¹ Whenever... can become just a routine. In that light, ha... but the meaning of the cross? We know th... Jesus died for our sins, according to the S...

To those who are religious, or 'spiritu... preaching of the cross is foolishness.³ We... mention of sin, sinners or self-denial is co... unkind. If that be the case, then what cros... cross that stood on Mount Calvary?⁴ Is it... 22? Is it the cross that caused Jesus to sw... of His suffering upon it?⁵

Through the blood of Jesus on the cro... are reconciled⁷ and redeemed.⁸ Thank Yo... That cross also crucifies the world to me a... demands my full surrender to Jesus.¹⁰ Tha... not the exaltation of self.¹² We are bough...

Not I, but Christ,¹⁴ is the meaning of t...

1-1 Cor 11:23-34; 2-1 Cor 15:3; 3-1 Cor...
5-Luke 22:44; 6-John 19:30; 7-Col 1:20;
10-Mark 10:21; 11-Matt 16:24; 12-Luke...
14-Gal 2:20.

DAY 16

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE CROSS?

When we come to the Lord's table, may we approach partaking of the bread and the cup reverently.¹ Whenever we do something repeatedly, it can become just a routine. In that light, have we forgotten, not the words, but the meaning of the cross? We know that the cross is the place where Jesus died for our sins, according to the Scriptures.²

To those who are religious, or 'spiritual,' or highly educated, the preaching of the cross is foolishness.³ We live in a day and age when any mention of sin, sinners or self-denial is considered to be archaic and unkind. If that be the case, then what cross are we talking about? Is it the cross that stood on Mount Calvary?⁴ Is it the cross of Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22? Is it the cross that caused Jesus to sweat drops of blood in anticipation of His suffering upon it?⁵

Through the blood of Jesus on the cross, all our sins are paid for;⁶ we are reconciled⁷ and redeemed.⁸ Thank You, Jesus! But don't stop there. That cross also crucifies the world to me and vice versa.⁹ That cross demands my full surrender to Jesus.¹⁰ That cross means the end of self,¹¹ not the exaltation of self.¹² We are bought with a price, saints!¹³

Not I, but Christ,¹⁴ is the meaning of the cross.

1-1 Cor 11:23-34; 2-1 Cor 15:3; 3-1 Cor 1:18; 4-Luke 23:33;
5-Luke 22:44; 6-John 19:30; 7-Col 1:20; 8-Eph 1:7; 9-Gal 6:14;
10-Mark 10:21; 11-Matt 16:24; 12-Luke 9:23,24; 13-1 Cor 6:20;
14-Gal 2:20.

DAY 17

LOVING LIFE

I find it so interesting that in a letter that is written to Christians who were being persecuted and unjustly treated, Peter would include a section on loving life.¹ Loving life when being persecuted? When under pressure? When unjustly treated?

Yes. Jesus told us that in this world we would face tribulation, but we are to be of good cheer, for He has overcome the world.² In other words, don't forget about heaven.³

When we get earth and heaven confused, our perspective in life gets skewed. When a follower of Jesus starts looking for fulfillment in the world,⁴ it is just a matter of time until their faith becomes shipwrecked.

So, what is a saint to do when the heat is on? Let's listen to what the Holy Spirit says through Peter,⁵ and in doing so, build our life upon our Rock,⁶ Jesus Christ.

“Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.”⁷

1-1 Peter 3:10; 2-John 16:33; 3-Col 3:2; 4-1 John 2:15-17;
5-1 Peter 3:12-16; 6-Deut 32:4; 7-Matt 7:24-25.

DAY 18

IT'S ALL JE

As we continue our study in 1st Peter that is often seen as confusing and is misunderstood, focus on what these verses declare about Jesus' ascensions,² and the freshness of revelation flowing from heaven.

Jesus suffered on the cross for our sins, but He did not stay there. He rose again on the third day³ by the power of the Father. In other words, Jesus, the very same Jesus⁵ who was crucified, is alive⁶ and in our midst today.⁷

That means that He hears our worship and our prayers, and He cares upon Him.⁸ Where His saints are gathered, He is there.⁹ So, if you get touched in a special way, let us know. Feel like you are the only one that God is speaking to? Join the church or take part in a home fellowship group.

Yes, Jesus has risen from the dead, and He has all authority in heaven.¹⁰ Jesus: On the throne of glory — Glorious!

1-1 Peter 3:17-22; 2-Psalm 71:1, 1 Cor 14:14-15
4-1 Peter 3:18; 5-Acts 1:11; 6-1 Cor 15:20-22
8-1 Peter 5:7; 9-Matt 18:20; 10-Heb 12:22-24

DAY 18

IT'S ALL JESUS

As we continue our study in 1st Peter, we find ourselves in a section¹ that is often seen as confusing and is misunderstood. However, as we focus on what these verses declare about Jesus, the cloud of confusion lifts,² and the freshness of revelation flows into our souls.

Jesus suffered on the cross for our sins, died, was buried, and then rose again on the third day³ by the power of the Holy Spirit.⁴ In other words, Jesus, the very same Jesus⁵ who walked this earth 2,000 years ago, is alive⁶ and in our midst today.⁷

That means that He hears our worship. That means we can cast our cares upon Him.⁸ Where His saints are gathered in His name, Jesus is there.⁹ So, if you get touched in a special way today, it's Jesus. If you feel like you are the only one that God is speaking to when you go to church or take part in a home fellowship group, it's Jesus.

Yes, Jesus has risen from the dead, and is seated in that place of authority in heaven.¹⁰ Jesus: On the throne, in our midst, and in our hearts — Glorious!

1-1 Peter 3:17-22; 2-Psalm 71:1, 1 Cor 14:33; 3-1 Cor 15:3-4;
4-1 Peter 3:18; 5-Acts 1:11; 6-1 Cor 15:20; 7-Rev 1:13,20;
8-1 Peter 5:7; 9-Matt 18:20; 10-Heb 12:2.

DAY 19

OUR NEW LIFE IN JESUS

After we are born again,¹ we become new creatures;² so new, in fact, that God likens us to newborn babies.³ Like a newborn baby, we step into a whole new way of living. This new life is also likened to a resurrection from the dead.⁴

The Apostle Peter tells us that walking with Jesus in newness of life requires a mental toughness like Jesus had when He went to the cross.⁵ Because we still live in these mortal,⁶ natural bodies,⁷ our ability to be tempted by sin⁸ and sinful living⁹ will not go away until we die. However, as we choose to yield to God's truth,¹⁰ we experience victory¹¹ and the joy of being a vessel of honor for the Master's use.¹²

A key to victorious living in Christ is realizing that I simply can no longer do the fleshly things I used to before I gave my heart to Jesus.¹³ I cannot enjoy something that pinned Jesus to the cross.

Salvation is not only forgiveness of sin;¹⁴ it is also the hourly, daily forsaking of sin¹⁵ in order that my life may become a living epistle of my Lord Jesus.¹⁶

1-1 Peter 1:23; 2-2 Cor 5:17; 3-1 Peter 2:2; 4-Rom 6:4; 5-1 Peter 4:1; 6-Rom 8:11; 7-1 Cor 15:42-44; 8-1 Cor 10:13; 9-James 1:13-16; 10-Rom 6:1-23; 11-1 John 5:4; 12-2 Tim 2:20,21; 13-Rom 13:12-14, 1 Peter 4:3; 14-Eph 1:7; 15-1 Peter 2:11; 16-2 Cor 3:3.

DAY 20

"THE LORD IS A

To say that Jesus is coming soon is a reactions. For some, it is a blessed hope,¹ religious fanaticism.²

According to the holy Scriptures, the cross for our sins, was buried, and rose from the dead to set up His Kingdom on this earth.³ This, many promises that God has given us in His Word.

To say that Jesus is "at hand" not only is a present anticipation as well, which has that we live.⁶ The nearness of Christ is a source of strength in time of temptation.⁸ The tolling of our clocks brings us that much closer to the Lord in the air.⁹

Communion reminds us of the sacrifice for our sins, and it is to be observed reverently as He returns.¹⁰

Yes, Jesus is at hand both prophetically and as a living reality in your life, or simply

1-Titus 2:13; 2-2 Peter 3:3,4; 3-Acts 1:6-7; 4-Rev 22:7,12,20; 6-Phil 4:4-7; 7-2 Cor 1:6; 8-1 Thess 4:16-18; 9-1 Cor 11:23-29; 10-1

DAY 20

“THE LORD IS AT HAND”

To say that Jesus is coming soon is a phrase which is met with mixed reactions. For some, it is a blessed hope,¹ but to others it is regarded as religious fanaticism.²

According to the holy Scriptures, the same Jesus who died on the cross for our sins, was buried, and rose from the dead, will soon return to set up His Kingdom on this earth.³ This, my friend, is just one of the many promises that God has given us in His holy Word.⁴

To say that Jesus is “at hand” not only looks to a future event,⁵ but it is a present anticipation as well, which has a radical effect upon the way that we live.⁶ The nearness of Christ is a comfort in time of trouble,⁷ and a source of strength in time of temptation.⁸ Each second that ticks away on our clocks brings us that much closer to the time when we will meet our Lord in the air.⁹

Communion reminds us of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross for our sins, and it is to be observed reverentially by all believers until He returns.¹⁰

Yes, Jesus is at hand both prophetically¹¹ and practically.¹² But, is that a living reality in your life, or simply a cold, factual doctrine?

1-Titus 2:13; 2-2 Peter 3:3,4; 3-Acts 1:6-11; 4-2 Cor 1:20;
5-Rev 22:7,12,20; 6-Phil 4:4-7; 7-2 Cor 1:3-5; 8-Isaiah 59:19;
9-1 Thess 4:16-18; 10-1 Cor 11:23-29; 11-Rev 1:7; 12-Rev 2:1.

DAY 21

THE REDEEMING LOVE OF GOD

What is meant by the redeeming love of God? Simply this: That God in His love has chosen to forgive sinful man of their trespasses¹ through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ,² made once and for all, for sin.³ The ‘motive’ (if I may use the word reverently) behind man’s redemption and salvation is the love of God.⁴

Of course, the attributes of God’s grace⁵ and mercy⁶ are connected with redemption, but it was in love that we were predestined unto salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.⁷ It is with lovingkindness that we are drawn to God.⁸ It is through Christ’s remarkable love that we are chosen⁹ to have personal fellowship with the Father.¹⁰ God choosing man is an act of sovereign love.

Whenever we remember the sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary for our sins,¹¹ and we partake of the bread and the cup, may our souls be rekindled by the love of God for us. His love has indeed covered a multitude of sins!¹²

We should ask ourselves these questions: As His child, do I possess forgiving love? Is our love for one another here at Koinonia deepening or declining? Is it fervent or feeble? Not even faith or hope surpass the love of God,¹³ and NOTHING can keep His love from us.¹⁴

1-Rom 5:8; 2-John 1:29; 3-Heb 10:12; 4-John 3:16; 5-Eph 2:8;
6-Eph 2:4-5; 7-Eph 1:4-5; 8-Jeremiah 31:1; 9-John 15:16;
10-1 John 1:3; 11-1 Cor 11:23-26; 12-1 Peter 4:8, Prov 10:12b;
13-1 Cor 13:13; 14-Rom 8:38-39.

DAY 22

THE POWER OF THE

What is greater than faith, or even hope, is the love of God that transforms us from the inside. Love finds its expression through love.²

This love of God is a powerful incentive. We can speak in tongues, understand the deep things of God, move mountains, give to the poor, and even die, but we don’t do those things out of a love for Jesus Christ, but for them.⁴

Oh how I long for this love of Jesus Christ. This love that is compassionate.⁵ This love that unites brothers and sisters in Jesus.⁶ This love that

For us, to love means to be like Jesus Christ. In our hearts today, He speaks the truth in love, and we walk in the truth.⁹ As we sow the love of God, we are sure to reap the blessing of the presence of God.

“Beloved, let us love one another, for love who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not know God, for God is love.”¹⁰

1-1 Cor 13:13; 2-Gal 5:6; 3-2 Cor 5:14;
5-1 John 3:11,17; 6-1 John 3:16; 7-1 Peter 4:8;
9-Eph 5:1,2; 10-1 John 4:7,8.

DAY 22

THE POWER OF THE LOVE OF GOD

What is greater than faith, or even hope? The love of God.¹ It is the love of God that transforms us from the inside out. In fact, faith itself finds its expression through love.²

This love of God is a powerful incentive to serve the Lord.³ You see, we can speak in tongues, understand the deep things of God, have faith to move mountains, give to the poor, and even sacrifice our lives, but if we don't do those things out of a love for Jesus, there is no profit for us from them.⁴

Oh how I long for this love of Jesus to overflow in our church family! This love that is compassionate.⁵ This love that lays down its life for brothers and sisters in Jesus.⁶ This love that covers a multitude of sins.⁷

For us, to love means to be like Jesus.⁸ As the Spirit of God speaks to our hearts today, He speaks the truth in love in order that we might in love walk in the truth.⁹ As we sow the love of God into the lives of others, we are sure to reap the blessing of the presence of God in our midst.

“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.”¹⁰

1-1 Cor 13:13; 2-Gal 5:6; 3-2 Cor 5:14; 4-1 Cor 13:1-3;
5-1 John 3:11,17; 6-1 John 3:16; 7-1 Peter 4:8; 8-John 15:9;
9-Eph 5:1,2; 10-1 John 4:7,8.

DAY 23

UNDERSTANDING SUFFERING AS A BELIEVER

Peter wrote today's Scripture section on suffering as a believer from first hand experience,¹ not from the grandstand. Peter was an eye-witness to the agony and persecution of our Lord Jesus.² In fact, one of the examples that Jesus left us to follow pertains to suffering³ that is in accordance with the will of God for our lives.⁴

Because we know that suffering as a Christian is inevitable,⁵ that doesn't mean that we seek to bring it upon ourselves. No, these present sufferings⁶ are called by Paul "momentary light afflictions",⁷ which actually benefit us spiritually. Every event in our lives is "Father-filtered,"⁸ regardless of the source of the trial or blessing.

Knowing that our times are in the Father's hand⁹ allows us to see beyond the present pain or affliction to God's eternal purpose.¹⁰ Even what is meant for evil,¹¹ God works for our good¹² and His glory.¹³ Trials are never pleasant to our flesh or stubborn wills. Hence, our need for them, that we might learn never to trust in our own flesh, but in our living Lord.¹⁴

May God's Spirit minister to each of our hearts about this misunderstood part of the Christian life — trials and sufferings for Christ's sake.

1-Luke 22:31,32; 2-Matt 26:36-50; 3-1 Peter 2:21; 4-1 Peter 4:19;
5-1 Peter 4:12; 6-Rom 8:16-18; 7-2 Cor 4:16-18; 8-Acts 2:23;
9-Psalm 31:15; 10-Eph 3:11; 11-Gen 50:20; 12-Rom 8:28;
13-1 Peter 4:14; 14-2 Cor 1:8-10.

DAY 24

CLOTHED AND C

It is very possible that when Peter wrote with humility and the reality of being care mind the night that Jesus washed his feet impression the humility of Jesus must have humility incarnate firsthand.²

Humility is a key ingredient in Christ nothing to hide and nothing to prove. Hum flowing through my life as the Lord enable the ability to say, "There go I, but for the g

It was the humble, broken publican w That is why Peter could give exhortation t your care upon Him, for He cares for you. child-like trust⁶ in the Father heart of God

One of the things that God has shown with Him.⁸ To walk in humility requires b obedience¹⁰ to our Lord. As Peter put it, h prayer life.¹¹

Humble me, Lord Jesus, for Your glo

1-1 Peter 5:5-7; 2-Matt 11:29; 3-1 Peter 5-1 Peter 5:7; 6-Matt 18:1-4; 7-Matt 7:1 10-Phil 2:8; 11-1 Peter 3:7.

DAY 24

CLOTHED AND CARED FOR

It is very possible that when Peter wrote about the need to be clothed with humility and the reality of being cared for by God¹ that he had in his mind the night that Jesus washed his feet, as recorded in John 13. What an impression the humility of Jesus must have made on Peter, for he saw humility incarnate firsthand.²

Humility is a key ingredient in Christian fellowship because it has nothing to hide and nothing to prove. Humility is the grace of God flowing through my life as the Lord enables me to minister to others.³ It is the ability to say, 'There go I, but for the grace of God.'

It was the humble, broken publican whose prayer was answered.⁴ That is why Peter could give exhortation to the humble soul to "(cast) all your care upon Him, for He cares for you."⁵ Humility is that quality of child-like trust⁶ in the Father heart of God.⁷

One of the things that God has shown us is the need to walk humbly with Him.⁸ To walk in humility requires both submission⁹ and obedience¹⁰ to our Lord. As Peter put it, humility is a key to an effective prayer life.¹¹

Humble me, Lord Jesus, for Your glory!

1-1 Peter 5:5-7; 2-Matt 11:29; 3-1 Peter 4:10,11; 4-Luke 18:9-14;
5-1 Peter 5:7; 6-Matt 18:1-4; 7-Matt 7:11; 8-Micah 6:8; 9-Eph 5:21;
10-Phil 2:8; 11-1 Peter 3:7.

DAY 25

THE GOD OF ALL GRACE

I find it so significant that at the conclusion of the letter of Peter to persecuted and suffering saints, he makes mention of “the God of all grace”.¹ When Paul was struggling with that thorn in his flesh, God chose not to remove it, but He granted him something far more powerful than healing. He showered Paul with grace.²

What is the one thing that you and I need more than everything else? The grace of God. We need to be strong in the grace of God.³ Our hearts need to be established in the grace of God.⁴ To grow in our knowledge of the Lord Jesus will result in growth in grace as well.⁵

Grace eliminates any possibility of human boasting of accomplishments whatsoever,⁶ for we are what we are by the grace of God.⁷ We are gifted according to the grace of God.⁸ We are saved by the grace of God.⁹

May we bow our hearts in worship to the God of all grace, Jesus Christ.¹⁰

1-1 Peter 5:10; 2-2 Cor 12:7-9; 3-2 Tim 2:1; 4-Heb 13:9;
5-2 Peter 3:18, 1:2; 6-Rom 3:24; 7-1 Cor 15:10; 8-1 Peter 4:10;
9-Eph 2:8-9; 10-John 1:14,17.

DAY 26

WHAT A GLORIOUS

On this day set aside to honor fathers, to acknowledge and worship our heavenly Father, and to reflect on what Scripture tells us about our heavenly Father.

Our Father knows everything about us. He has pity on us.³ Because our Father is unchanging,⁴ for He is everlasting.⁵ It is by His grace we are drawn to the Lord Jesus Christ.⁶ It is by His grace we say “Abba, Father.”⁷ It is from God our Father that we receive His peace.⁸

Our precious God is “the Father of all comfort”.⁹ He is the God who delivers us from every tribulation. Every single Christian is blessed by the Father in heavenly places in Christ.¹¹ Among the things we have access to is the Father in prayer.¹²

May we determine to give thanks to our Father in all things, is,¹⁴ and what He has done for us.¹⁵

1-John 4:23,24; 2-Psalm 139:1-18; 3-Psalm 103:1-5;
5-Isaiah 9:6, 63:16; 6-John 6:37; 7-Rom 8:32-35;
9-2 Cor 1:3; 10-Gal 1:4; 11-Eph 1:3; 12-1 Cor 1:3-7;
13-Eph 5:20; 14-Exodus 34:5-7; 15-2 Peter 1:3-7

DAY 26

WHAT A GLORIOUS FATHER!

On this day set aside to honor fathers, let us not forget to take the time to acknowledge and worship our heavenly Father.¹ How I love to read what Scripture tells us about our heavenly Father!

Our Father knows everything about us,² and having such knowledge, He has pity on us.³ Because our Father is God, His nature does not change,⁴ for He is everlasting.⁵ It is by the will of the Father that we are drawn to the Lord Jesus Christ.⁶ It is by the Spirit of adoption that we cry, “Abba, Father.”⁷ It is from God our Father that we receive grace and peace.⁸

Our precious God is “the Father of all mercies and God of all comfort”⁹. He is the God who delivers us from this present evil world.¹⁰ Every single Christian is blessed by the Father with all “spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ”.¹¹ Among those blessings is the privilege of having access to the Father in prayer.¹²

May we determine to give thanks to our Father always¹³ for who He is,¹⁴ and what He has done for us.¹⁵

1-John 4:23,24; 2-Psalm 139:1-18; 3-Psalm 103:13,14; 4-Malachi 3:6;
5-Isaiah 9:6, 63:16; 6-John 6:37; 7-Rom 8:15, Gal 4:6; 8-1 Cor 1:3;
9-2 Cor 1:3; 10-Gal 1:4; 11-Eph 1:3; 12-Eph 2:18, Matt 6:9;
13-Eph 5:20; 14-Exodus 34:5-7; 15-2 Peter 1:2-4.

DAY 27

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

When we speak about knowledge, it is important to differentiate between head knowledge, which is information, and heart knowledge, which is revelation.

Knowing about God is not the same as knowing Him. Even the devil and demons have the knowledge of God.¹ Even believing that there is a God only proves that we are not fools.² When Peter talks about the knowledge of God,³ he is not talking informationally, but relationally. A Christian is a person who, through a new birth,⁴ has entered into a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.⁵

Being religious is not the same as having a meaningful relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.⁶ Jesus identified the religious leaders of His day as offspring of the devil!⁷ But Jesus came to “destroy the works of the devil”,⁸ and to give us eternal life.⁹

The Lord Jesus is a Person whom we can know,¹⁰ and with whom we can have fellowship.¹¹ Knowing the Almighty God,¹² the true God,¹³ is what the gospel of grace declares.¹⁴

1-James 2:19; 2-Psalm 14:1; 3-2 Peter 1:2; 4-John 3:3-7; 5-John 10:14; 6-Phil 3:3-10; 7-John 8:44a; 8-1 John 3:8; 9-1 John 5:11-13; 10-2 Peter 3:18; 11-1 John 1:3; 12-Jer 9:23,24; 13-John 17:3; 14-Rom 10:13-15.

DAY 28

THE SUPPORTING CA

Without faith it is impossible to please God,¹ and more than miracles and signs.² Peter lists the ‘signs’ in his second epistle.

When Peter wrote, “add to your faith”³ the foundation upon which the rest of our lives are mentioned as additions to faith; they are temperance (self-control), patience (perseverance), kindness, and charity (love).⁴ How do we live? Verse 5 tells us it is by “giving all our effort is required on our part.

Faith is not magic; it is not positive thinking, a verb which acts on the promises, commands, and promises, this clearly explained in Hebrews 11. For as we look to God,⁵ we begin to see glorious changes in our lives. A new birth⁷ is truly a transformed life⁸ — a demonstration of the amazing grace of God.⁹

As we endeavor to live by God’s Word, the Holy Spirit and Christ empower us to abide in Him and bear fruit.

1-Heb 11:6; 2-Mark 16:17,18; 3-2 Peter 1:5-7; 4-Rom 6:11-19; 5-2 Cor 3:17,18; 6-1 Cor 13:4-7; 7-1 Cor 13:4-7; 8-1 Cor 13:4-7; 9-1 Cor 13:4-7; 10-John 15:1-11.

DAY 28

THE SUPPORTING CAST OF FAITH

Without faith it is impossible to please God,¹ but there is more to faith than miracles and signs.² Peter lists the ‘supporting cast’ of faith for us in his second epistle.

When Peter wrote, “add to your faith”,³ the implication is that faith is the foundation upon which the rest of our walk is built. Seven qualities are mentioned as additions to faith; they are: virtue, knowledge, temperance (self-control), patience (perseverance), godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity (love).⁴ How do we develop these qualities in our lives? Verse 5 tells us it is by “giving all diligence”. In other words, effort is required on our part.

Faith is not magic; it is not positive or possibility thinking. Faith is a verb which acts on the promises, commands, or warnings of God. We see this clearly explained in Hebrews 11. Furthermore, as we yield our heart to God,⁵ we begin to see glorious changes take place in our own life.⁶ The new birth⁷ is truly a transformed life⁸ — and it’s all because of the amazing grace of God.⁹

As we endeavor to live by God’s Word today, may the grace of Jesus Christ empower us to abide in Him and be fruitful.¹⁰

1-Heb 11:6; 2-Mark 16:17,18; 3-2 Peter 1:5; 4-2 Peter 1:5-7;
5-Rom 6:11-19; 6-2 Cor 3:17,18; 7-1 Peter 1:23; 8-Rom 12:2;
9-1 Cor 15:10; 10-John 15:1-11.

DAY 29

GOD'S WONDERFUL WORD

When we open our Bibles today, we are not reading the opinions of men,¹ but just what it claims to be - the word of God.²

God's word is incorruptible,³ it is alive and piercing, like a two-edged sword.⁴ In a world that is dark, God's word shines like a light unto my path.⁵ God's holy word is described as: "perfect," "sure," "right," "pure," "true," "righteous," more desirable than riches, sweeter than honey, protective, and profitable.⁶

Sadly, because you and I have easy access to God's word in many forms, there is a tendency to diminish its value. We can begin to read the Scriptures in search of 'hidden clues' or 'keys for success' instead of reading it to hear God speak to our hearts. God's word is meant for revelation, not mere information. It is God's love letter to His bride. It also tells us of things which lie ahead.⁷ Oh how blessed we are to have all of God's word so readily available to us!

So, as we study God's word together today, pray for ears to hear,⁸ and a tender and obedient heart.⁹ Ask the Holy Spirit to show you how to apply the truth in your daily life.¹⁰ Don't just listen and leave; obey and live!¹¹

1-2 Peter 1:20-21; 2-2 Tim 3:16-17; 3-1 Peter 1:23; 4-Heb 4:12;
5-Psalm 119:105; 6-Psalm 19:7-11; 7-Rev 1:1; 8-Rev 3:6;
9-Ezekiel 11:19-20; 10-Luke 6:46-49; 11-Isaiah 1:19.

DAY 30

THE NEED TO BE

When Paul and Silas taught in the synagogues that the listeners received the word with all readiness, they searched the Scriptures daily to see whether they were Biblically correct.¹ It would do each and every one of us the example of those Bereans, for it seems to me that we need to be where nobody is a false prophet or false teacher. We have been warned by Jesus that such will not be the case. We have talked about false prophets coming who would be "ravenous wolves."² The Greek word for a wolf is an extortioner. A Biblical extortioner is a person who uses clever tactics or methods. Amongst these wolves will appear in sheep's clothing; they will use Biblical terminology, but they are corrupt in their hearts.

In His Olivet discourse, Jesus warned us that they would come on the scene.³ Interestingly, Jesus said that they would show great signs and wonders.⁴ This is why we need to know that appears to be from God really is. In the case of false prophets, Jesus declared that many will claim to be from God and even do many mighty works in His Name, but they *do not* know you.⁵

Both apostles Peter and John write about these things in these last days.⁶ John would exhort you and me to be diligent in teaching to see whether or not it is biblical.⁷ Test them to "examine" or "put to the test". What are we looking for? 'word's from the Lord' with? The Word of God and the spirit is from God and many false prophets are using the Bible, the doctrine of Balaam is the prostitution of the Word for personal financial gain.⁸

Precious saints, may we continue in the traditions of the saints.¹⁰ False teachers are to be marked and not tolerated. In an age where winds of doctrine are blowing in hurricane-like proportions, may we hold the church family together, giving attention to reading, to the pure doctrine of God's Word¹⁴ protect us from the false teachers who are so prevalent in these last days.

1-Acts 17:10,11; 2-Matt 7:15; 3-Matt 24:11;
6-2 Peter 2:1-3; 7-1 John 4:1; 8-Rev 2:14; 9-1 John 4:1-3;
11-Rom 16:17; 12-Eph 4:14; 13-1 Tim 4:13;

DAY 30

THE NEED TO BE A BEREAN

When Paul and Silas taught in the synagogue in Berea, the Scriptures tell us that the listeners received the word with all readiness of mind, but then they searched the Scriptures daily to see whether the things that were taught them were Biblically correct.¹ It would do each and every one of us well to follow the example of those Bereans, for it seems to me that we are living in a day and age where nobody is a false prophet or false teacher anymore. Yet, we have already been warned by Jesus that such will not be the case in these last days. Jesus talked about false prophets coming who would be clothed as sheep, but inwardly would be “*ravenous wolves*”.² The Greek word for ravenous here means an extortioner. A Biblical extortioner is a person who wrestles money from others by using clever tactics or methods. Amongst them is, ‘Thus saith the Lord!’ These wolves will appear in sheep’s clothing; they will carry Bibles and they will use Biblical terminology, but they are corrupt in their hearts.

In His Olivet discourse, Jesus warned us that many false prophets would come on the scene.³ Interestingly, Jesus said that these wolves in sheep’s clothing would show great signs and wonders.⁴ This clearly teaches us that not everything that appears to be from God really is. In the context of His teaching on false prophets, Jesus declared that many will claim to have cast out devils, prophesy and even do many mighty works in His Name, to which Jesus will reply, “*I never knew you*”.⁵

Both apostles Peter and John write about our need to have a discerning heart in these last days.⁶ John would exhort you and me to try the spirit behind the teaching to see whether or not it is biblical.⁷ The Greek word for try there means to “examine” or “put to the test”. What are we to examine teachings, prophecies or ‘word’s from the Lord’ with? The Word of God. Why? Because not every spirit is from God and many false prophets are in the world today. According to the Bible, the doctrine of Balaam is the prostituting of the Word of God for personal financial gain.⁸

Precious saints, may we continue in the apostles’ doctrine,⁹ not man-made traditions.¹⁰ False teachers are to be marked and exposed,¹¹ not coddled and tolerated. In an age where winds of doctrine are blowing through the church¹² in hurricane-like proportions, may we hold the course in our personal lives and as a church family, giving attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.¹³ May the pure doctrine of God’s Word¹⁴ protect us from the “itching ears”¹⁵ syndrome that is so prevalent in these last days.

1-Acts 17:10,11; 2-Matt 7:15; 3-Matt 24:11; 4-Matt 24:24; 5-Matt 7:21-23;
6-2 Peter 2:1-3; 7-1 John 4:1; 8-Rev 2:14; 9-Acts 2:42; 10-Matt 15:3-9;
11-Rom 16:17; 12-Eph 4:14; 13-1 Tim 4:13; 14-2 Tim 3:16-17; 15-2 Tim 4:3.

DAY 31

THE ATONING SACRIFICE

Today we gather together to remember the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ on Calvary as the Lamb of God.¹ Just as Israel was delivered from their bondage in Egypt by the blood of the lamb sprinkled over the doorpost,² you and I, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, have been redeemed from the bondage to sin and this present evil world.³ Jesus has done all the work necessary for our salvation, and by virtue of that fact, we are invited to step into this wonderful covenant by grace through faith.⁴

With reverence and thanksgiving, we lift the bread and the cup to our lips today, remembering the price that was paid for the forgiveness of our sins. We do this in loving obedience to our Lord's command to "*do this in remembrance of Me.*"⁵

The bread reminds us of Christ's body, which was beaten and bruised for our iniquities.⁶ The cup reminds us of His sinless blood, which was shed as the atonement price of our sin.⁷ Together, they remind us of the wonderful grace of God that has provided for sinful man a way to be saved and enter into a personal, meaningful relationship with God.⁸

1-John 1:29; 2-Exodus 12; 3-Gal 1:4; 4-Eph 2:4-9; 5-1 Cor 11:23-25;
6-Isaiah 53:5; 7-1 Peter 1:18-19; 8-1 John 1:1-3.

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