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BEHIND THE VEIL

By

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Dear Saints in Christ Jesus,

These notes were taken from our Old Testament and New Testament Bible surveys at Koinonia on Wednesday and Sunday evenings. The intention was to give an overview of the entire Bible and see how the two testaments “connect.” Within the notes, practical truths were brought out because we know that the study of Scripture without application is like a vehicle without gas...going nowhere.

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

PURPOSE

Without purpose in life, a person merely lives from day to day, paycheck to paycheck, gathering all that one can get until they die. The writer to Ecclesiastes called this lifestyle that is limited to an existence under the sun as vanity.¹ This is never how the Lord intended our lives to be.

Created² and recreated³ to have fellowship with Him,⁴ our lives, through the grace of Christ,⁵ now belong to God.⁶ This living relationship with God through Jesus Christ⁷ gives our lives purpose. The purpose? To be His witnesses in the midst of a world that is bound by darkness.⁸ By obedience to God's word we are to hold forth the word of life in the midst of the unregenerate.⁹

As we are faithful to carry out the daily responsibilities described in Scripture, we find ourselves in our sovereign mission fields. How important to remind ourselves often, if not daily, of our responsibility to the Lord Jesus to be His witnesses in this lost world.¹⁰ Realizing this purpose makes whatever I say and do holy business,¹¹ the business of serving the Lord Jesus Christ.¹²

When Christians make ministry the purpose for life, they have missed the mark. Christ was Paul's life,¹³ with the overflow of that relationship being the work he was called to do.¹⁴ Purpose in your heart to cleave to Jesus throughout your day.¹⁵ Put on Jesus, not the flesh.¹⁶ Make living each day to please Jesus your vision, your purpose in life.¹⁷ That is truly living, and that's real ministry.

1-Eccl 1:2,14, 2:22,23, 4:4, 5:10; 2-Psalm 139:1-18; 3-1 Peter 1:23; 4-1 John 1:3; 5-Eph 2:4-9; 6-1 Cor 6:19,20; 7-Gal 3:26; 8-1 Peter 2:9; 9-Phil 2:15,16; 10-Acts 1:8; 11-Col 3:17; 12-Col 3:23,24; 13-Phil 1:21; 14-Gal 1:15,16a; 15-Acts 11:23; 16-Rom 13:14; 16-Rom 12:11.

DAY 2

RESURRECTION OR RELIGION?

When we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ, let's embrace His glorious triumph with a personal response of praise, thanksgiving, and awe. The tomb is EMPTY!¹ The veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom!² Those powerful words, "It is finished!"³, declared that full payment for man's sin has been made.⁴

Jesus blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us⁵ so that we receive "forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace."⁶ What a glorious truth, that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners!"⁷ Sadly though, Resurrection Sunday for many is practiced traditionally, as opposed to being experienced personally. Head knowledge of the facts of Christ's resurrection doesn't save anyone. Even the devil has the historical facts correct.

Let me ask you these questions: Has the Biblical implication of Resurrection Sunday changed your life? Are you "born again"?⁸ Does the Holy Spirit of God dwell in you?⁹ Are you living obedient to Jesus?¹⁰ Are you yielded to Jesus Christ in your daily life?¹¹

If today is the day that you realize salvation is being offered to you, do not be blinded by tradition.¹² The empty tomb is greater than Protestantism, Catholicism, or any other "ism". Jesus is as alive today as He was 2,000 years ago.¹³ He is seated at the right hand of God on our behalf.¹⁴

The apostle Peter declared, "He is Lord of all",¹⁵ but, is He your Lord? Have you received Him?¹⁶ If so, are you following Him?¹⁷ Don't accept a substitute for Jesus. Don't allow the god of this world to blind you for a single moment longer.¹⁸ Take God's gift into your heart today,¹⁹ and celebrate His resurrection every day.²⁰

1-Matt 28:6; 2-Matt 27:51; 3-John 19:30; 4-Heb 9:26; 5-Col 2:14;
6-Eph 1:7; 7-1 Tim 1:15; 8-John 3:3-7; 9-John 14:16,17;
10-John 15:10; 11-Rom 12:1,2; 12-Heb 3:15, Mark 6:13a; 13-Heb 13:8;
14-Heb 9:24, Rom 8:34; 15-Acts 10:36; 16-John 1:12; 17-Matt 4:19;
18-2 Cor 4:4; 19-Rom 6:23; 20-1 John 1:3,4.

DAY 3

PROPHECY – MORE THAN THE EYE CAN SEE

We are seeing and reading on a regular basis now about the human atrocities in places like Kosovo, Afghanistan, and the Sudan. It wasn't that long ago when the same horror was going on in Somalia. My sister-in-law tells me about the ethnic wars that she and her family experienced in Bangladesh, formerly called East Pakistan. These "incidents", keep in mind, are only the ones that make the newspapers; most events like these don't. Jesus foretold these days saying, "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom."¹ The word "nation" in Greek is "ethnos", from which we get our word "ethnic".

What blows me away is that all the destruction and pain that the human race experiences is the result of believing a seed of doubt planted by the serpent.² Now on a much smaller scale, scope-wise, this is not the honest, pure-in-heart kind of doubting or questioning, like Mary's.³ No, death and destruction result from the doubts that stem from the carnal, unsanctified mind,⁴ as opposed to the mind set on the Spirit.⁵

Saints, we are living in the last days. We have been for nearly 2,000 years!⁶ However, while prophecy is being fulfilled, life goes on. We need to "dig in" for the battle.⁷ We need to be "doubtless" concerning our Father's care for us.⁸ We need to realize the transitory nature of our stay here on planet Earth.⁹ I look out; I look around; I get both angry at sin and homesick¹⁰ at the same time.

In a letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul's statement that "we walk by faith, not by sight" is couched between two sentences which feature the word "confident",¹¹ the Greek definition of which means "to exercise courage, be bold, be of good cheer". Like Paul, we are to become more confident in Jesus and less confident in ourselves.¹² Jesus is in control.¹³ He is my rest.¹⁴ There is much more than my eyes¹⁵ can see.¹⁶

1-Matt 24:7; 2-Gen 3:1; 3-Luke 1:34; 4-Rom 8:6a,7; 5-Rom 8:6b;
6-1 John 2:18; 7-Eph 6:10-18; 8-Luke 12:24-32; 9-James 4:14;
10-John 14:2,3; 11-2 Cor 5:6-8; 12-Phil 3:3-8; 13-Rev 19:6;
14-Heb 4:3a, Matt 11:28; 15-1 Cor 13:12; 16-2 Kings 6:13-17.

DAY 4

HOLINESS

A quality that should mark every Christian is holiness. Unlike the deceived Pharisee in the temple who thought he was holy because he observed religious duties,¹ true holiness is the fruit of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. In fact, have you ever heard the saying, “Like father, like son”? Well, essentially Scripture says the same thing.²

We are called to be holy, just like our heavenly Father.³ To be holy, we must experience a close encounter of the best kind.⁴ It’s that recognition deep within that being in the Lord’s presence⁵ is holy territory, just like Moses heard God tell him.⁶

God declares that every saved person is a member of a holy priesthood.⁷ This means that we have been set apart by God to have a relationship with Him⁸ and with fellow Christians,⁹ and to carry the message of salvation into the world.¹⁰

In order to be the holy man of God that is required of me, I must daily present myself to the Lord for His purpose.¹¹ My body is now His holy temple.¹² Like any other temple, there are holy features that are proof that we are “God’s property”.¹³ Also, we need the “fuel” of prayer to build a holy faith within us.¹⁴

Holiness, saints, is a verb. It’s not an obligation, but the overflow of your relationship with Jesus. So, to become holy, pursue Christ.¹⁵ Draw near to Him.¹⁶ Keep yourself pure.¹⁷ Then your life will exhibit holiness. Holiness exhorts others.¹⁸ Holiness restores others.¹⁹ Holiness prefers others.²⁰ When we let the mind of Christ work in us,²¹ holiness will be the result.²²

1-Luke 18:11,12; 2-John 8:19, 14:7a,9; 3-1 Peter 1:14-16;
4-Isaiah 6:1-8; 5-Acts 17:28; 6-Ex 3:5; 7-1 Peter 2:5; 8-1 Cor 1:9;
9-Eph 2:19-22; 10-Acts 1:8; 11-Rom 12:1,2; 12-1 Cor 3:17;
13-Col 3:12-16; 14-Jude 20; 15-2 Peter 3:18a; 16-James 4:8a;
17-1 Tim 5:22; 18-Heb 3:13; 19-Gal 6:1,2; 20-Rom 12:10; 21-Phil 2:5;
22-Rom 6:22.

DAY 5

VICTORY AT AI

One of the defeats of the army of Israel was at the city of Ai.¹ There was no record of prayer, no record of God speaking to them about this military campaign, as He was known to do.² They went to battle, saints, “in the flesh”. They presumed that God would give them victory; after all, the mighty city of Jericho had just come a tumbling down!³

How rich these chapters are in providing us insight for our lives today.⁴ When we walk in the Spirit⁵ and talk in the Spirit⁶ we are walking in victory. 1 John 5:4 tells us that “whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith.” Denying self and yielding my life to Christ⁷ is what it means to “walk by faith, not by sight.”⁸

You see, every victory depends upon the Lord’s doing.⁹ Being in the Spirit is what keeps us in the victory and love of God.¹⁰ Every area of our lives must be yielded to the will of God, which is the wisdom of God.¹¹ We tend to “submit” our Jericho but try to handle our “Ai” ourselves. The result? The corruption of the flesh.¹²

The defeat at Ai, however, actually worked for the good¹³ for Israel when, at God’s leading, they returned to Ai and whipped them good.¹⁴ There is always victory in obedience to Jesus. Many times, though, we experience the defeat of Ai before the final victory. Don’t allow defeats to develop a defeated attitude in you. Rather, let the defeats remind you that your victory is always in Jesus, never in your flesh.¹⁵

1-Joshua 7:1-5; 2-Joshua 6:2-5; 3-Joshua 6:20; 4-1 Cor 10:6,11;
5-Gal 5:16; 6-Eph 4:29; 7-Rom 6:1-13; 8-2 Cor 5:7; 9-Psalm 44:1-3,
John 15:5b; 10-Jude 21; 11-Col 1:9,10; 12-Gal 6:8; 13- Rom 8:28;
14-Joshua 8:1-29; 15-Prov 3:5,6.

DAY 6

FELLOWSHIP

When the 3,000 souls came to Christ on Pentecost¹ they immediately began fellowshiping with other believers.² Coming to Jesus not only necessitates the renunciation of false gods,³ but it also makes necessary active relationships with other Christians.⁴ This is because we are now part of a body.⁵ The Christian Church is not a dead organization, but a living organism. Like our physical body, we cannot say to our brothers and sisters in Christ that we do not need them.⁶

However, our fellowship is to be firstly and primarily vertical – that is, with God – and secondarily horizontal, with people.⁷ By divine design we have been placed into a body that has been created to minister to one another.⁸ This is one way that God is glorified.⁹ This fellowship is to be loving and kind,¹⁰ meeting each other's needs.¹¹ This fellowship is transparent with one another.¹² What a glorious thing it is when Christ's body dwells together in unity!¹³

May each of us daily desire to draw closer to Jesus and one another. His love working in us and through us¹⁴ is the greatest witness we can offer the world.¹⁵

Meditate on Ephesians 4:1-3: “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with long-suffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” And Philippians 2:1-4: “Therefore, if *there is* any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind. *Let* nothing *be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”

Pray it. Live it. That's what fellowship is all about!

1-Acts 2:41; 2-Acts 2:42; 3-1 Cor 10:20,21; 4-Heb 10:24,25;
5-1 Cor 12:13; 6-1 Cor 12:20,21; 7-1 Cor 1:9, 1 John 1:3;
8-Rom 12:5-8; 9-1 Peter 4:10,11; 10-Rom 12:9,10; 11-Rom 12:13;
12-James 5:16; 13-Psalm 133; 14-John 13:34; 15-John 13:35.

DAY 7

BLOWING YOUR HORN

In 1 Samuel 13:3,4, we find the first hint at the root of King Saul's fall – pride. Not that he was proud that Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines, but Saul blew the trumpet. Simply put, Saul took the credit for a victory he never win. He loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.¹

How critical a point this is for us as Christians! We need to remember and proclaim, as Peter and John did in Acts 3:6, 11-16, that every victory, every miracle comes from the Lord to us, and by His design, through us.² Are you a personal “horn blower”? You may indeed be gifted, but where did that gift come from?³ You may be blessed materially, but where did that blessing come from?⁴

The Pharisees sought a reputation;⁵ Jesus didn't.⁶ Servants of God don't and won't blow their horn⁷ because, quite frankly, there is no horn to blow. The glory of a servant of Christ is that Jesus be magnified.⁸ “Sauls” leave their fingerprints all over the place. Servants of Christ boast in Him, in His grace, love, and mighty power all day long.⁹ We are so mortal that we cannot even boast of tomorrow unless we attach, “if the Lord wills” to it.¹⁰

May we stand in awe that the living God would not only redeem us, but also fellowship with us¹² and use us in His Kingdom.¹³ Perhaps we should put up little reminders in our homes – “No Horn Blowing Allowed!” If we don't resist that temptation to pride, there will be death in the pot!¹⁴

To Christ be all the glory for the things He has done, is doing, and will do!¹⁵

1-John 12:43; 2-2 Cor 3:5; 3-1 Peter 4:10,11, James 1:17; 4-Deut 8:18, 1 Tim 6:17; 5-Matt 23:5a; 6-Phil 2:7; 7-Psalm 115:1; 8-John 3:30; 9-Psalm 44:8; 10-Prov 27:1; 11-James 4:13-16; 12-1 John 1:3b; 13-2 Tim 2:20,21, 2 Cor 4:7; 14-2 Kings 4:40, Prov 16:18; 15 –Jude 24,25.

DAY 8

POWER!

When you hear the word power, what do you think of? When the Bible uses the word power, what does it mean? Well, the original word in the Greek for power means “special miraculous power, ability, abundance, might, strength.” This same word is translated elsewhere as virtue¹ or mighty.²

Jesus told His disciples that they were to tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued, invested with, this power from on high.³ The Book of Acts records some of the manifestations of this power in the form of healings⁴ and speaking in tongues.⁵ However, the most visible manifestation was a boldness and strength to live every day as a witness for Jesus, even in the most challenging circumstances.⁶

Many people seek God’s power in order to be known as men or women of power,⁷ and some people put on displays of power supposedly “to the glory of God”. But true power comes from God,⁸ saints, and Jesus gives us power to be His witnesses.⁹ He gives the power to share our faith with the lost.¹⁰ He gives us power to be holy in an unholy world,¹¹ loving in an unloving world. Jesus gives us power to love our spouses,¹² to love each other.¹³ He empowers us to happily be nobody! You see, the power of God’s precious Spirit is not to be flaunted, toyed with, or put on display. Rather, the power of God’s Spirit is given to us that we might be fruitful¹⁴ and faithful to Jesus whether it be at work, school, on vacation, etc.

Do you want a fresh filling today? Ask Abba and receive from Him the power of His Spirit.¹⁵

1-Luke 6:19, 8:46; 2-Luke 10:13, 19:37; 3-Luke 24:49; 4-Acts 3:1-8, 5:14-16, 8:5-7; 5-Acts 2:4-6; 6-2 Cor 4:7-11; 7-Acts 8:18,19; 8-Luke 9:1,2; 9-Acts 1:8; 10-1 Thess 1:5,6; 11-1 Peter 1:15,16; 12-Eph 5:22-33; 13-John 13:34; 14-Gal 5:22,23; 15-Luke 11:11-13.

DAY 9

PRAYER PRECEDES PENTECOST

To wait for the “power from on high”,¹ the disciples prayed.² The lesson here is that the praying person or church is the one that walks in the power of the Holy Spirit. When told to wait for the promise of the Spirit they prayed. The most effective way to wait for any promise of God is in prayer. This renews spiritual strength³ and prevents fainting as well.⁴ Prayer is directed to our Heavenly Father alone.⁵ It is personal,⁶ yet powerful.⁷ This access to God through Jesus⁸ enables us to “come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”⁹ How powerful prayer is!

The pattern for the church, whether it be for evangelism of the lost or the edification of the saints, is rooted in prayer. You see, prayer is the language of faith; it’s the language of dependency upon Jesus for everything.¹⁰ A journey through the Book of Acts reveals no less than 20 references to praying or prayer. Therein lies the key to their growth¹¹ and the miracles that took place.¹²

Saints, we are no less the Church than they were! They weren’t “Superman” and “Wonder Woman”. They were as human as we are. They experienced hypocrisy,¹³ internal problems about perceived partiality,¹⁴ attempted enemy invasion,¹⁵ loss of members,¹⁶ disputes about doctrine¹⁷ and personal ministry choices,¹⁸ prison ministry¹⁹ ... Whew! What kept them energized? Prayer. Note, they prayed together, seeking the Lord’s will and glory.²⁰

Is Pentecost for today? Well, is prayer for today? Prayer preceded Pentecost, but Pentecost preceded the Spirit-filled church. Many together praying.²¹ Lord Jesus, teach us to pray!

1-Luke 24:49; 2-Acts 1:14; 3-Isaiah 40:31; 4-Luke 18:1; 5-Psalm 5:3, Matt 6:9; 6-Psalm 54:2; 7-James 5:16; 8-Eph 2:18; 9-Heb 4:16; 10-John 15:5; 11-Acts 2:42,47; 12-Acts 3:1-10; 13-Acts 5:1-11; 14-Acts 6:1; 15-Acts 8:9-24; 16-Acts 12:1; 17-Acts 15:1,2,5-11; 18-Acts 15:36-41; 19-Acts 16:25-31; 20-Acts 1:24, 4:31, 6:6; 21-Acts 12:12.

DAY 10

WHAT IF JESUS MOVED IN?

What changes would you make in your life if Jesus “moved in” to your apartment or home or college dorm?¹ What changes would you make in your business if Jesus became your “silent partner”?² What changes would occur in your marriage if Jesus spent an entire month with you?³

If you’re anything like me, these questions challenge me to the very core of my being.⁴ For one thing, I would probably consider more carefully the choice of words that I use.⁵ I’m sure that with Jesus looking over my shoulder I’d probably be far less selfish and demanding.⁶ No doubt, I’d pay more careful attention to the needs of my wife and children.⁷

What about the content of my phone conversations? It’s not likely to contain gossip. Judgmental, unloving things would not be spoken either; no, not with Jesus around.⁸ What would I watch on television? What movie might I rent from Blockbuster Video?⁹ If my neighbor invited me over, would I ask if Jesus could come too? After all, wouldn’t I want my neighbor to know that I take in those kind of people?¹⁰

If Jesus were my roommate would it change my Bible reading¹¹ How about church gatherings for worship and teaching?¹² I’d probably be more generous in my giving.¹³

Hey wait a minute! If I belong to Jesus, He does live with me!¹⁴ In fact, He has moved into my heart. The moral of the story? It’s time for some changes in this lifestyle. How about you?

1-Psalm 139:1-10; 2-2 Cor 8:21; 3-Eph 5:21-33; 4-Matt 7:20;
5-Matt 12:36,37; 6-Luke 9:23; 7-1 Tim 5:8; 8-Eph 4:29; 9-Psalm 101:3;
10-Matt 10:32,33; 11-Psalm 1:1-3; 12-Heb 10:25; 13-2 Cor 9:6,8;
14-1 Cor 6:19,20.

DAY 11

ARROWS OF VICTORY

On his deathbed the prophet Elisha had a final word for Joash, the king of Israel. It was concerning Israel's enemy Syria. The Lord God, through Elisha, uttered a word of tremendous victory. Praise God! However, when Elisha told Joash to take the arrows and smite the ground, symbolizing the victories that his faith in God would attain, he stopped at three victories. Elisha was angry at the limitations that Joash had placed upon God's ability to grant the nation victory.¹

The Lord Jesus died to give us victory over death² and over the world.³ So often when we read or hear a promise from the Word⁴ we stagger in unbelief. Usually because we think that we are the ones responsible for bringing the promise to pass. Wrong! Our sole responsibility is to obey by faith,⁵ trusting in the Lord to perform what He has said.⁶ We are not responsible to produce results because we can't. It is only when we walk by faith in Christ⁷ that we see fruit⁸ and conquest.⁹

Why did Israel take a 40 year tour of the land instead of a 3 day "missions trip"? Because they limited the Holy One of Israel. They did not remember how their mighty God had delivered them from Egypt.¹⁰ Nor did they believe Him for future victories.¹¹ I wonder how many times there was a victory prepared but my unbelief¹² limited my striking the ground with arrows of victory. Despite our "shortcomings" the Lord will work "till He sends forth justice to victory".¹³

What battle are you facing right now? Rather, what battle is greater than your Lord? Victory is not apart from but through Jesus Christ.¹⁴ When we cleave to the sword¹⁵ the Lord will work great victories in our lives.¹⁶ Every victory is His!¹⁷ Your trial is really an arrow with the word "victory" inscribed upon it. Don't shoot it into the ground in frustration; don't break it in half in anger. Shoot it up towards heaven and praise Jesus for the victory that He has given unto you.

In Christ we are at the advantage, despite the volleys of life.¹⁸ Don't pout. "Shout to God with the voice of triumph!"¹⁹ Our triumph is in His hands!²⁰

1-2 Kings 13:14-19; 2-1 Cor 15:55-57; 3-1 John 5:4; 4-2 Peter 1:4;
5-John 5:28,29; 6-Jer 1:12, Rom 4:20,21; 7-2 Cor 5:7; 8-Heb 11:4-13,
32-34; 9-1 John 4:4; 10-Psalm 78:41-53; 11-Num 14:11, Heb 3:19;
12-Matt 13:58; 13-Matt 12:20; 14-1 Cor 15:57; 15-Eph 6:17;
16-2 Sam 23:10,12; 17-1 Chron 29:11; 18-2 Cor 2:14; 19-Psalm 47:1;
20-Psalm 92:4.

DAY 12

THE GRACE TO SAVE AND OBEY

God's grace provided through Jesus Christ is indeed amazing! The grace by which we are saved is the very same grace that enables us to obey Jesus. Because Jesus Christ is Lord, not only nature¹ but also demonic spirits must submit to His authority.² Should we, as children of God by faith in Christ,³ be required to do anything less than obey our King? Obeying God is of utmost importance.⁴ There is a power associated with obedience.⁵

In every part of our lives we are faced with challenges. Each temptation is a test of obedience either to the Lord or our lusts.⁶ Just as believing in Jesus constitutes obedience unto salvation,⁷ believing in that same grace constitutes obedience unto purification.⁸ Each act of obedience is an act of faith.⁹ By Jesus' one act of obedience "many will be made righteous."¹⁰ His example provides us the focus that we need to be obedient,¹¹ even unto the death of self.¹²

Pray to God that people may "read" this flock and see loving obedience to Jesus displayed.¹³ May our every thought be brought "into captivity to the obedience of Christ".¹⁴ Even Jesus Himself "learned obedience by the things which He suffered."¹⁵ "Follow me"¹⁶ includes His example of obedience.

The grace of God is more than sufficient to save your soul and purify it. Grace elects, grace sanctifies, grace makes obedience possible.¹⁷ The strength to obey¹⁸ comes from the One who dwells within.¹⁹ Enjoy the blessings of obedience by coming to Jesus²⁰ and abiding in Jesus every moment of every day.²¹

1-Matt 8:27; 2-Mark 1:27; 3-Gal 3:26; 4-1 Sam 15:22, Acts 5:29;
5-Acts 5:32; 6-Rom 6:12-19; 7-Rom 10:16; 8-1 Peter 1:22; 9-Heb 11:8;
10-Rom 5:19; 11-Heb 12:1-4; 12-Phil 2:8; 13-Rom 16:19a;
14-2 Cor 10:5; 15-Heb 5:8; 16-Matt 4:19; 17-1 Peter 1:2; 18-Phil 4:13;
19-Gal 2:20; 20-Matt 11:28-30; 21-John 15:4-7.

DAY 13

SUCH AS I HAVE GIVE I THEE

How much better and blessed are the plans of the Lord in comparison to ours!¹ What if the beggar in Acts 3 got what he was asking for, silver and gold? For a short period of time things might have been a bit easier for him in some respects, but in due time the money would have run out. He would have been “back to square one”, begging again. No pun intended, but our plans are lame compared to Christ’s.² We think of the near future, the 50-yard dash, but He considers the long haul, the marathon.

The reply from Peter to the lame man, “such as I have give I thee”,³ is God’s will for each of us today! In Mark 2 a man was brought to Jesus looking only for a physical miracle, but “such as I have give I thee” was the response from Deity, giving salvation and healing! We are so prone to settle for the “silver and gold” when Jesus has so much more for us.⁴ The Lord wants our lives to be fruitful.⁵ The Lord wants to give us strength in the hour of temptation.⁶ Does that mean that we can say farewell to trials and tests? No, but what it does mean is that when we say, “not my will, but Thy will be done in my life, dear Lord Jesus”, His response will be, “such as I have give I thee.” Of course, God has given us the greatest gift in His Son, Jesus.⁷

Jesus is the source of our faith and power in the very midst of life’s pits. Oh yes, there are tears; but there is also joy, tremendous joy,⁸ even in life’s prisons⁹ because “such as I have give I thee” is the answer to every prayer.¹⁰ Praise God for His sufficient grace!¹¹

Jesus is at work in your life today.¹² He is the Potter¹³ molding, spinning, and shaping you into a beautiful vessel of honor.¹⁴ But by demanding that He shape you according to the lame request for “silver and gold” - the temporal and material - is potentially forfeiting “such as I have give I thee.” Stop begging and start praising God for blessing you with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus!¹⁵

1-Jer 10:23, 29:11; 2-Prov 19:21; 3-Acts 3:6; 4-Eph 3:20; 5-Psalm 1:3, Mark 4:8; 6-1 Cor 10:13; 7-John 3:16; 8-1 Peter 1:8; 9-James 1:2-4; 10-John 15:7-11; 11-2 Cor 12:9a; 12-Phil 2:13; 13-Isaiah 64:8; 14-2 Tim 2:20,21; 15-Eph 1:3.

DAY 14

THE BATTLE FOR THE BODY

Your physical body is in great demand. Madison Avenue knows it. This fallen world system makes appeals for it. However, we are three part beings.¹ The highest level of existence is the spiritual and the lowest level of existence is physical.

Before conversion our existence is solely on this physical, earthly plane. Our drives are according to this world² and not of the Father.³ At conversion, which was an actual transaction that required a sin payment,⁴ “you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”⁵ Did you catch that? Jesus bought the ownership of your body! Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost.⁶ However, your base nature – the “flesh”⁷ – still desires to employ your body in selfish, unholy, even unhealthy activities.

Romans 6 wonderfully reveals this lesson about yielding our bodies as “instruments of righteousness unto God.”⁸ Our physical bodies will be driven by our heart’s desire, whether good⁹ or bad.¹⁰ Never think that being born again means no more problems with temptation. Temptation is common to all of us, male and female, old and young.¹¹

Moreover, the battle for the body is continual.¹² Daily your body can either be a vessel of honor or a vessel of dishonor.¹³ Whichever vessel you are is the result of giving your body the “green light” to participate in either the things of the Spirit¹⁴ or the things of the flesh.¹⁵ Are you making choices with your body that glorify Christ? I wish to God that each one reading this article would boldly declare, “Christ will be magnified in my body”.¹⁶

As we yield to the Holy Spirit He grants us the self control and power to have victory in this mortal body.¹⁷ Practical theology is personal application of Romans 12:1,2. I cannot present your body to God, nor can you present mine. The outcome of each battle is life or corruption.¹⁸ Each battle necessitates a choice.¹⁹ Or does it? That depends on who owns your body.²⁰

1-Thess 5:23; 2-Eph 2:1-3; 3-1 John 2:15-17; 4-1 Peter 1:18,19; 5-1 Cor 6:20; 5-1 Cor 6:19; 7-Rom 7:18a, 24; 8-Rom 6:13; 9-Rom 6:17; 10-Luke 6:45,46;; 11-1 Cor 10:13; 12-Gal 5:16,17; 13-2 Tim 2:20,21; 14-Gal 5:22,23; 15-Gal 5:19-21; 16-Phil 1:20; 17-Rom 8:13; 18-Gal 6:7,8; 19-1 Cor 9:27; 20-Gal 2:20.

DAY 15

THE SPIRIT OF GOD OR STRIVING?

Jesus the Messiah was anointed by the Spirit of the Lord. One of the recorded evidences of this was that He would not strive.¹ In our lives one sure way to detect “J2K” non-compliance is the flesh striving against the Holy Spirit.²

The flesh, manifested in strife, aspires to notoriety,³ but the anointing of the Lord seeks nothing of the kind.⁴ Did you know that striving is walking improperly, even in dishonesty?⁵ How is that? Because strife is a contradiction of how Jesus intended for us to live.⁶ The church at Corinth was both charismatic and carnal. This was in part due to their proud spirit, nitpicking and strife.⁷ If you are striving, you are not yielding to the Holy Spirit. In fact, you are grieving Him.⁸ Strife is as much a sin of the flesh as immorality,⁹ although maybe not as obvious. It is very possible to do outwardly religious activities with fleshly motivation.¹⁰ How each of us needs to repent of striving and vainglory in our walk, our homes, and the church.¹¹

When agape is flowing, sin is covered; when hatred is flowing, there is “war in the pews”.¹² Are you a strife-stirrer or a strife-quencher?¹³ When you sow strife, you destroy friendships.¹⁴ Strife can make one miserable even when “swimming” in abundance.¹⁵ How can you and I stop strife? Only by the anointing of Christ¹⁶ and a personal decision not to turn on the faucet of my mouth!¹⁷ To love strife is to love sin.¹⁸ To meddle in strife is to play the role of a fool¹⁹ and can be likened to grabbing a ferocious dog by the ears.²⁰ Gossip and strife are inseparable.²¹ Pride and strife go hand in hand.²² Anger and strife are also linked together.²³

Listen saints, the servants of the Lord must not strive with one another²⁴ or with God.²⁵ Rather, we are to fervently endeavor by yielding to the Holy Spirit to bring the flesh under subjection.²⁶ Strife is from the pit of hell.²⁷ Agape does not strive, so supplicate; don’t scream. Compliment, don’t compete. When the Spirit of the Lord is flowing in your life, you will not strive.

1-Matt 12:18,19; 2-Gal 5:17; 3-Luke 22:24; 4-Phil 2:3-8; 5-Rom 13:13;
6-Psalm 133, John 17:20-26; 7-1 Cor 3:1-4; 8-Eph 4:30; 9-Gal 5:19,20;
10-Phil 1:15; 11-Phil 2:3; 12-Prov 10:12; 13-Prov 15:18;
14-Prov 16:28; 15-Prov 17:1; 16-Isaiah 10:27; 17-Prov 17:14;
18-Prov 17:19a; 19-Prov 20:3; 20-Prov 26:17; 21-Prov 26:20;
22-Prov 28:25a; 23-Prov 29:22a; 24-2 Tim 2:24; 25-Isaiah 45:9;
26-1 Cor 9:24-27; 27-James 3:14-16.

DAY 16

REMEMBER WHERE HOME IS

When we celebrate communion we honor and remember Jesus.¹ How blessed it is to remember what Jesus did for us.² How precious to remind ourselves, and one another, what Jesus did for people while upon earth.³ How critical it is for us to remember that our risen Lord Jesus hasn't changed one bit.⁴ Also, may we never forget that part of our communion meditation should include anticipating our new home⁵ and family.⁶

Saints, because of the finished work of Jesus Christ for our sins, heaven's door will be flung wide open⁷ to receive us the very moment we breathe our last breath upon this earth.⁸ When we finish our testimony,⁹ we're going home!¹⁰ We think about heaven far too little. We can get so "battle-minded"¹¹ that we forget what Jesus has in store for each one of us.¹² Our brother Lazarus, of whom Jesus spoke, didn't have that much of a life here upon earth,¹³ but boy, is he comforted now!¹⁴

Moses forsook all of this world's glitter because he could "see" the invisible.¹⁵ Too often we want heaven upon earth. Thank God for all that He does bless us with day by day!¹⁶ If we only focused on the earthly blessings we would find it hard to be adequately thankful.¹⁷ But the truth is, we'll have heaven too! In fact, the Bible records that some "bonus pay" will be given in heaven for being faithful.¹⁸

In the midst of all of our earthly "stuff", be it bad or good, remember heaven! The best is yet to come; for example, a wedding to pale all other weddings.¹⁹ Although it's spiritually "night time" in this world in a sense, and we all have shed and will shed our share of tears, remember "joy comes in the morning."²⁰ Remember how short our time is here on earth.²¹

When we celebrate communion we remember the gift of eternal life.²² That's a promise²³ from Abba.²⁴

1-1 Cor 11:24-26; 2-Heb 2:9; 3-Acts 10:38, Matt 9:35; 4-Heb 13:8;
5-John 14:2,3; 6-Heb 12:22,23, Eph 3:15; 7-Rev 4:1; 8-Acts 7:54-60;
9-Rev 11:7; 10-Phil 1:23; 11-Eph 6:11,12; 12-1 Cor 2:9;
13-Luke 16:20,21; 14-Luke 16:25; 15-Heb 11:24-27; 16-Psalm 68:19;
17-Psalm 116:12; 18-Matt 5:12; 19-Rev 19:5-9; 20-Psalm 30:5;
21-Psalm 89:47a; 22-John 6:54; 23-1 John 2:25; 24-Rom 8:15.

DAY 17

CHARACTER

How does God build character? Probably not the way that you and I would choose. Well, God's ways are not our ways.¹ I'll tell you one of my favorite verses in Scripture (yeah, right) - "count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations" (or, "various trials").² Saints, I do not do cartwheels when I'm going through a trial. Do you?

However, look at the character that is developed when we joyfully submit that trial to Jesus. James 1:3 informs us that "the testing of your faith produces patience." There is great value when our faith is tried and yet, despite the pressures from without and within, we remain obedient to our Lord.³ Look at the character building process described in Romans 5:3-5: "we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us." Whatever your trial at this very moment, ask yourself these questions: "What fruit of the Spirit is being developed in my life?"⁴ "What attribute of God am I in most need of in this trial?"

You see, we can be confident in our trials.⁵ Even in the midst of trouble Jesus is perfecting that which concerns me.⁶ One manifestation of a person with "beatitude-like" qualities is character.⁷ A guarded heart⁸ and a guarded mouth⁹ produce deeds¹⁰ and words¹¹ of character.

Study the "Hall of Faith" heroes in Hebrews 11. One word is a common thread in each of these saints – character. Godly character is developed by faith,¹² and it doesn't happen overnight. The trials and tribulations Paul listed in 2 Corinthians 4:8,9 were actually character builders. Look past the momentary discomforts¹³ and towards the prize.¹⁴ Character endures. Character trusts the Creator.¹⁵ Character is being like Jesus.¹⁶

1-Isaiah 55:8,9; 2-Jam 1:2; 3-1 Peter 1:6,7; 4-Gal 5:22,23; 5-Phil 1:6;
6-Psalm 138:7,8; 7-Matt 5:3-12; 8-Prov 4:23; 9-Psalm 141:3;
10-Titus 2:14; 11-Eph 4:29; 12-2 Cor 5:7; 13-2 Cor 4:17,18;
14-Phil 3:14; 15-1 Peter 4:19; 16-1 John 3:16.

DAY 18

TEMPTATION ... WHOM WILL I PLEASE?

Temptation is something that each of us faces. It has been around since Adam & Eve's encounter with the serpent in the Garden of Eden.¹ Paul writes that every temptation is common to man.² It's important to realize that temptation in and of itself is not sin. Remember that Jesus was tempted by the devil³ and Jesus is sinless.⁴

A proper understanding of the nature and objective of temptation is vital. Our temptation has its source in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.⁵ The ultimate goal of temptation is self-gratification in disregard for the revealed will of God. It's the sifting process of which Jesus told Peter.⁶ When the process of temptation goes full cycle,⁷ the result is always death,⁸ that is, alienation from Jesus Christ. When Jesus cried, "Why have You forsaken Me?"⁹ it was because the Father had removed His presence the moment Jesus became sin for us.¹⁰ Of course Jesus didn't become sin literally, but the Bearer of our sin, and the Father's action against Him revealed His hatred for sin and the effects it has upon us.

The focus of every temptation is myself. If I yield to this or that, it will make me feel good; it will ease the pain; it will put a few more dollars in my pocket; etc. However, when we by the power of the Holy Ghost resist temptation, our chief concern then becomes pleasing the Lord Jesus.¹¹ So our response to temptation either develops or damages our character; it either enhances or negates our witness for Jesus. Temptation is a way that leads either to life or corruption.¹²

Victory isn't the absence or elimination of temptation, but it's the resolve to say "yes" to Jesus and "no" to the tempter.¹³ When our response to temptation is, "It is written",¹⁴ then victory is certain.¹⁵

1-Gen 3:1-7; 2-1 Cor 10:13; 3-Matt 4:1-10; 4-Heb 4:15, 7:26;
5-1 John 2:15-17; 6-Luke 22:31; 7-James 1:14,15; 8-Rom 6:23;
9-Mark 15:34; 10-2 Cor 5:21; 11-1 Thess 4:1; 12-Gal 6:7,8;
13-Matt 4:3; 14-Matt 4:4; 15-1 John 5:4.

DAY 19

WALKING IN THE SPIRIT

Care must be exercised when we learn about the gifts of the Spirit in operation.¹ A false balance concerning the gifts can result in “false advertising” with the result being frustration and questioning, “Why didn’t I get the baptism?” Saints, post-Pentecost records give examples of the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the exercising of the gifts giving,² administration,³ and helps.⁴

The listings and purposes for spiritual gifts are found in Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:4-10, and Ephesians 4:11-13. These gifts come from above⁵ and are equally supernatural. To say that one gift is “the gift” is wrong.⁶ We do not know whether Barnabas spoke in tongues or not, but he certainly had the gifts of helps and giving,⁷ and he indeed used his gifts for the glory of his Lord.⁸

If you are a child of God⁹ then there is within you a gift, and probably more than one gift of the Spirit. How do you “discover” and manifest your gift(s)? Simple. By cultivating a personal walk with Jesus Christ,¹⁰ and living a life of prayer,¹¹ through the study¹² and meditation¹³ of God’s Word, and unconditional obedience to His commandments.¹⁴ The overflow of this “abiding”¹⁵ will be the operation of your gift(s), and it will be supernaturally “natural”.

Get acquainted with Jesus.¹⁶ Listen to the leading of the Holy Spirit.¹⁷ Walk by faith, not by sight.¹⁸ Keep pure.¹⁹ Above all, be motivated by an intense love for Jesus because without that, your gift is worthless.²⁰

1-1 Cor 12; 2-Acts 4:34,35; 3-Acts 6:1-7; 4-Acts 18:24-28; 5-1 Cor 12:11; 6-1 Cor 12:29,30; 7-Acts 9:26,27a, 11:21-30; 8-1 Peter 4:11; 9-John 1:12; 10-1 Cor 1:9; 11-1 Peter 4:7, Eph 6:18; 12-2 Tim 2:15; 13-1 Tim 4:15,16; 14-1 Peter 1:14, 2 Cor 2:9; 15-John 15:4-14; 16-Job 22:21; 17-Rev 2:7a; 18-2 Cor 5:7; 19-1 John 3:3; 20-1 Cor 13:1-3.

DAY 20

THE LEAVEN OF HYPOCRISY

When we compromise we agree to meet the world, the flesh, or the devil half way.¹ You see, the devil loves half-hearted faith because his kingdom is not effected in the least by it. Compromise is extremely dangerous because it sends the wrong message to both the body of Christ and the world. What compromise begets is hypocrisy.

The evidence of hypocrisy is the external religious activity that serves as a “cover up” for inner wickedness.² Hypocrisy is primarily concerned with what man thinks.³ A hypocrite is a religious actor that demonstrates, or acts out, a religious show.⁴ One cannot truly come before Jesus in that condition.⁵ The “thrill” of fooling others by our “holy” charade is only temporary.⁶ Hypocrisy is a spiritual cancer that manifests itself by verbal assassination.⁷

Is my hypocrisy reversible? Yes, by admitting that sin to Jesus.⁸ This is how we take the “beam” out of our own eye.⁹ This confession¹⁰ is step one in crushing the practice (the cover-up) of hypocrisy.¹¹ We must realize that hypocrisy in the heart and in the pew is a leaven that grieves God,¹² defiles worship,¹³ and spreads to others.¹⁴ Hypocrisy left unchecked can become “normal Christianity”.

In contrast, heavenly wisdom is without hypocrisy.¹⁵ This wisdom is manifested in a true fear of the Lord.¹⁶ We cannot be contrite and cover up at the same time. We are called to sincerity,¹⁷ which translates in the Greek as “judged by sunlight”, i.e. tested as genuine. The only “act” that we are to follow is Jesus,¹⁸ and Christ pleasers are not men pleasers.¹⁹

Honesty – inwardly,²⁰ vertically,²¹ and horizontally²² – keeps hypocrisy at bay.²³ May we walk in truth²⁴ and be true worshippers of God.²⁵

1-1 John 2:15-17; 2-Matt 23:27,28; 3-Matt 23:5-7; 4-2 Tim 3:5;
5-Job 13:16; 6-Job 20:5; 7-Prov 11:9a; 8-Prov 28:13; 9-Matt 7:5;
10-1 John 1:9; 11-Psalm 32:5,6a; 12-Mark 3:5; 13-Matt 15:7-9;
14-Luke 12:1; 1 Cor 5:6b; 15-James 3:17; 16-Prov 9:10; 17-1 Cor 5:8;
18-Matt 4:19; 19-Gal 1:10; 20-Psalm 51:6; 21-Rom 9:1; 22-Zech 8:16,
Eph 4:25; 23-2 Cor 8:21; 24-Psalm 86:11; 25-John 4:23,24.

DAY 21

REPENTANCE

There is no “repentance-less” salvation. In the New Testament John the Baptizer’s ministry was one of repentance.¹ This paved the way for a person to receive Jesus² as Messiah, Savior, Lord.³ Biblical repentance and belief in Jesus go hand in hand. Repentance and belief in the gospel is what Jesus preached.⁴ Jesus calls sinners like us to repentance.⁵ Without true contrition for sin,⁶ man will perish.⁷

In that glorious chapter in Luke’s gospel which gives three accounts of lost things found, we’re told that rejoicing takes place in heaven, amongst the angels, and even on earth when a sinner repents.⁸ Repentance is a turn from the active practice of sin – “go and sin no more”⁹ – to a personal faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ.¹⁰ How did Peter respond to the conviction cry in Acts 2? With the exhortation to repent.¹¹ We must note that the very word repentance carries along with it the meaning “to turn” or “to change”. So, initial conviction and repentance is what it means to be converted¹² and forgiven.¹³ The will of God is that all come to repentance¹⁴ with the corresponding fruit.¹⁵

From the moment of new birth¹⁶ there begins a life long “operation” of change through the power of the Holy Spirit.¹⁷ There are no finished products of Christ upon earth; hence the process of repentance, which will be displayed with the fruits of repentance.¹⁸ The apostle Paul wrote of sins in Corinth that were in need of repentance.¹⁹ Remember “the goodness of God leads you to repentance”²⁰.

Check out the word repent in Revelation chapters 2 and 3, which were written to the churches. The Gospel isn’t “Accept and receive”, it is “Repent and believe”. Does your life reflect repentance?

1-Matt 3:1,2; 2-John 1:12; 3-Luke 2:11; 4-Mark 1:15; 5-Mark 2:17;
6-2 Cor 7:8-10; 7-Luke 13:3,5; 8-Luke 15:7,10,32; 9-John 8:11;
10-1 Cor 15:1-4; 11-Acts 2:38; 12-Acts 3:19; 13-Col 2:13;
14-2 Peter 3:9; 15-Acts 26:20; 16-John 3:3-7; 17-2 Cor 3:17,18;
18-Matt 3:8; 19-2 Cor 12:21; 20-Rom 2:4.

DAY 22

HONESTY OR HYPOCRISY?

The word hypocrisy means basically to pretend or to play a part; it is acting something out. In ancient days it meant to put on a mask so as to appear differently to others. The sin of Ananias and Sapphira was hypocrisy. Outwardly they wanted to appear as charitable as the others, but inwardly they were lying to God the Holy Spirit.¹ When we are dishonest before the Lord, but at the same time “putting on an act” before the body of Christ, that is hypocrisy.

To avoid hypocrisy we need to have an “honest and good heart”.² Rather than cover up our sins, we confess them to God,³ and if need be to others,⁴ and by the grace of God repent.⁵ How vital that we be transparent with one another and of course with our Lord Jesus.⁶ To live in hypocrisy is to be living in denial of the truth. We must walk in honesty, thus putting on Christ⁷ who is “the Truth”.⁸ Ananias and Sapphira held back the truth under the disguise of total surrender about the true value of the land they sold. They could have avoided the severe judgment of the Lord if they had simply been honest about the situation.⁹

Honesty prevents hypocrisy.¹⁰ We are told to think about things that are honest.¹¹ Do we “stretch” the truth when we share with others? Do we add a little “pizzaz” so as to sound holier than we are? That’s both a lie and hypocrisy and must be confessed as sin.

Part of our prayer life is to be directed for those in authority that we might live in honesty.¹² An honest way of living is a key to effective evangelism.¹³ Are you willing to live honestly?¹⁴ Is the “real you” someone else when you are away from the crowd at church? Speaking lies in hypocrisy is devilish¹⁵ and in opposition to the wisdom from above, which is without hypocrisy.¹⁶

May the Spirit of God lead us into the truth¹⁷ and full disclosure of the leaven of hypocrisy in our hearts¹⁸ today. We can’t grow when in denial, neither can we have true fellowship in the Spirit apart from honesty. Lord, search me today.¹⁹

You need not fear honesty, only hypocrisy.²⁰

1-Acts 5:1-3; 2-Luke 8:15; 3-1 John 1:9; 4-James 5:16a; 5-Prov 28:13; 6-Rom 9:1; 7-Rom 13:14; 8-John 14:6a; 9-Acts 5:4-10; 10-2 Cor 8:21; 11-Phil 4:8; 12-1 Tim 2:1,2; 13-1 Thess 4:12; 14-Heb 13:18; 15-1 Tim 4:1,2; 16-James 3:17; 17-John 16:13a; 18-Jer 17:9; 19-Psalm 139:23,24; 20-Luke 18:9-14.

DAY 23

LAY UP HIS WORDS IN YOUR HEART

Our title is taken from Job 22:22, which reads, “Receive, please, instruction from His mouth, and lay up His words in your heart.” Words are extremely powerful.¹ Where do words go? Into our hearts. How vital it is for us to be guided by the Word of God² because there are all kinds of words in our world. Sadly, many of them are negative and destructive, such as words of anger, words of bitterness, words of greed, and words of intimidation.

Face it, who and what we are today stems from our response to the words of someone. Whose words have you taken to heart? Consider: “Thy word have I hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee.”³ Many people live their entire life upon the basis of what “they say”. Who are “they”? Since when did “they” usurp the authority of God’s mighty Word?⁴ We must hear what the Spirit is saying to the church today.⁵ We need to hear the wisdom of God instead of the philosophies of man.^{6,7}

It is the Holy Spirit’s desire to reveal God’s glorious truth to us,⁸ thus enabling us to be spiritually minded.⁹ By laying His words in our heart richly,¹⁰ we are being transformed¹¹ “from glory to glory” into the image of Jesus.¹² The application of the Word of God¹³ develops faith.¹⁴ The faith that withstands the inevitable storms of life.¹⁵ To lay up God’s word in our heart may require that I turn off the tube and turn on the light.¹⁶

As we lay up God’s word in our heart, we inevitably “lay aside all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness”,¹⁷ “perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”¹⁸ What we lay up in our heart is what we live out in our lives.¹⁹ To whom are you listening?²⁰

1-Prov 18:21a, James 3:1-5; 2-Psalm 1:1-3; 3-Psalm 119:11;
4-2 Peter 3:5-7; 5-Rev 2,3; 6-1 Cor 2:4-8; 7-Col 2:8; 8-1 Cor 2:9,10;
9-Rom 8:6; 10-Col 3:16; 11-Rom 12:2; 12-2 Cor 3:18;
13-James 1:22-24; 14-Rom 10:17; 15-Matt 7:24,25; 16-Psalm 119:130;
17-James 1:21; 18-2 Cor 7:1; 19-Luke 6:45; 20-Psalm 95:7,8.

DAY 24

UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER

Do you serve Christ conditionally? That, in essence, was the argument that Satan had lodged against Job.¹ In other words, Satan's viewpoint was, "Why wouldn't Job serve You, Jehovah? Look at his family, his financial abundance, his health. Of course he serves You, but he does so because of Your blessings upon his life, not because he simply loves you!"

Although in Job's case Satan was incorrect, how would you and I respond to this type of inquiry? How would we measure up under such scrutiny? Honestly, are we, as much as lies within us, serving Jesus because He really is enough? Is Jesus, and Jesus alone, our portion² and the motivation for our service?³

Paul not only counted all things that were gain to him as loss, but he also "suffered the loss of all things and count(ed) them as rubbish".⁴ Was he a superman of some kind? No.⁵ He, like you and I, had to count the cost⁶ of following Jesus.

Unlike Job and Paul, Judas Iscariot could be bought.⁷ None of us in this mortal body are giving the Lord 100% all of the time, but are we totally committed to Him, regardless of external circumstances, good or bad? What pleasure is worth betraying Him? What tragedy is cause to forsake Him?

Unconditional atonement⁸ is the reason for unconditional surrender.⁹ God forbid that we should live any other way.¹⁰ Jesus is the Lord¹¹ and He is worthy to be praised!¹²

1-Job 1:9,10; 2-Psalm 73:25,26; 3-2 Cor 5:14; 4-Phil 3:7,8;
5-Rom 7:14-25; 6-Luke 14:25-33; 7-Matt 26:14-16; 8-Rom 3:20-26;
9-Rom 12:1,2; 10-Gal 6:14; 11-1 Cor 12:3; 12-Rev 5:11-14.

DAY 25

BEHOLD YOUR GOD!

You are distraught, frustrated. You are at the proverbial end of your rope. The outlook is not promising. Everything seems stacked against you. Is this you today? Precious child of God, behold your God! How successful the devil is during life's potholes to convince us that Jesus has forsaken us! But this is never true!

As the Lord told Israel regarding the time when they would be overwhelmed by their enemies during the great tribulation period, "Behold, your God will come".² What strength there is when our focus is redirected from the problem to the Solution!³ Saints, no matter what you are facing right now, "Behold your God!"⁴

Scripture teaches that our eyes affect our heart,⁵ and never are we to deny our problems. However, never should we allow our problems to govern our lives. Behold, your God is on the job.⁶ His ways are much higher than ours.⁷ Faith "sees" what one cannot yet view with physical eyes.⁸ Faith "walks"⁹ looking unto Jesus.¹⁰ So when you are sinking, and life is stinking, behold your God!¹¹

Salvation, past, present and future, is summed up in the words, "Behold the Lamb of God".¹² Even Pilate declared, "Behold the Man!"¹³ and "Behold your King!"¹⁴ Saints, behold your Rock!¹⁵ Meditate on Jesus today. Read the accounts of His miracles in the Gospels. Behold afresh this truth, the love bestowed upon you, His child.¹⁶ His work, despite the present circumstances, will prove to be good.¹⁷

1-Matt 28:20, Heb 13:5b; 2-Isaiah 35:4; 3-Luke 4:18,19;
4-Isaiah 40:9; 5-Lam 3:51a; 6-Phil 2:13; 7-Isaiah 55:8,9;
8-Heb 11:1; 9-2 Cor 5:7; 10-Heb 12:2; 11-Matt 14:30,31;
12-John 1:29; 13-John 19:5; 14-John 19:14; 15-1 Peter 2:6;
16-1 John 3:1a; 17-Psalm 57:2,3, Rom 8:28.

DAY 26

RUNNING TO WIN

Oftentimes you will hear a sports broadcaster say, “He (or she) has their game face on.” In other words, they mean business. They are into the game, the event, the series. Nothing else matters but one thing – to win the prize. You and I are in a race.¹ Our Prize? The high calling of God in Christ Jesus.² To win this race we too must have our “game face” on.³ We too must be about our Father’s business.⁴

A Christian’s destiny is heaven.⁵ However, while on earth we need to “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness”⁶ so that we will finish our race unashamed.⁷ Are you playing by the rules?⁸ Or do you have divided interests, making you double-minded, unstable in all your ways?⁹

Our lives as followers of Jesus¹⁰ were never meant to be compartmentalized. No. Anything and everything we do is to be done for the Lord¹¹ and for His glory.¹² So saints, put on your game face! To glorify Christ in all that we do is the game plan.¹³ There are no bows to be taken; no standing (or sitting) ovations for us. Nothing but glory “to the King, eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God”.¹⁴

Don’t get sidetracked. Don’t get weary.¹⁵ Finish your course well¹⁶ so that you will hear, “Well done, good and faithful servant... Enter into the joy of your Lord.”¹⁷

1-1 Cor 9:24-27; 2-Phil 3:13,14; 3-Luke 9:5; 4-Luke 2:49;
5-John 14:2,3; 6-Matt 6:33; 7-1 John 2:28; 8-2 Tim 2:3-5;
9-James 1:8, 4:8; 10-Matt 4:19; 11-Col 3:23; 12-1 Peter 4:11;
13-Rom 16:27; 14-1 Tim 1:17; 15-Gal 6:9; 16-2 Tim 4:7;
17-Matt 25:21.

DAY 27

RED ALERT!

There is no beautiful side of evil when you strip away the outer shell of deception. However, rarely does the god of this world¹ dress himself up externally with obvious adornment of wickedness.² The name of the game in the kingdom of darkness is deception.³ Satan is the king of craftiness.⁴ That's why we are warned to avoid even the appearance of evil.⁵

Saints, whether we like it or not, we are in a war.⁶ There is an adversary, the devil.⁷ He is also known as "the wicked one".^{8,9} Scripture says that the wicked plot against the righteous.¹⁰ The word plot in the military sense would be known as plans of the devices used to steal, kill, or destroy souls.¹¹ We are not to be ignorant of the devil's devices.¹² Anything created by God, Satan seeks to destroy or defile. Anything redeemed or belonging to God, he relentlessly attacks.¹³ Christian, the devil wants to destroy you with pride,¹⁴ envy,¹⁵ astrology,¹⁶ ease,¹⁷ or abundance and selfishness.¹⁸ He will also use secular Christ-rejecting philosophies¹⁹ and sexual encounters outside of marriage²⁰ to destroy lives. How we need the discerning of spirits²¹ to unmask his camouflaged plots!

The enemy cannot steal your soul if you've been sealed by the Holy Spirit,²² but he can make a shipwreck of your faith.²³ James prescribes the way to stay afloat: "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and *your* joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up."²⁴

1-2 Cor 4:4; 2-2 Cor 11:13,14; 3-Matt 24:24; 4-Eph 4:14;
5-1 Thess 5:22; 6-Eph 6:10-20; 7-1 Peter 5:8; 8-Matt 13:19;
9-1 John 2:13,14; 10-Psalm 37:12; 11-John 10:10a; 12-2 Cor 2:11;
13-Luke 22:31; 14-Prov 16:18; 15-Prov 14:30b; 16-Isaiah 47:13,14;
17-Isaiah 32:9-11; 18-Ezek 16:49; 19-Col 2:8; 20-Prov 5, 7;
21-1 Cor 12:10; 22-Eph 1:13,14, 4:30; 23-1 Tim 1:19; 24-James 4:7-10.

DAY 28

BLESSED ENDURANCE

The word endurance describes the ability of the Lord that enables you to hang in there, persevere, bear trials. Endurance and Christ-like character are spiritual twins. The attribute of God that enables us to endure is love. Agape endures all things.¹ By the way, endurance doesn't mean enjoyment. The joy that we have while enduring our trials comes from understanding of Scripture about the reason for the trials.^{2,3} Also, we know in our trials that Jesus hasn't forsaken us.⁴ On the contrary, He designs each test for our benefit and as a testimony of His power.⁵

The human side of endurance is developed by godly exercise⁶ and discipline,⁷ and by regular participation in "the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers."⁸ These are the basic elements for a living, growing faith.

We are soldiers of Jesus Christ⁹ and we learn endurance in this "boot camp" called life. We cannot selectively choose the things we want to endure and just "give in" to others.^{10,11} The day to day grind, as well as those times of afflictions, reveal the depth of our faith in Jesus.¹²

Seasons of affliction are inevitable,¹³ but you can be certain, dear child of God, that the outcome of faithful endurance is the obtaining of a wonderful promise from Abba for you.¹⁴ If our focus is upon Jesus, if we're confident in who He is, then we will be able to endure. Moses teaches us that lesson.¹⁵ Are you in an endurance lesson today? Look to Jesus.¹⁶ Your endurance is proof that you are His child.¹⁷

Blessed endurance!¹⁸ Happy endurance!¹⁹ Precious endurance!²⁰ There is something else that endures through every moment of every trial...the mercy of the Lord.^{21,22}

1-1 Cor 13:7; 2-Rom 5:3-5; 3-James 1:2-4; 4-Heb 13:5b,6;
5-Psalm 138:8, Rom 8:28; 6-1 Tim 4:8; 7-1 Cor 9:24-27; 8-Acts 2:42;
9-2 Tim 2:3,4; 10-2 Tim 2:10; 11-2 Tim 3: 10-12; 12-Mark 4:17;
13-2 Tim 4:5, John 16:33; 14-Heb 6:15; 15-Heb 11:27; 16-Heb 12:1,2;
17-Heb 12:7; 18-James 1:12; 19-James 5:11; 20-1 Pet 2:19;
21-Psalm 107:1; 22-Psalm 136.

DAY 29

AT ALL TIMES

Consistency. Consistency and I do not always go together. My desire to be consistent is real, but within me I lack the ability to always be consistent in my pursuit of Christ. Is this a problem? Yes and no. You see, I am a creature that is totally dependant upon the grace¹ of the Consistent One.² I can't be consistent apart from Jesus,³ and when I appear to be consistent, it is only by the enablement of God's Holy Spirit.⁴

Conclusion? I glory in Christ at all times.⁵ I do not reward myself for any good thing done,⁶ nor do I condemn myself when I fail.⁷ I'm ever, at all times, in need of my Lord Jesus' strength, especially when I am weak.⁸

Solomon requested that Jehovah maintain both his cause and the cause of His people Israel at all times.⁹ Every moment of every day, that is at all times,¹⁰ we are to trust in Jesus.¹¹ How we need to embrace the words, "I am with you always"¹² and "I will never leave you nor forsake you."¹³

God's grace is very much alive today! Listen, if we were loved when at our worst,¹⁴ why would we think Jesus has left us now? He is the friend that loves at all times.¹⁵ Jesus is my testimony.¹⁶ I am a "product" of His grace from A to Z.¹⁷

The gospel of Jesus Christ¹⁸ is the reason why I can praise Jesus at all times.¹⁹ Do it now – reverently, worshipfully. "Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together."²⁰

1-1 Cor 15:10; 2-Mal 3:6; 3-John 15:5; 4-Rom 8:11; 5-1 Cor 1:31;
6-James 1:17; 7-Rom 8:1; 8-2 Cor 12:9,10; 9-1 Kings 8:59;
10-Psalm 62:8; 11-Matt 12:21; 12-Matt 28:20; 13-Heb 13:5;
14-Rom 5:6,8,10; 15-Prov 17:17; 16-1 Cor 1:6; 17-Heb 12:2;
18-1 Cor 15:1-4; 19-Psalm 34:1; 20-Psalm 34:3.

DAY 30

GET OUT!

Father Abraham was given this simple command about his relationship with his pagan environment, “Get Out”.¹ In the Book of Revelation John heard a voice from heaven addressing God’s people regarding their relationship with the whorish religious system, and the command was, “Come Out”.² These two commands speak of consecration unto the Lord. Just like Israel was called to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation,³ so too is the church.⁴

When Moses writes concerning the priesthood, he states the purpose of being consecrated was “that he may minister unto Me in the priest’s office”.⁵ How simple God’s ways are. The entire redemptive plan is a purchase,⁶ the price being the Holy Lamb Jesus,^{7,8} that we might be delivered from darkness⁹ and called into a living, loving fellowship with Christ.¹⁰

Our call is to minister to Jesus¹¹ that He might minister through us.¹² Salvation is not only escape from the fires and torments of hell, it is also being saved from sin’s dominion¹³ that we might be separate,¹⁴ not entangled in the snares of the world.¹⁵ To “Get Out” and “Come Out” precedes entering in the narrow gate.¹⁶ We enter in through Jesus¹⁷ that we might be totally separated unto God.¹⁸ The only alternative of consecration is confusion.

Like Abraham,¹⁹ we have been called out that we might enter in.²⁰ Rip up that return address to the world if you are a new creature in Christ.²¹ It’s later than you think!²²

1-Acts 7:2,3; 2-Rev 18:4; 3-Ex 19:6; 4-1 Peter 2:9; 5-Ex 28:1,3,4;
6-1 Cor 7:23; 7-John 1:29; 8-1 Peter 1:18,19; 9-Col 1:13; 10-1 Cor 1:9;
11-Acts 13:2; 12-Phil 2:12,13; 13-Matt 1:21; 14-2 Cor 6:14-18;
15-1 John 2:15-17; 16-Luke 13:24; 17-John 10:9; 18-Rom 1:1;
19-Gal 3:6-9; 20-Rev 22:14; 21-2 Cor 5:17; 22-Rom 13:11,12.

DAY 31

THE LOCAL BODY

The illustrations found in Scripture are so simple yet so profound. One such description is that of the local church, which is part of the body of Christ. Although communion symbolizes the body of Christ,¹ each and every “born again” Christian,² both individually³ and collectively, make up the body of Christ.⁴ We the Church are His body.⁵ Having established that truth, Paul wrote about how this body is to function. Every single member has an important part; in fact, especially the ones that we consider to be less desirable.⁶ The local church is the sovereign design of God,⁷ put together by Jesus Himself.⁸ He is the Architect and the Holy Spirit is the “gift Giver”.⁹ Our body here has many members, and we are multi-gifted.¹⁰ We must work together, avoiding any appearance or expression of haughtiness.¹¹ We are called to prefer one another¹² and care for one another.¹³ Never can we “un-member” ourselves from the body of Christ.¹⁴

Repeatedly we are warned about dividing this Body.¹⁵ Why? Because we reflect Jesus to the world. We are a witness, either good or bad.¹⁶ Our response to difficulty or problems is to be different than the groups of this world. The root of all of our activity is to be love.¹⁷ This “love from above” is to motivate our serving,¹⁸ giving,¹⁹ and attitudes.²⁰

As I was reflecting on this idea of the church being a body, I began to realize how every member of my body is involved in writing this article! In fact, I need my entire body to eat, teach, walk, talk, etc. I wasn’t designed like my old toy “Mr. Potato Head” with disjoining members. Saints, you and I are connected! We have been tempered by Deity.²¹ No coincidences or errors. Just as each of us needs to be properly “dressed”,²² likewise we must remove those things that cause harm to the body,²³ thus establishing an atmosphere of peace²⁴ and holiness.²⁵ Although we are complete,²⁶ we’re still far from the finish line in so many ways.²⁷

Are you a body builder or a body buster? May each of us seek the “attitudes to be”,²⁸ and in so doing enjoy the loving environment²⁹ which is to characterize our membership in Christ’s body.³⁰ In the shadow of His cross may we press inward and onward together,³¹ and may each of us freshly commit ourselves to Jesus and His purposes for us.

1-1 Cor 11:24,25; 2-John 3:3-7; 3-1 Cor 12:14-20; 4-1 Cor 12:27;
5-Eph 1:22,23; 6-1 Cor 12:22-24; 7-1 Cor 12:18; 8-Matt 16:18;
9-1 Cor 12:7-11; 10-Rom 12:4-8; 11-Rom 12:16; 12-Rom 12:10;
13-Rom 12:15; 1 Cor 12:25; 14-1 Cor 12:21; 15-1 Cor 12:25; 1 Cor 1:10-13;
16-Acts 1:8; 17-1 Peter 4:8; 18-2 Cor 5:14; 19-2 Cor 8:1-4; 20-Eph 4:1-3;
21-1 Cor 12:24; 22-Col 3:12-14; 23-Col 3:5-9; 24-Col 3:15;
25-1 Peter 1:15,16; 26-Col 2:10; 27-Phil 3:12-16; 28-Matt 5:3-12;
29-1 Cor 13:4-8a; 30-John 13:34,35; 31-Heb 10:19-25.

NOTES

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