

# deaf devo

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Through the Bible Series #1



“God’s Wonderful Plan”

Dear Faithful Reader,

With this issue of *Deaf Devo*, we will begin a study of verses from Genesis through Revelation. This study will continue through 2018 and 2019. The theme for this book is “God’s Wonderful Plan.” Many of the devotions in this book are based on verses from the book of Genesis. We will learn about God’s wonderful plan for His creation and for salvation through Jesus.

Thirty-five writers have contributed to this issue. Several of these writers are now deceased. Some devotions are old, and some are new. But all of them were written to share God’s message of hope and peace with you. Besides learning from Genesis, this book contains devotions about getting in shape, Jesus’ death and resurrection, and Bible questions.

I hope you will enjoy learning about the people and stories from Genesis. God will bless you for reading and studying His Word.

Serving Him,



Jo Krueger

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## Through the Bible

Welcome to a New Year! It is exciting to think about the wonderful adventures that God has planned for you and me this year!

In this January through April devotion book, we will begin a journey through the Bible that will continue through 2018 and 2019. We will study verses from the first book of the Bible, Genesis, to the last book, Revelation. We will learn about God and how He has worked through His people since the creation of the world. We will also study Jesus' life and learn about the early Christians who helped lead God's church.

God's Word, the Bible, is God's message to us. Paul wrote a letter to a young preacher named Timothy. Paul reminded Timothy about the importance of reading God's Word in 2 Timothy 3:16. ***"All Scripture is given by God. And all Scripture is useful for teaching and showing people what is wrong in their lives. It is useful for correcting faults and teaching the right way to live."***

Decide right now to read these devotions and study the Bible every day in 2018. God will bless you and help you grow strong in your Christian life.

– Jo Krueger

*Suggested Bible Reading*

2 Timothy 3:14-17

Monday, January 1

## Book of Genesis

In this devotion book, more than half of the devotions will be based on verses from Genesis, the first book of the Bible. The word Genesis means beginning. Genesis tells us about the beginning of the world, the beginning of sin and the beginning of God's plan of salvation.

Moses wrote the Bible books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. He wanted God's people, the Israelites, to always remember how God had taken care of them. Moses also wanted the Israelites to know about the faithful men and women who served God.

Hebrews, chapter 11, is often called the "Faith Chapter of the Bible." Why? Because this chapter lists Bible people who had great faith in God. We can learn about some of the people in the list by reading the book of Genesis — Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and many others. Hebrews 11:1-2 tells us about these people. ***"Faith is what makes real the thing we hope for. It is proof of what we cannot see. God was pleased with the people who lived a long time ago because they had faith like this."***

Tomorrow we will start learning about God creating the world. Ask God to help your faith to grow as you study His Word.

– Jo Krueger

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Hebrews 11:1-22

Tuesday, January 2

## The First Day

God was before all things. It is impossible for us to really understand what this means. We can only understand things that have a beginning and an end. That is because we live our whole life in time. But God was before time existed. God created time.

Genesis 1:1-2 tells us that God created space and time. ***“God created the sky and the earth. At first, the earth was completely empty. There was nothing on the earth. Darkness covered the ocean, and God’s spirit moved over the water.”*** God made the sky and the earth, but the earth didn’t have any shape yet. Before God gave the earth a shape, He had to create space.

The next few verses in Genesis, chapter 1, tell us that God created light and darkness. He made them happen one after the other — light, then dark, then light. This is when God created time. Now, God had made a place for all physical things to live. He had created time so that things could live in order. God made all things to have a beginning and an end.

Enjoy God’s wonderful world today. And praise Him for all the things He has made for you!

– Matt Keller

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 1:1-13

Wednesday, January 3

## The Second Day

When God created the earth on the first day, there was only water. The earth did not have a shape. So, on the second day God gave a shape to the earth. He made the earth into a sphere — like a ball. Then He made air around the sphere of water. This air was called “sky.” Genesis 1:7 tells us about this. ***“So God made the space and separated the water. Some of the water was above it, and some of the water was below it.”***

Some people who study the Bible believe that verse 7 means that there was a special layer of water or ice that surrounded the sky. They call this layer a “canopy.” These people believe that this canopy protected the earth from some of the radiation of the sun. They also believe that the canopy helped make it easier for animals and plants to grow. Why? Because the canopy created pressure on the air. These people also think that later, when God flooded the earth in Noah’s time, He caused the canopy to fall as rain. Today there is no canopy of water around the earth. Our water is in the clouds and rain and snow.

We truly have a wonderful God! He made our world and continues to control it today. Thank God for His faithfulness and love.

– Matt Keller

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 1:1-13

Thursday, January 4

## The Third Day

On the third day, God gathered the waters on the earth into the oceans, seas, lakes and rivers. He also made dry land. These are the first things that the Bible tells us God called “good.”

Then God created plants. The Bible says later that God made plants as food for animals and people to eat. Genesis 1:11 tells us about this. ***“Then God said, ‘Let the earth grow grass, plants that make grain, and fruit trees. The fruit trees will make fruit with seeds in it. And each plant will make its own kind of seed. Let these plants grow on the earth.’ And it happened.”***

But God did not make animals or people until day six — three days later! This shows us that God had a plan from the time He started creating things. Each day of creation prepared things for the next day. Everything God created affects everything else.

God clearly had a plan for how He would create everything. Any person who honestly studies the things God created can see that there was a plan and a design. These things did not just happen; God made them!

Take time to look at the world around you today. Notice all the beautiful trees and flowers that God made for you!

– Matt Keller

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 1:1-13

Friday, January 5

## The Fourth Day

On the fourth day, God created the sun, moon, stars and planets. He created all the things in space. Genesis 1:14-15 tells us why God created all these things. ***“Then God said, ‘Let there be lights in the sky. These lights will separate the days from the nights. They will be used for signs to show when special meetings begin and to show the days and years. They will be in the sky to shine light on the earth.’ And it happened.”***

God created light on the first day, but on the fourth day, God made the sun, moon and stars. The sun, moon and stars are sources of light. God made a special order for the universe around the earth. God also created these things so people would have a way to measure time.

Yesterday we talked about how we can see God’s plan because He created plants for food before He created animals and people. And the fourth day shows God’s plan even more strongly. God planned for people to measure time and to celebrate special days. God created us to be more than just animals. God planned for us to be special and to use His creation in a special way.

God made a special world for us. Why? Because He loves us so much!

– Matt Keller

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 1:14-2:4a

Saturday, January 6

## The Fifth Day

On the fifth day God created all creatures in the water and all the birds. Genesis 1:21 tells us about this. ***“So God created the large sea animals. He created all the many living things in the sea and every kind of bird that flies in the air. And God saw that this was good.”***

The Bible emphasizes that God made all the creatures that live in the water at the same time. God made all the different kinds of fish, dolphins and whales, oysters, crabs and octopi — every creature that lives in the water. God also made all the birds, from the tiny hummingbirds to the tall ostrich. These creatures and birds did not slowly evolve, starting from a single cell. No, God made them all in one day!

If we study the way creatures in the ocean live together, we see that it would be impossible for them all to slowly evolve. Each one affects the others around it in a special way. All of these creatures work together like a perfectly organized system. This system did not happen by accident!

Think about all the beautiful colors and shapes of birds and fish. God designed them this way on purpose. God wants to enjoy the things He created, and He wants us to enjoy them, too!

– Matt Keller

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 1:14-2:4a

Sunday, January 7

## The Sixth Day

On the sixth day, God created all the animals and creatures that live on the land. And then, last of all, He created people. Genesis 1:26 talks about what God did. ***“Then God said, ‘Now let’s make humans who will be like us. They will rule over all the fish in the sea and the birds in the air. They will rule over all the large animals and all the little things that crawl on the earth.’”*** God didn’t make anything else to be like Him. Only people are made like God.

God made people so that He could have a special relationship with us. God planned to do this even before He started creating the earth and all the things in it. People are God’s special creation. People are very important to God!

Notice that God also made man and woman for each other. God intended for a man and a woman to start a family together. Therefore, God invented marriage. The devil has tried to attack the relationship between a man and a woman. Why? Because this relationship is a special creation of God. God even uses marriage as a way to explain His relationship to people. It is another way that God shows His plan through creation.

Thank God today for making you His very special creation!

– Matt Keller

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 1:14-2:4a

Monday, January 8

# The Seventh Day

God created the whole universe and everything in it in six days. And then the Bible says that after God was finished, He rested. Genesis 2:2-3 tells us that God made the seventh day a special day for resting. ***“God finished the work he was doing, so on the seventh day he rested from his work. God blessed the seventh day and made it a holy day. He made it special because on that day he rested from all the work he did while creating the world.”***

Did God rest because He was tired from creating everything? Probably not. God’s rest on the seventh day was another part of His plan. He established this time of rest as an example for us. We can work hard for a while, but we always must stop and rest and worship God. If we do not take time to rest from work, our bodies and minds will become unhealthy.

Also, if we do not take time to focus on worshipping God, our relationship with Him will become unhealthy. Many years after creation, God gave His laws to Moses. God made a commandment about a special day of rest and worship.

God knows we need time to help our bodies stay healthy. And, we need to spend time focusing on God in worship so our spirit will stay healthy.

– Matt Keller

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 1:14-2:4a

Tuesday, January 9

# Our Creator

Today people talk about “creating” life in a laboratory. This is called cloning. People discuss how long this process might take. Others talk about whether doing this is right or wrong.

The very first verse of Genesis talks about God creating the earth and sky. The rest of the verses in Genesis, chapter 1, tell us about all the wonderful things that God created. It did not take many months or thousands of years like some people believe. God spoke, and it happened!

Genesis 4:4 sums up God’s work of creation. ***“This is the story about the creation of the sky and the earth. This is what happened when the Lord God made the earth and sky.”*** But God did not only create things. He made people, too. And God did not just make Adam and Eve. You and I were created by God, too.

God has also created a way for us to live forever with Him. We learn in the New Testament that God sent Jesus to save us. When we love and obey Jesus, we receive God’s gift of eternal life. God made us and the world where we live. And He made a way so we can have a close relationship with Him.

I am so thankful that God made me! Are you thankful that God made you?

– Debbie Klahn

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 1:14-2:4a

Wednesday, January 10

## Jigsaw Puzzle

A friend showed me her new jigsaw puzzle. From a distance, the puzzle looked like a map of the world. But up close, I could see that it was made of tiny pictures of people and animals from all over the world. What a neat puzzle!

God is like that jigsaw puzzle. We know what the Bible tells us about Him. But if we look at the people in the world and all of creation around us, we can learn even more about God. Genesis 1:31 tells us that all of these things God made are very good. ***“God looked at everything he had made. And he saw that everything was very good. There was evening, and then there was morning. This was the sixth day.”***

When we look at the changing seasons and the cycle of life, we know that God is orderly. When we look at a mother holding a new baby, we learn the God is loving. When we look at animals in the world, we learn that God likes variety. And when we look at a sunset, we know that God likes beautiful colors.

Take some time today to look around you. See what you can learn about God from watching creation. Then thank Him for all these amazing things.

– Millie Mueller

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 1:14-2:4a

Thursday, January 11

## God Became a Man

How can I know that a person really exists? Maybe I see that person's name in a telephone book. Maybe I read about them in a newspaper. But when I finally meet that person and talk with him, I can be sure that he really exists.

We cannot see God. So how can we know that He really exists? How can we know that He loves us? We read in the book of Exodus that God led the Israelites with pillars of cloud and fire. And God's glory was in the Holy tent and later in the temple.

Then at just the right time, God came to earth as a man. This man was His Son, Jesus. Jesus walked among people. He ate with them and taught them about God. John 1:14 talks about God coming to earth. ***“The Word became a man and lived among us. We saw his divine greatness — the greatness that belongs to the only Son of the Father. The Word was full of grace and truth.”***

Does God really exist? Yes, He does. More than two thousand years ago, He came to earth in the form of a man. Why did God do this? Because He loves us so much and wants us to live forever with Him! God is real, and His love for you is real. I hope you will tell someone about God and His love today.

– Bob La Forge

*Suggested Bible Reading*

John 1:1-18

Friday, January 12

## God's Peace

You are feeling content. Then you have an argument with your friend, and you become upset. Or you turn on the TV news and start to worry about the bad things happening in the world. Or maybe you start your day thinking about God and His blessings. But later at work, you have problems and feel that you are a failure.

Our emotions can go from peaceful to discontented very quickly. Paul talks about this in Philippians 4:7. ***“And because you belong to Christ Jesus, God’s peace will stand guard over all your thoughts and feelings. His peace can do this far better than our human minds.”***

When we start having negative thoughts or become worried, we need to give these thoughts and worries to God. As Christians, we are God’s children. He is willing to guard us against bad thoughts. Then He will replace these bad thoughts with His peace. Our lives will become calm, and we will feel more contented.

Maybe you will face situations today that cause you to have negative thoughts and emotions. Give these to God, and He will fill you with His wonderful peace.

– Bonnie Hall

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Philippians 4:5-9

Saturday, January 13

## Poured Out

Before I brush my teeth, I pour mouthwash into the plastic top from the bottle. I set it carefully on the bathroom counter. One morning my hand hit the plastic top and mouthwash poured out onto the counter. I didn’t spill the mouthwash on purpose. It was an accident.

The night before Jesus was crucified, He shared a meal with his twelve disciples. Jesus took some bread, broke it and told His disciples that the bread was His body. Then Jesus took a cup of wine and gave it to the disciples. In Matthew 26:28, Jesus told them about the wine. ***“This wine is my blood, which will be poured out to forgive the sins of many and begin the new agreement from God to his people.”***

The very next day, Jesus did exactly what He said He would do! Jesus was hung on a cross. Blood poured out of His body. Jesus sacrificed His life for us so that our sins can be forgiven. This didn’t happen by accident. Jesus gave up His life on purpose for you and me. Because of this, we can have forgiveness and live forever with Him.

Think about Jesus’ death today. And thank Him that He died on purpose for you!

– Suzanne Austin-Hill

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Matthew 26:26-30

Sunday, January 14

# Adam

In chapters 1 and 2 of Genesis, we learn that God made Adam. Genesis 2:7 tells us about Adam. ***“Then the Lord God took dust from the ground and made a man. He breathed the breath of life into the man’s nose, and the man became a living thing.”*** After that, God made Eve. He made Adam and Eve to be the first man and woman to live on the earth. I believe this really happened. But some people I know say that this is just a made-up story to teach us about good and bad.

I believe that all of the Bible is true, so I believe that the story about Adam and Eve is true. Another reason I believe this story is true is because men who wrote the Bible believed it. Paul believed it. He talked about Adam several times in his letters to churches. Luke believed it, too. In his book about Jesus, Luke listed Adam as one of Jesus’ ancestors. Paul and Luke believed that Adam and Eve really lived.

Because the Bible is true, we need to pay attention to it. The stories in the Bible teach us about God and show us how to live. When we read about Adam and Eve, we learn that sin is terrible and that we should always obey God. I hope that you will pay attention to the Bible. It is true, and it is God’s Word for us today.

– Steve Husting

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 2:4b-9

Monday, January 15

# Eve

The first woman on earth was named Eve. Her husband, Adam, gave her that name because she would be the mother of everyone who ever lived. God did not want Adam to be alone. God wanted Adam to have a companion and helper in life.

Genesis 2:21-22 tells us that God created Eve from one of Adam’s ribs. ***“So the Lord God caused the man to sleep very deeply. While he was asleep, God took one of the ribs from the man’s body. Then he closed the man’s skin where the rib had been. The Lord God used the rib from the man to make a woman. Then he brought the woman to the man.”***

Adam and Eve were the first husband and wife. They lived in the special garden that God prepared for them. Their home must have been very beautiful! God provided food for them, and they had everything they wanted. Adam and Eve were also the first people to sin and disobey God. But even though they rebelled against God, He still took care of them. God even offered them a way to have their sins forgiven.

God’s plan for forgiveness is for you, too! He offers you forgiveness, salvation and eternal life through His Son, Jesus.

– Jo Krueger

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 2:20b-25

Tuesday, January 16

## Relationships

God designed people to have relationships with each other. When God created the world, everything was perfect for Adam. He walked and spoke with God. Adam was healthy and had plenty of good food to eat. But Genesis 2:20 tells us that something was missing from Adam's life. ***"The man gave names to all the tame animals, to all the birds in the air, and to all the wild animals. He saw many animals and birds, but he could not find a companion that was right for him."*** Adam needed to have a relationship with another person. So God created Eve and brought her to him.

God took care of Adam, and He takes care of us today. God could satisfy all of our needs directly. If we need food, God could drop a basket of fruit and vegetables onto our doorstep. God can meet all our needs, but usually it happens through our relationships with other people. When someone is in need, we are the ones who can give them food, clothes and a place to live. And when someone is lost, we can share the Good News about Jesus with them.

God will use you to show His love and grace to people around you. Allow Him to use you to help and serve others today.

– Bob La Forge

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 2:20b-25

Wednesday, January 17

## Two Trees

The Garden of Eden where Adam and Eve lived was a perfect place. God provided them with food, shelter and a promise of eternal life. God gave only one limitation to Adam and Eve. They were not to eat the fruit of the tree that would give them the knowledge about good and evil. God made it very clear that eating from this tree would bring the penalty of death. This tree was a visual reminder to trust and obey God.

Adam and Eve knew what they were supposed to do. The devil came and tempted Eve. Genesis 3:2-3 shows us that Eve knew God's rule. ***"The woman answered the snake, 'No, we can eat fruit from the trees in the garden. But there is one tree we must not eat from. God told us, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden. You must not even touch that tree, or you will die.'"***

When Adam and Eve sinned, that tree became a symbol of death. Many years later Jesus was crucified on a cross. To people in Jesus' time, a cross was a symbol of shame and death. But God took that symbol of death and changed it into a symbol of love and grace.

When we see a cross today, we don't have to think about death. We can think about God's wonderful grace and salvation.

– Joel Burkum

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 3:1-7

Thursday, January 18

## Fellowship with God

In the beginning, Adam and Eve had a wonderful relationship with God. The first few chapters of Genesis show us that God walked in the garden and talked with Adam and Eve. They had a close fellowship with God.

Then things changed! Adam and Eve sinned and disobeyed God. Genesis 3:8 tells us what happened next. ***“During the cool part of the day, the Lord God was walking in the garden. The man and the woman heard him, and they hid among the trees in the garden.”*** Why did Adam and Eve try to hide from God? Because they knew that they had disobeyed God.

Both Adam and Eve gave in to the devil’s temptation. God punished them for their disobedience. One of the punishments was that God threw Adam and Eve out of the beautiful garden. Adam and Eve’s relationship with God changed. They couldn’t talk and walk with Him in the garden any more.

It must have been wonderful to walk and talk with God. Even though I am not in the Garden of Eden today, I can still have fellowship with God. He talks to me through His Word, the Bible. And I can communicate with Him through prayer. Make sure that you spend time fellowshiping with God today!

– Jo Krueger

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 3:8-19

Friday, January 19

## Victory through Jesus

Yesterday we learned that God punished Adam and Eve for their disobedience. He also punished the devil. Genesis 3:15 tells us part of God’s punishment for the devil. ***“I will make you and the woman enemies to each other. Your children and her children will be enemies. You will bite her child’s foot, but he will crush your head.”***

That verse is a prophecy. It is talking about something that would happen in the future. Many years later this prophecy was fulfilled when Jesus died on the cross. But Jesus did not stay dead. Three days later He arose. Jesus defeated the devil.

When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, sin entered the world. Ever since then, people have suffered from disappointments and failures. We suffer today because of sin that is in the world. But God gave us victory over sin through Jesus. Some day Jesus will come to take His followers to live forever with Him. Then the devil will be forever defeated.

As Christians, we have victory over the devil. But we cannot defeat him alone. We need to depend on God’s help. When we obey God and rely on His Word, God will help us stand strong against the devil’s attacks. Celebrate your victory through Jesus today!

– Ruby Dunn White

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 3:8-24

Saturday, January 20

# The Best Plan

Yesterday we talked about the devil tempting Adam and Eve to sin. The devil tricked them into believing that they could know more than God knew. But Adam and Eve finally realized that the devil was lying to them.

Adam and Eve learned that God's plan was really the best. God wanted Adam and Eve and their descendants to live a perfect life and enjoy His blessings forever. But when Adam and Eve chose to disobey God, all that changed. Genesis 3:24 tells us what happened. ***"God forced the man to leave the garden. Then he put Cherub angels and a sword of fire at the entrance to the garden to protect it. The sword flashed around and around, guarding the way to the tree of life."***

Don't let the devil trick you like he tricked Adam and Eve. Remember that God has the best plan for your life. That plan is much better than any plan you could make. Don't let the devil persuade you to rebel against God's plan. Instead, depend on God to help you stand strong against the devil.

God loves you and wants you to live forever with Him. Keep your focus on God today. Trust His plan for your life.

– Gayle Thorn

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 3:8-24

Sunday, January 21

# Faithfulness

If I want to learn a new sport or skill, it is very important to learn the basics first. No one can become skilled at playing tennis or repairing cars without a good foundation of basic knowledge.

It is the same with our Christian life. We need to learn the basics and stay faithful to them. What are some of these basics? We should have a special time every day when we can study God's Word, pray and worship God. James talks about this in James 5:16. ***"So always tell each other the wrong things yo have done. Then pray for each other. Do this so that God can heal you. Anyone who lives the way God wants can pray, and great things will happen."***

We should also fellowship with other Christians who can encourage and help us. And we should look for opportunities to share the Good News about Jesus with our friends and neighbors. If we are faithful to do these basic things, we will become more like God.

When we study the Bible and pray, we learn more about God. When we worship, we come close to God. When we serve others, God will share more blessings with us. Be faithful to do these things and God will use you in greater ways for His glory!

– Bob La Forge

*Suggested Bible Reading*

James 5:13-20

Monday, January 22

## Heaven

John wrote the book of Revelation to share some important things with Christians. These are things that God revealed to him. John warned seven churches about avoiding sin and staying faithful to God. And John also shared a small glimpse of what heaven will be like.

John wrote about the beauty of heaven in Revelation 4:3. ***“The one sitting there was as beautiful as precious stones, like jasper and carnelian. All around the throne was a rainbow with clear colors like an emerald.”*** Wow! Heaven will be much more beautiful than anything we can imagine.

Nothing is more important than obeying and serving God. But if we obey and serve God, we may also suffer times of persecution and hate. Later in the book of Revelation, John talks about people who are praising God in heaven. These people had faced persecution and suffered terrible things because they served God.

In heaven we will receive our reward for staying faithful to Jesus. We will be with other Christians who have served God. And we will have eternity to praise and thank God for what He has done for us. Are you excited to think about living forever with God?

– Eileen C. Wood

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Revelation 4:1-11

Tuesday, January 23

## God's Comfort

Are you feeling discouraged today? God understands that we all become discouraged at times. But He doesn't want us to continue feeling discouraged and depressed. He wants to give us hope and encouragement.

John, chapter 14, is a great chapter to read when you are feeling discouraged or depressed. In that chapter, Jesus reminded His disciples that God knows all about our worries and sorrows. Jesus encouraged His disciples in John 14:1. ***“Jesus said, ‘Don't be troubled. Trust in God, and trust in me.’”***

Jesus knew that soon He would die, rise from the dead and then leave the earth. So He wanted His disciples to remember some of God's promises. First, Jesus wanted them to remember that God had promised to comfort His children. Jesus also wanted them to know that God had promised to take care of them and meet their needs. Finally, Jesus wanted to remind His disciples that God had promised to give them peace. These promises are for Christians today, too.

The next time you are feeling discouraged, tell God what is happening in your life. Tell Him how you feel. Then ask God to keep His promises of comfort, care and peace. He will give you the comfort and encouragement that you need.

– Gayle Thorn

*Suggested Bible Reading*

John 14:1-7

Wednesday, January 24

## Jesus Helps Us

Jesus and His followers were leaving the town of Jericho. A blind man named Bartimaeus was sitting by the road. Bartimaeus often sat there and asked people for money. When Bartimaeus heard that Jesus was walking by, he shouted and asked Jesus to help him. Some people told Bartimaeus to be quiet. But then he shouted to Jesus even more loudly.

Jesus heard Bartimaeus shouting and calling His name. He wanted to help the blind man. Mark 10:49 tells us what happened next. ***“Jesus stopped and said, ‘Tell him to come here.’ So they called the blind man and said, ‘You can be happy now. Stand up! Jesus is calling you.’”*** Bartimaeus stood up and ran to Jesus. Jesus asked him what he wanted. Bartimaeus told Jesus that he wanted to see again. Jesus healed Bartimaeus, and immediately he could see. Then he followed Jesus and His disciples.

Maybe you are like Bartimaeus. You have problems that need to be solved. Maybe you are sick or you have financial problems or your family members are fighting. God wants you to ask Him to help you. You can pray to God and ask Him for help. He will pay attention to your prayers and help you. Then be sure to thank God for helping you and answering your prayers!

– Donna J. Howard

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Mark 10:32-52

Thursday, January 25

## Do It!

Have you ever been on a trip and become lost? The best thing to do is to stop at a gas station or a restaurant and ask someone for directions. Maybe they will have a map and can show you exactly how to get to your destination. But you need to pay attention and follow their directions.

In the book of James, the writer says that we should do what God’s teaching says we should do. James 1:22-24 tells us what happens when we don’t obey God’s teachings. ***“Do what God’s teaching says; don’t just listen and do nothing. When you only sit and listen, you are fooling yourselves. Hearing God’s teaching and doing nothing is like looking at your face in the mirror and doing nothing about what you saw. You go away and immediately forget how bad you looked.”***

Sometimes we may read the Bible or watch a preacher. We go away and think, “Oh, that was nice.” But we don’t do anything about it. Instead, when God’s Word tells us to do something, we need to do it!

Pay attention to the Bible today. Maybe you need to change some things in your life. Or maybe you need to spend more time praying and talking to God. Read God’s Word and then do it!

– Bonnie Hall

*Suggested Bible Reading*

James 1:19-27

Friday, January 26

## Cain's Choice

Genesis tells us about two sons of Adam and Eve. One son was named Abel. He was a shepherd. The other son was named Cain, and he was a farmer. When it was time to bring an offering to God, Abel brought the best sheep from his flock. The Bible says that God was pleased with Abel's offering.

Cain brought an offering to God, too. His offering was some of the food that he grew. Genesis 4:5 tells us how God felt about Cain's offering. ***"But he did not accept Cain and his offering. Cain was sad because of this, and he became angry."*** Cain let his anger control him, and later he killed his brother, Abel.

The Bible does not tell us why God did not accept Cain's offering. But we do know that Cain did not obey God. It seems that God had given Cain and Abel some instructions about offerings, and Cain did not do what God said.

Cain made a choice to disobey God. Every day we have choices to make, too. We can choose to obey God and His Word, or we can choose to be like Cain and disobey God. I hope you will choose to obey God today. If you do, He will be pleased with you!

– *Anonymous*

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 4:1-16

Saturday, January 27

## Enoch

Genesis, chapter 5, lists some of the descendants of Adam. One man mentioned is Enoch. Genesis 5:24 tells us about Enoch. ***"One day Enoch was walking with God, and he disappeared. God took him."*** Hebrews 11:5 tells us about Enoch, too. This verse says God took Enoch because he had faith.

Enoch walked with God. Maybe Enoch really walked with God like Adam and Eve did in the garden. We do not know for sure. Some Bible versions translate these words, "Enoch pleased God." Enoch must have been a very good man. And he must have had a close relationship with God. Enoch did not have to face death. God just took him from the earth.

It is very important that we please God. We please God when we obey Him. But before we can obey Him, we need to know what He wants us to do. We learn this by studying the Bible. In the Bible we can learn about other people who pleased God. We should follow their example of faith and obedience.

Take time today to look for ways that you can please God. Praise Him, pray to Him and share His love with everyone you meet.

– *Jo Krueger*

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 5:24,29

Sunday, January 28

## Oldest Person

Yesterday we learned about Enoch who walked with God. Today we will talk about his son, Methuselah. Methuselah was the grandfather of Noah. But Genesis 5:27 tells us something even more interesting about Methuselah. ***“So Methuselah lived a total of 969 years; then he died.”***

The Bible tells us about many people and their ages, but Methuselah is the oldest person listed in the Bible. We learn from Genesis that Enoch and Noah obeyed God. But the Bible doesn't tell us much about Methuselah. Probably Methuselah followed God, too.

Jesus lived only 33 years on earth. The New Testament tells us just a few things about Jesus before the age of 30. Most of the information in the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John is about the last three years of Jesus' life. As John ends his Gospel, he says that if all the things Jesus did were written down, the world would not be big enough for all the books that would be written.

It doesn't matter how many years we live here on earth. What is important is *how* we live. I hope you are obeying God and walking with Him today.

– Diana French

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 5:3-32

Monday, January 29

## Surrender to God

People who are in college sometimes take classes that are very challenging. I know a college professor who always encouraged his students to try hard to succeed in his classes. He would tell his students, “Don't do this class halfheartedly. It requires all your effort!”

Following God requires all our effort, too. One time Jesus was talking with an expert of the Jewish law. This man wanted to know how to have eternal life. Jesus asked the man what he thought he should do to have eternal life. In Luke 10:27 we read the man's reply. ***“The man answered, Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.’ Also, Love your neighbor the same as you love yourself.”*** Jesus told the man that his answer was correct.

As Christians, we should love God with our whole heart, soul, mind and strength. Our goal should be complete dedication to God. We need to give God 100% of our effort. This means that we need to completely surrender our lives to Him!

Surrendering your life to God means that you have a true dedication to Him and His Word. Be sure to live every day obeying God and serving Him.

– Lynette H. Denton

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Luke 10:25-29

Tuesday, January 30

## The Party

Imagine that you are planning a really great party. You have sent invitations to all your friends, bought lots of food and finished decorating. Then you find out that none of your friends are coming to your party. What would you do? Cancel the party? No way! Instead of canceling the party you go into your neighborhood and invite everyone you see. You fill your house with guests and have a great time!

The people who did not accept your invitation are not really your friends. Those people who came to your party are your true friends. It is the same with God and people in the world. God has invited everyone to His great party in heaven. That will be a wonderful party that will last forever.

Jesus told His followers about that great party. In Matthew 22:14 he shared the sad truth about that party. ***“Yes, many people are invited. But only a few are chosen.”*** God wants everyone in the world to accept His offer of salvation. But only a few people will truly live for Him.

God has invited you to His great party in heaven. It will happen when Jesus comes back to earth. That could happen any day! I hope you have accepted God’s invitation to live forever with Him.

– Gayle Thorn

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Matthew 22:1-14

Wednesday, January 31

## Pain

People who have gone through hip replacement surgery know that it is a very expensive process. The new hip costs a lot and then there are doctors’ fees and hospital charges. And there can be a lot of pain that follows this kind of surgery.

Every person in the world suffers some kind of pain. It may be physical pain after a surgery or illness. It may be the loss of a loved one. It may be daily struggles to pay the bills. Or it may be family relationships that are broken.

Jesus felt sorry for the crowds of people who came to him. Many were physically sick. Many just needed someone to lead them. In Matthew 11:28-29, Jesus offered rest to people in pain. ***“Come to me all of you who are tired from the heavy burden you have been forced to carry. I will give you rest. Accept my teaching. Learn from me. I am gentle and humble in spirit. And you will be able to get some rest.”***

We will all have to go through some kind of pain in life. But Jesus offers to help us. He will give us His strength and peace to help us face our struggles. Trust Jesus and depend on Him today.

– Robert Segress

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Matthew 11:25-30

Thursday, February 1

## Changed

An artist painted a picture of Jesus as He appeared to His disciples after His resurrection. Everyone who saw the painting thought it was wonderful. But the artist said that she wanted to re-paint some parts of it. The people who had seen the painting begged her not to change anything. But the artist went ahead and changed the painting. The result was an even more wonderful and realistic painting.

Sometimes we look at ourselves. We think about the times we have failed again and again. Some people I know call themselves “God’s dirt balls”! But God doesn’t want us to think that way. God not only forgives us — He changes us and makes us better.

One time some men brought a crippled man to Jesus. Jesus forgave the man’s sins and healed him. Mark 2:12 tells us what happened. ***“Immediately the paralyzed man stood up. He picked up his mat and walked out of the room. Everyone could see him. They were amazed and praised God. They said, This is the most amazing thing we have ever seen!”***

That man was truly changed by his experience with Jesus. As Christians, God is with us and changing us every day — making us better. Remember that God loves you and is working in your life today!

– Bob La Forge

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Mark 2:1-12

Friday, February 2

## Disappointment

God created a beautiful world. Everything in the world was wonderful. Then Adam and Eve chose to disobey God, and sin entered the world. Adam and Eve’s descendants became more and more sinful. These people thought about evil things all the time.

At the time Noah lived, the world have become a very wicked place. God was very disappointed with the people on earth. Genesis 6:7 tells us what God decided to do. ***“So the Lord said, I will destroy all the people I created on the earth. I will destroy every person and every animal and everything that crawls on the earth. And I will destroy all the birds in the air, because I am sorry that I have made them.”*** That is very sad! But the next verse tells us something very important. God was pleased with Noah. So God decided to save Noah and his family and some of the animals on the earth.

Sometimes we read the Bible, and then we ignore what we read. Other times we do not pay attention to the preacher or teacher at church. When we do those things, God must be disappointed in us. But God still loves us and wants us to change and follow Him with all of our heart.

Don’t disappoint God. Depend on Him and His Word today.

– Jolly Herbert

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 6:1-18

Saturday, February 3

## God is Good

Some people tell me that God is not good. They do not understand some of the things God has done. Yesterday we talked about God's disappointment. The earth was full of very bad people. Finally, God decided to destroy the bad people so the earth would not become worse and worse. God was not happy to do this. It made Him very sad!

God did not become angry with people and send the flood right away. He gave the people time to repent and follow Him. But the people did not change their hearts. Noah was the only man on earth who pleased God. Noah and his family were the only people saved from the flood. Genesis 7:1 tells us what God said to Noah. ***“Then the Lord said to Noah, I have seen that you are a good man, even among the evil people of this time. So gather your family, and all of you go into the boat.”***

Some people may not understand why God destroyed the earth with a flood. But we can be sure that God is all-knowing and wise. He always chooses to do the right things at the right time.

Always remember that God is good. He has done many wonderful things for you and me. Take time today to praise Him and thank Him!

– Steve Husting

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 6:19-7:23

Sunday, February 4

## Mount Ararat

Yesterday we learned about the great flood that covered the earth. Noah, his family and many animals were saved in the boat. It rained for many days. Then God sent a wind to dry up the earth. Genesis 8:3-4 tells us what happened to the boat. ***“The water that covered the earth began to go down. After 150 days the water was low enough that the boat touched land again. The boat stopped on one of the mountains of Ararat. This was the 17th day of the seventh month.”***

The boat landed on one of the mountains in Ararat. This area is part of eastern Turkey today. Many people over the past two hundred years have tried to locate Noah's boat. Some people thought that they had found the boat only to discover that they had seen shadows formed by the ice and snow. Today that area of Turkey is restricted, and no more expeditions are allowed to search for the boat.

It does not matter that people have not been able to find the boat. We can believe what the Bible says and learn from it. The story about Noah teaches us that God will bless and take care of people who follow and obey Him. God does that for us today. Be faithful like Noah, and God will bless your life and take care of you!

– Jo Krueger

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 7:24-8:19

Monday, February 5

## Rainbow

One time I was driving when a severe thunderstorm appeared. As we crossed a big river, we felt like we would be blown over the side of the bridge. The winds were strong; the rain was hard. It was a really bad storm, and I was a little scared.

The rain was hitting my windshield so hard I could not see. Cars were slowing down on the highway. The sky was dark, and the lightning was bright. The storm lasted for about thirty minutes, and then it became calm and the sun started shining again. Soon we saw the most wonderful rainbow I have ever seen. It was bright and huge! It stretched far across the sky.

After Noah and his family came out of the boat, God put a rainbow in the sky. In Genesis 9:16, God gave us His promise. ***“When I look and see the rainbow in the clouds, I will remember the agreement that continues forever. I will remember the agreement between me and every living thing on the earth.”***

When I saw that beautiful rainbow, it was a reminder of God’s promise. I need to always remember that God is with me and knows what is best for my life.

– Joe Mathis

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 9:1-17

Tuesday, February 6

## Get in Shape (1)

Everywhere you look today, you can see exercise equipment, diet plans and special foods to help you get in shape. Today and for the next few days we will talk about some important steps to help a person get into good physical shape. And we will compare these steps to things that can help us get in shape spiritually, too.

If a person wants to get in shape, it is important that they set some goals. Maybe they want to lose 30 pounds, or only eat certain kinds of foods or be able to do 50 sit-ups. Thinking about these goals every day will help them stay focused on getting into shape.

It is the same with being spiritually fit. We need to set some goals to help us be closer to God. Maybe one goal could be reading through the Bible in a year or having a special time of prayer every day. Another goal might be to take time every day to think about Jesus and what He did on earth. Hebrews 12:3 talks about this. ***“Think about Jesus. He patiently endured the angry insults that sinful people were shouting at him. Think about him so that you won’t get discouraged and stop trying.”***

Do you want to be closer to God? Set some goals. Write them down so you can see them every day. And ask God to help you become spiritually fit.

– Jennifer Forrester

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Hebrews 12:1-6

Wednesday, February 7

## Get in Shape (2)

“What should I eat so I can get in shape?” People will give you many different answers to that question. Some will say that you need to eat only fruits and vegetables. Others will say that you should cut out all fats and carbohydrates. And yet others will tell you that you have to eat the special foods that they sell. It is very important to eat the right foods if you want to be physically fit. What goes into your body will affect how you look and feel.

If we want to be spiritually fit, we need to make sure that we “feed” on God’s Word. That means we need to read and study the Bible every day. Putting God’s words into our minds will help us serve Him better. Paul talks about that in Philippians 4:8.

***“Brothers and sisters, continue to think about what is good and worthy of praise. Think about what is true and honorable and right and pure and beautiful and respected.”*** This may also mean that we need to remove some things from our lives that cause us to have bad thoughts.

Fill your mind with good spiritual “food” today. Depend on God and His Word to help you live a pure life.

– Jennifer Forrester

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Philippians 4:5-9

Thursday, February 8

## Get in Shape (3)

Exercise! Some people love to exercise, and others hate to even think about doing a few push-ups. But whether we like it or not, exercise is an important part of getting in shape physically. Sometimes exercise can be painful, but the end result of getting in shape is worth the pain.

We need to do some spiritual exercises if we want to get in shape spiritually. What are some spiritual exercises? One spiritual exercise is to allow the Holy Spirit to develop Godly characteristics in our lives. In Galatians 5:22-23, Paul calls these characteristics “the fruit that the Spirit produces.”

***“But the fruit that the Spirit produces in a person’s life is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these kinds of things.”***

Another spiritual exercise is to serve God. This happens when we show love and kindness to others. We can paint the church building, help lead a worship service, take care of children in the church nursery, prepare a meal for a sick person or visit someone in prison. These acts of service will help us get in shape spiritually.

Look for ways to do some spiritual exercises today!

– Jennifer Forrester

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Galatians 5:22-26

Friday, February 9

## Get in Shape (4)

If you are trying to get in shape, it is very important that you have an accountability partner. An accountability partner is someone who helps you meet your goals. Maybe they will remind you to avoid eating the wrong kinds of food. Or maybe they will exercise with you and encourage you to get into shape.

It is the same with becoming spiritually fit. Christians need other Christians. If you are facing times of persecution, another Christian will be able to encourage and comfort you. If you are struggling with giving up a sinful habit, a Christian brother or sister can share Bible verses with you that will strengthen you. And if you are sad and lonely, another Christian can help you see God's plan for your life.

When the Apostle Paul wrote letters to churches, he always reminded them to work together and to encourage one another. Paul talked about that in 1 Thessalonians 5:11. ***“So encourage each other and help each other grow stronger in faith, just as you are already doing.”***

I hope you have a Christian friend who encourages you to get in shape physically. Praise God for that special person!

– Jennifer Forrester

*Suggested Bible Reading*

1 Thessalonians 5:8b-11

Saturday, February 10

## Get in Shape (5)

In the last few devotions we have talked about setting goals, eating the right foods, exercising and finding an accountability partner. Today we will talk about asking God to help us as we get in shape.

As Christians, we need to pray about all areas of our lives. If we are changing our diet or adding a new exercise routine, we need to pray about that. We should pray and ask for God's help in accomplishing our goal of becoming physically fit.

We need God's help to get in shape spiritually, too. Paul reminds us about this in Ephesians 6:18. ***“Pray in the Spirit at all times. Pray with all kinds of prayers, and ask for everything you need. To do this you must always be ready. Never give up. Always pray for all of God's people.”***

In that verse, Paul teaches us several things about prayer. We need to pray throughout the day, and we need to pray all kinds of prayers — prayers of thanks, prayers of praise and prayers that ask for help. Also, we must have an attitude of prayer all the time. And, we must never give up praying to God.

Ask God to help you become a stronger Christian and serve Him better every day.

– Jennifer Forrester

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Ephesians 6:13-20

Sunday, February 11

## Tower of Babel

After God sent the flood to destroy people, Noah's family began to grow. Noah's sons had children, and then their children had children. After a while, there were many people again. But those people did not spread over the earth. Instead, they all lived in the same place.

These people became very proud of themselves. They realized they could do many things. Genesis 11:4 tells us what they decided to do. ***"Then the people said, 'Let's build ourselves a city and a tower that will reach to the sky. Then we will be famous. This will keep us together so that we will not be scattered all over the earth.'"*** This tower is often called the tower of Babel.

God saw that the people were proud. He knew that if they continued doing what they were doing, they would become more proud. They would depend on their own power and forget God. So God caused them to speak different languages and to spread all over the earth.

God does not want us to be proud. He does not want us to depend on our own power. God wants us to depend on Him. Remember that our power can fail, but God's power will never fail.

– Matt Keller

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 10:32-11:10

Monday, February 12

## God's Promise

We can be happy because Jesus came to save us from our sins. This happiness that we have in Jesus is for all people. God loves all the people in the world so much that He planned good things for us even before He made the world.

But the devil has other plans for us. He wants to destroy us. The devil thought he succeeded when Adam and Eve disobeyed God and had to leave the garden. But God promised to send a Savior for them — and for us, too. And God promised to destroy the devil.

Abram (later called Abraham) was a man who loved and obeyed God. One day God made a promise to Abram. We can read what God told Abram in Genesis 12:2. ***"I will build a great nation from you. I will bless you and make your name famous. People will use your name to bless other people."*** God's promise was a prophecy about Jesus. Many years later Jesus would come to earth and die on the cross. Because of Jesus' death, every person can have salvation.

The Bible has many prophecies about a Savior that would come into the world. These prophecies were fulfilled when Jesus came to live on earth. He is our Savior and Lord. Thank God for Jesus today!

– Opal Cochran

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 12:1-8

Tuesday, February 13

## Haran

Yesterday we talked about Abram. He and his family moved from Ur to the city of Haran. Probably Abram and his family were satisfied to live in Haran. But God did not want Abram to stay there. God told Abram to move to another place. Genesis 12:4 tells us what Abram did. ***“So Abram left Haran just like the Lord said, and Lot went with him. Abram was 75 years old when he left Haran.”*** This was where God wanted Abram to live.

Sometimes my spiritual life is a lot like Abram’s travels. I try to improve my relationship with God. I read the Bible and pray every day. But then I become satisfied with my spiritual life. I do the same things over and over again. But that is not what God wants me to do.

Finally I realize that God wants me to move on and improve my spiritual life. So I start once again to learn more about God from His Word. I try to find ways I can serve God in better ways.

Abram arrived in Canaan — that’s where God wanted him to be. Someday I will be where God wants me to be — living forever with Him in heaven. But until that time, I will continue to follow where God leads me.

– Beverly Eliason

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 11:27-12:8

Wednesday, February 14

## Kindness

Parents teach their children to be kind. “Share your toys.” “Let other people be first.” “Always say ‘please’ and ‘thank you.’” It is important for Christians to show kindness to others.

When I think about kindness, I think about Abram. Abram and his nephew, Lot, moved to Canaan. The land could not support all the animals that Abram and Lot had. So Abram and Lot decided to separate their flocks. Abram was kind to Lot. Abram let Lot choose which land he wanted. Lot chose the best land in the valley with lots of water. That meant Abram and his flocks had to stay in the hills.

But God blessed Abram for his kindness to Lot. In Genesis 13:15-17 God told Abram how He would bless him. ***“All this land that you see I will give to you and your people who live after you. This will be your land forever. I will make your people so many that they will be like the dust of the earth. If people could count all the particles of dust on earth, they could count your people. So go. Walk through your land. I now give it to you.”*** God blessed Abram with much land and many descendants. The place where Lot chose was full of sinful people. Lot faced many problems because of his choice.

God will bless you for your kindness, too. Start today and be kind to someone at work, home or school.

– Jo Krueger

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 13:2-18

Thursday, February 15

## Faithful Christian

I knew a woman who was a faithful Christian. She worked all her life as a nurse. She became sick and was in hospice care. Even during this time, she showed others that she loved and served God. When she died, she left her body to medical science so that medical students could learn more about the human body.

There have been many people throughout history who have remained faithful to God. Hebrews, chapter 11, lists some of these people who loved and served God. Hebrews 11:1 talks about true faithfulness. ***"Faith is what makes real the things we hope for. It is proof of what we cannot see."***

You probably have read about many of the people listed in Hebrews 11 — Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Gideon, Samson, David and many more. None of these Old Testament people was perfect. But God used all of these faithful people to accomplish His plan.

God wants to use you today. Maybe He will use you to lead others to Jesus. Maybe God will use you to teach children about Him. Or maybe He will use you to bless the lives of other people. Be a faithful Christian and let God use you today.

– Cathy Garvin

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Hebrews 11:1-10

Friday, February 16

## God's Power

Many people like to wear a watch so they can know what time it is. Some watches are very expensive. These watches are made by very skilled watchmakers and contain many small parts.

Suppose that I took all the parts from an expensive watch and threw them up in the air. When the parts hit the ground, would they all come together as a watch again? No! Putting a watch together requires someone who is very skilled at making watches.

It is the same with our world. Some people want us to believe that the world just happened. But that is not true. All the wonderful things in creation show us that they didn't happen by accident. Our beautiful world is here because God put it all together and made it for us.

When I look up into the sky on a beautiful day, I can see that God created the world. The writer of Psalm 19:1 talked about that. ***"The heavens tell about the glory of God. The skies announce what his hands have made."***

As you look around at the world today, notice the colorful flowers, the variety of birds and animals and the different types of people that God made. Then praise Him and give Him glory!

– Lynette H. Denton

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Psalm 19:1-4

Saturday, February 17

## Perfect Parent

Think about your parents. Are your parents perfect? If you have children, are you a perfect parent? Most parents try to always be loving, patient and understanding. But no parent is perfect all the time.

My parents are not perfect either. But I thank God that I have one special parent who is always loving, always patient and always understanding. This “perfect parent” is always right, will always pay attention to me and is always there to help me. Even when our human parents fail us, we can always rely on this perfect parent.

Who is our perfect parent? God, our heavenly Father! In 2 Corinthians 6:18 Paul tells us God’s words from the Old Testament. ***“I will be your father, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord All-Powerful.”*** God wants to take care of us and be our perfect parent.

How can you have God as your perfect parent? Tell Him that you have sinned and that you are sorry. Decide to change your life and live for Him every day. Believe in God’s Son, Jesus, and obey His teachings in the Bible.

God is my wonderful heavenly Father. I hope He is your Father, too!

– Gayle Thorn

*Suggested Bible Reading*

2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1

Sunday, February 18

## A Window

If I am in a room without windows, I don’t know if the sun is shining or if it is raining. But if I look out a window, I can see the world outside. I can see God’s creation and know what is happening with the weather.

The Bible is like a window. When we read it, we can look back and see the creation of the world, the boat that saved people and animals from the flood, the Israelites as they came out of slavery in Egypt, the shepherd boy who became a king, the prophets, Jesus and the apostles and the early church leaders.

As Christians, the Holy Spirit helps us see many other things in the Bible. These things cannot be seen by people who do not follow Jesus. Paul talks about this in 1 Corinthians 2:10. ***“But God has shown us these things through the Spirit. The Spirit knows all things. The Spirit even knows the deep secrets of God.”***

The Holy Spirit will help us see people in the world who need to know about Jesus. God’s Spirit will also help us look forward to heaven and see the wonderful blessings God has waiting for His children. Read God’s Word and allow the Holy Spirit to help you love and serve God.

– Bob La Forge

*Suggested Bible Reading*

1 Corinthians 2:6-16

Monday, February 19

# Hope

A person who is alone and depressed may be worried, discouraged, hopeless and afraid. Those words certainly describe a woman named Hagar.

Abram's wife, Sarai, had an Egyptian slave named Hagar. Sarai gave Hagar to Abram, and Hagar became pregnant with Abram's son. This made Hagar feel that she was better than Sarai. Sarai became jealous, and she was cruel to Hagar. So Hagar ran away.

In Genesis 16:13, God talked to Hagar and told her He would take care of her and her son. ***"The Lord talked to Hagar. She began to use a new name for God. She said to him, 'You are God Who Sees Me.' She said this because she thought, 'I see that even in this place God sees me and cared for me!'"*** Hagar understood that God cared for her. God gave her hope again.

Maybe you are depressed today. You are feeling discouraged and hopeless and filled with worry and fear. God does not want you to be burdened with those things. Instead, God wants you to know that you can always find hope and peace when you love and trust Him.

Be like Hagar. Remember that God loves you and wants to take care of you today and every day.

– Gayle Thorn

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 16:1-16

Tuesday, February 20

# God All-Powerful

Yesterday we talked about Hagar. Abram had a son by Hagar. The son was named Ishmael. But Ishmael was not the son that God had promised to Abram and Sarai. Years later, God spoke to Abram. Genesis 17:1-2 tells us that God made an agreement with Abram. ***"When Abram was 99 years old, the Lord appeared to him. He said, 'I am God All-Powerful. Obey me and live the right way. If you do this, I will prepare an agreement between us. I will promise to make your people a great nation.'"***

In the Old Testament we can read many different names for God. These names often described one of God's characteristics or told about something that He had done. The name used in Genesis, chapter 17, for God is El Shaddai, which means "God All-Powerful." This name refers to God as the One who supplies all our needs — just like a mother takes care of her children. Several years later, God gave Abram and Sarai a son named Isaac. This happened because of God's great power.

That same God who provided for Abram, will provide for you today, too. If you love God, obey Him and serve Him, He will take care of your daily needs and give you more blessings than you can imagine!

– Bonnie Hall

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 17:1-27

Wednesday, February 21

## Promises

I have a friend who does not have a clothes dryer in her house. So she hangs her clothes outside on a clothesline to dry. She says she loves the fresh smell of clothes that have dried in the sun.

One wash day, it was cloudy and gloomy outside. My friend watched the weatherman on TV. He predicted that it would be a sunny day. So my friend ignored the gray clouds and hung her clothes outside. The weatherman's prediction was correct, and the clothes dried in the sun.

A weatherman's predictions don't always come true, but we can trust all of God's promises to come true. God changed Abram and Sarai's names to Abraham and Sarah. Then God promised them they would have a son, even though they were very old. Genesis 18:12 tells us how Sarah reacted to God's promise. ***"So she laughed to herself and said, 'I am old, and my husband is old. I am too old to have a baby.'"*** Sarah did not believe that God would give her and Abraham a son. But God kept His promise and soon their son, Isaac, was born.

Study the Bible and learn about God's promises to you. Remember that God loves you and always keeps His promises. You can trust God to do what He says.

– Catherine Bratten

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 18:1-15

Thursday, February 22

## God and Abraham

Lot was Abraham's nephew. Lot lived in the city of Sodom. Sodom and the neighboring city of Gomorrah were filled with many wicked people. So God wanted to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. But Abraham was concerned about what would happen to Lot.

Abraham talked with God. He asked God to save the cities if 50 good people could be found there. God agreed to that. But Abraham knew that there were not that many good people. So he started to plead with God. Would God save the cities for 45 good people? For 40 good people? For 30 good people? For 20 good people?

In Genesis 18:32 we learn that Abraham begged God one last time. ***"Then Abraham said, 'Lord, please don't be angry with me, but let me bother you this one last time. If you find ten good people there, what will you do?' The Lord said, 'If I find ten good people in the city, I will not destroy it.'"***

God could not find ten good people in Sodom and Gomorrah. God rescued Lot and his family, but He destroyed the two cities. This Bible story shows us that God is fair and loving. He will always answer our prayers in a way that is best for us and His kingdom.

– Angeline Skjold

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 18:16-33

Friday, February 23

## Warning!

A violent hurricane was coming. The police warned people to leave their homes and move to a safe place. People obeyed the warning. They packed their bags and drove to a safe place inland. They stayed until the hurricane passed and it was safe to return home.

Many times in history God has warned people about His coming judgment. Sometimes people partially obeyed God. Others were stubborn and ignored God's warnings. But the wise people paid attention to God's words and followed His instructions.

God planned to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. But first He sent two angels to warn Lot and his family. Genesis 19:13 tells us what the angels said to Lot. ***"We are going to destroy this city. The Lord heard how evil this city is, so he sent us to destroy it."*** Lot gathered his family and they left the city of Sodom. The angels told them to not stop and to not look back. But as they were leaving, Lot's wife looked back at the city. She was changed into a block of salt.

God's warnings in the Bible are for our protection. We should not ignore them or only obey some of them. God's instructions for us are very clear. Pay attention to His Word today!

– Diane Crosby

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 19:1-29

Saturday, February 24

## Go to Jesus

I watched a little boy who was playing with his favorite truck. His head was bent down, and he was shaking the truck from side to side. I walked closer, and I could see that the truck had broken into many pieces.

When the little boy's mother saw the problem, she ran to him. The little boy had tears in his eyes as he told his mother he was sure the truck could not be fixed. But his mother said that his father would look at it later. When the boy's father came home, he searched through his tool box to find just the right tools to mend the truck.

One time Jesus met a man named Jairus whose daughter was sick. The man asked Jesus to heal his daughter. As they were going to Jairus' house, they met someone who said that the man's daughter had died. Luke 8:50 tells us what Jesus said. ***"Jesus heard this and said to Jairus, 'Don't be afraid! Just believe and your daughter will be well.'"*** Jairus trusted Jesus, and He made Jairus' daughter well again.

Sometimes things can become broken in our lives. We may become sick, or we may have money problems or someone we love may die. That's when we need to go to Jesus. He always knows how to comfort us and help us face our problems. Turn to Jesus for help today!

– Bonnie Hall

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Luke 8:40-56

Sunday, February 25

## Be An Example

Timothy was a young preacher. Maybe some older men in his church thought that Timothy was too young to be a leader. Paul wrote to Timothy and encouraged him to be faithful and to continue serving God.

We find Paul's advice to Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:12. ***"You are young, but don't let anyone treat you as if you are not important. Be an example to show the believers how they should live. Show them by what you say, by the way you live, by your love, by your faith, and by your pure life."*** Paul encouraged Timothy to live in a way that showed his faith in God. By doing this, Timothy would be the leader God wanted him to be.

Being a Christian means that you should always do the things God wants you to do. Examine your life. Ask yourself these questions: Am I living for God at home, at school, at work, at the mall or when I am driving? Do I live for God every day of the week and not just on Sunday? Am I doing what God wants me to do?

The best way to lead other people to Jesus is to be an example for them. Your true faith, your communication and your actions will show others that you love and serve God. Be an example for Him today!

– Gayle Thorn

*Suggested Bible Reading*

1 Timothy 4:1-16

Monday, February 26

## Be Ready

You have probably read stories about weddings that are delayed because a member of the wedding party is late. Sometimes the bride and groom do not wait. They go on with the wedding without the person who is late.

Jesus told His followers a story about a wedding. Ten girls were waiting for the bridegroom to arrive. It was nighttime, so these girls took their oil lamps with them. Five of the girls took extra oil with them, and five did not. They waited and waited. Finally at midnight, someone announced that the bridegroom was coming. The five girls with extra oil were able to take their lamps and go to the wedding. The other five girls had to go buy more oil. While they were gone, the bridegroom came and they missed the wedding.

Jesus told this story to help us understand that we should always be ready for Him to return. When Jesus returns, He will take His followers to live with Him forever. Matthew 25:13 tells us what Jesus wants us to do. ***"So always be ready. You don't know the day or the time when the Son of Man will come."***

Jesus could come today or tomorrow or next week. Are you ready to live with Him forever?

– Eileen C. Wood

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Matthew 25:1-13

Tuesday, February 27

# Trust in God

I know people who love to look through a department store catalog. They look at all the items for sale and make a long list of things that they would like to have. Some people think about prayer in the same way. When they pray, all they do is ask God to give them the things they want to have in life.

When we pray and ask God to give us things, we need to trust Him. Psalm 37:4-5 talks about that. ***“Enjoy serving the Lord, and he will give you whatever you ask for. Depend on the Lord. Trust in him, and he will help you.”*** The Bible is filled with examples of people like Noah, Abraham, Moses and David who trusted God to provide their needs.

God loves us and wants us to have good things. So does that mean He will give us everything we ask for? No! We need to trust God to give us things that are good for us and will help us grow spiritually. Sometimes we ask for things that will hurt us or keep us from serving God. Remember that God always knows what is best for us.

It’s okay to share your needs, your wants and your secret desires with God. But remember to trust that He will bless you with things that will help you faithfully serve Him every day.

– Robert Segress

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Psalm 37:4-11

Wednesday, February 28

# Abraham

Some people think that Abraham was the first prophet. God spoke to Abraham and told him many things. One thing God told Abraham was to move from his home in Ur and travel to a different place called Canaan. That place would later become the land of Israel.

Wherever Abraham went, God protected him. But Abraham did not always fully trust God to protect him. One time Abraham and Sarah traveled to a new place. Abraham was afraid that someone would take Sarah and kill him. Genesis 20:2 tells us what Abraham did. ***“Abraham told people that Sarah was his sister. King Abimelech of Gerar heard this. Abimelech wanted Sarah, so he sent some servants to take her.”*** Abraham wanted to do things his way instead of God’s way. But God helped Abraham and Sarah and kept them safe.

Later, Abraham learned to trust God completely. When God told Abraham to sacrifice his son, Isaac, Abraham trusted God to keep Isaac alive. Abraham knew that God would keep his promise to give Abraham many descendants through Isaac.

I hope you will trust God completely today. He loves you and will always be with you.

– Matt Keller

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 20:1-18

Thursday, March 1

## 100 Years Old

Abraham and his wife, Sarah, worshiped God. God told them to leave their home and move to a new land. Abraham and Sarah obeyed God. Abraham and Sarah liked their new home, but they were sad. Why? Because they did not have any children.

God spoke to Abraham and told him he would have a son. Abraham and Sarah waited and waited. Finally, Abraham and Sarah had a son. Genesis 21:5-7 tells us about Isaac's birth. ***"Abraham was 100 years old when his son, Isaac, was born. Sarah said, 'God has made me happy, and everyone who hears about this will be happy with me. No one thought that I, Sarah, would be able to have Abraham's child. But I have given Abraham a son, even though he is old.'"***

Wow! Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah was 90 years old when Isaac was born. Everything happened just as God had promised. This was a special blessing from God. It could only have happened through God's great power.

God always keeps His promises. When God says something will happen, it will happen. You can read God's many promises in the Bible. We cannot always depend on promises that people make. But we can always depend on God!

– Jo Krueger

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 21:1-21

Friday, March 2

## Faithful Father

Abraham had great faith in God. Often God tested Abraham's faith. Genesis 22:2 tells us about the hardest test of Abraham's faith. ***"Then God said, 'Take your son to the land of Moriah and kill your son there as a sacrifice for me. This must be Isaac, your only son, the one you love. Use him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains there. I will tell you which mountain.'"***

God promised Abraham that he would have a son. Yesterday we read that this son, Isaac, was born when Abraham was 100 years old. God also promised Abraham that he would have many descendants through Isaac. Then God told Abraham to kill Isaac and offer him as a sacrifice!

What did Abraham do? I am sure God's command did not make sense to Abraham. But he wanted to obey God. God had always blessed Abraham and kept His promises. That's why Abraham chose to obey God.

Because of his faith, Abraham prepared to do what God told him to do. At the very moment Abraham was ready to kill Isaac, God stopped him. Abraham was a very faithful father. Isaac was faithful, too. He obeyed his father through the whole experience. Both Abraham and Isaac are great examples for us to follow.

– Harold L. Noe

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 22:1-19

Saturday, March 3

## Burial Place

When Sarah was 127 years old, she died. The Bible tells us that Abraham was very sad and he cried for her. Abraham was not living in his homeland. He did not own land where he could bury Sarah.

Genesis 23:3-4 tells us what Abraham did. ***“Then he left his dead wife and went to talk to the Hittites. He said, I am only a foreigner staying in your country. I have no place to bury my wife. Please give me some land so that I can bury her.”***

The Hittites were very kind to Abraham. They offered to give him a place to bury Sarah. But Abraham refused. He wanted to pay full price to the owner of the land. So Abraham paid for the land and buried Sarah in a cave in a field. This land became Abraham’s property to use as a burial place.

Abraham loved God, and he loved Sarah. God took care of them and blessed them with their son, Isaac. Many years later, through Isaac’s family line, God’s son, Jesus, was born on earth. Abraham and Isaac were part of God’s plan to offer forgiveness and eternal life to every person who loves and obeys Him.

– Pam Davis

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 23:1-20

Sunday, March 4

## Faithful Servant

Abraham did not want his son, Isaac, to marry a woman from Canaan. He was afraid that a woman from Canaan would cause Isaac to stop following God. So Abraham wanted Isaac to marry a woman who followed God.

Abraham had a faithful servant. This servant was in charge of all that Abraham owned. Genesis 24:4 tells us what Abraham told his servant. ***“Go back to my country, to my own people, to find a wife for my son Isaac. Bring her here to him.”***

Abraham’s servant traveled to Abraham’s homeland. The servant prayed to God and asked Him to help him find the right wife for Isaac. God answered the servant’s prayer and showed him a woman named Rebekah. She was the woman who would become Isaac’s wife.

Abraham’s servant is an example of someone who trusted and obeyed God. The servant had a job to do, so he prayed about it. God helped him finish his job and be successful.

God will help us to do our jobs, too. We need to ask God to help us do our best at our jobs. God will bless us and help us be good witnesses for Him.

– Eileen C. Wood

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 24:1-9

Monday, March 5

# God's Blessings

Yesterday we learned that Abraham's servant found a wife for Isaac. Her name was Rebekah. She and Isaac had twin sons, Jacob and Esau. Esau was a skilled hunter. Jacob was a quiet man who stayed at home.

Esau was born first. That meant when his father died, he would be given half of his father's property. Esau would also become the new head of the family. The firstborn son had a place of honor in his family.

One day Jacob was cooking a pot of lentil beans. Esau came home from hunting. He was very tired and hungry. When he smelled the beans cooking, he asked Jacob to give him some. But Jacob was tricky. He told Esau that he would trade him some beans for his right as the firstborn son. Genesis 25:34 tells us what happened next. ***"Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil soup. Esau ate the food, had something to drink, and then left. So Esau showed that he did not care about his rights as the firstborn son."***

Esau did not care about the wonderful blessing of being the firstborn son. When we follow and obey Jesus, we become God's children. That is a wonderful blessing that we should cherish and honor. Thank God today that you are His child. Praise Him for the many blessings He shares with you.

– Donna J. Howard

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 25:19-34

Tuesday, March 6

# God is in Control

We all like to feel that we are important people. We like to be the person who decides which game to play, what restaurant we will eat at or which movie to watch. We want to be in control of our lives and to make all the big decisions.

The truth is that the One who is in control of all areas of our lives is God. We can't do anything or go anywhere unless God allows it. The prophet Jeremiah talked about God being in control in Lamentations 3:37-38. ***"No one can say something and make it happen, unless the Lord orders it. God Most High commands both good and bad things to happen."***

God is always working in our lives. He wants to be our teacher. He wants to lead us in the way He wants us to go. But sometimes we may choose not to obey God. Then God may allow us to do things that He knows are not good for us. God uses these experiences to help us grow spiritually and to learn to depend on Him more.

God is in control of your life. Are you paying attention to what He says in His Word, the Bible? Are you following Jesus' example of obedience and faith? Honor God and let Him be your Lord today!

– Gayle Thorn

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Lamentations 3:33-40

Wednesday, March 7

# Forgiveness

I watched two kittens playing. They seemed to enjoy playing with each other. But sometimes they would start to play rough with each other. Usually one kitten would then run away from the other kitten. But soon they would forget their fight and play together again.

At times we all have problems with other people. These differences can happen at home, at work or even at church. Maybe someone says something that hurts your feelings. Or a friend forgets to include you in their activities. God wants you to forgive these people and continue to love them.

Paul knew that forgiveness is an important part of being a Christian. When he wrote a letter to the Colossian Christians, he reminded them about forgiving each other. In Colossians 3:13 Paul told them what they should do. ***“Don’t be angry with each other, but forgive each other. If you feel someone has wronged you, forgive them. Forgive others because the Lord forgave you.”***

Jesus loves you. He died on the cross to forgive your sins. So remember that you should be loving and forgiving with others today.

– Linda Lamb

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Colossians 3:12-17

Thursday, March 8

# Pay Attention to Jesus

In Acts, chapter 9, we read about Saul, who was later called Paul. Saul was a Jew, and he did not believe that Jesus was God’s Son. So Saul did bad things to Christians and put them in jail.

One day Saul was traveling to the city of Damascus. He hoped to find some Christians and arrest them. As he was nearing the city, he saw a very bright light. Acts 9:4-5 tells us what happened next. ***“He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul! Why are you persecuting me?’ Saul said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ The voice answered, ‘I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting.’”***

Immediately Saul obeyed Jesus. He went into Damascus. There a man named Ananias helped Saul learn about Jesus. Saul was baptized and started following Jesus. He spent the rest of his life loving and serving God. That is an exciting story! Saul talked with Jesus. He was a witness to the fact that Jesus truly arose from the dead.

Jesus speaks to us today through His Word, the Bible. But someday we will live forever with Him. It will be exciting to talk to Jesus face-to-face. I am looking forward to that time. I hope you want to see Jesus, too!

– Donna J. Howard

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Acts 9:1-14

Friday, March 9

## God's Grace

Jonah was a disobedient prophet. God told him to go to the city of Nineveh. Nineveh was a very wicked city. God told Jonah to preach a message of repentance and salvation to the people in Nineveh.

But Jonah refused to obey God. He ran away on a ship. Then God caused a terrible storm to happen. A great fish swallowed Jonah. After Jonah repented, the fish spit him up on shore. Jonah 3:3 tells us what Jonah did. ***“So Jonah obeyed the Lord and went to Nineveh. It was a very large city. A person had to walk for three days to travel through it.”*** The people of Nineveh accepted Jonah's message and turned to God.

God shows His grace to people who follow Him and also to people who do not follow Him. When Jonah disobeyed God and ran away, God showed him His grace and gave him another chance. God also showed His grace to the wicked people in Nineveh. He shared His message through Jonah and gave the people a chance to repent of their sins.

God wants to show His grace to you today, too. He loves you and is willing to forgive you. Accept God's grace and obey Him today!

– Bob La Forge

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Jonah 3:1-10

Saturday, March 10

## Finding a Place

Abraham's son, Isaac, had trouble finding a place to live. When he tried to stay somewhere, the people there would fight with him. They wanted him to leave. Did Isaac ever find a place to live? Genesis 25:22 tells us about that. ***“Isaac moved from there and dug another well. No one came to argue about this well. So Isaac named it Rehoboth. He said, Now the Lord has found a place for us. We will grow and be successful in this place.”***

Maybe you feel like you can't find your “place” in life? Maybe you are not trying to find a place to live, like Isaac. Instead, you don't know what kind of job you should have. Or maybe you don't know what God wants you to do. Maybe you are frustrated because nothing seems to happen the way you plan.

Isaac didn't give up. When people forced him to move, he found a new place. Finally he found a place where he had peace. He found the place God wanted him to be.

When you have trouble finding your “place” in life, don't become angry or discouraged. Trust God. Keep trying to find your “place.” Keep trying to learn what God wants. If you trust Him, He will show you.

– Matt Keller

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 26:1-25

Sunday, March 11

## Do Not Hate

We have already learned about Isaac's sons, Jacob and Esau. They were twin brothers. Because Esau was the oldest son, he should have received a special blessing from his father.

But one day Jacob put on Esau's clothes. He prepared some meat for his father — just the way Isaac liked it. Then Jacob went to see his father. Isaac was old and almost blind. He gave Jacob the special blessing. Why? Because he thought he was blessing Esau. Jacob was wrong to trick his father.

When Esau learned that Jacob had received the special blessing, he was very angry. In Genesis 27:41 we learn how Esau felt. ***“After that Esau hated Jacob because of this blessing. Esau said to himself, ‘My father will soon die, and after we are finished with that, I will kill Jacob.’”*** Jacob ran away and the brothers did not see each other for many years. When they finally met again, Esau forgave Jacob.

Even when people do something wrong to us, we should forgive them. God does not want us to hate other people. God wants us to love everyone — especially people who hurt us. If we love those people, then we are showing God's love.

– Anonymous

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 27:1-45

Monday, March 12

## Protection

Many people in the world feel insecure. They feel that they are always alone and unprotected. But the Bible tells us that God protects people who love and obey Him.

Yesterday we learned that Jacob tricked Esau and received his father's special blessing. So Jacob prepared to leave his home and travel to the place where his mother's relatives lived.

As Jacob was traveling, he stopped for the night. While he was sleeping, he had a dream. Jacob dreamed there was a ladder on the ground that reached up to heaven. God's angels were going up and down the ladder. Then Jacob saw God standing by the ladder.

God talked to Jacob. He told him He would give him land and many descendants. In Genesis 28:15 we read what else God told Jacob. ***“I am with you, and I will protect you everywhere you go. I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I promised.”***

Jacob loved and served God all his life. And God took care of Jacob. I hope that you will love and serve God, too. Then God will always be with you and protect you.

– Irene Roberts

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 28:10-22

Tuesday, March 13

## God's Face

Maybe you have wondered what God's face looks like. The Bible tells us many things about God — about His love, His patience and His grace. But it doesn't tell what God looks like. We don't have a photograph of God.

A few days ago, we learned that Jacob and Esau had some problems. For many years, they did not see each other. Finally Jacob sent Esau a message saying that he wanted to meet him. Genesis 33:10 tells us what Jacob said when he finally saw Esau. ***“Jacob said, ‘No, I beg you! If you really accept me, please accept the gifts I give you. I am very happy to see your face again. It is like seeing the face of God. I am very happy to see that you accept me.’”***

Jacob thought that Esau's face was a very beautiful thing. Why? Because Jacob knew that his brother still loved him. When Jacob saw Esau's face, it was like seeing God's face.

If we look around us today, we can see God's face in many places. Maybe it is the face of a young person who serves food to needy people. Or the face of someone who offers a hug to a sad person. We can see God's face in the faces of all Christians who obey God and love other people.

I hope that other people will see God's face in your life today.

– Gayle Thorn

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 33:1-7

Wednesday, March 14

## Worship Only God

The Bible tells us that God wants His followers to worship only Him. Genesis, chapter 35, tells us that people who lived near Jacob worshiped foreign gods. They made idols of wood and metal and worshiped them.

Jacob told his family and the other people traveling with him to destroy all the foreign gods they had. Genesis 35:4 tells us what the people did. ***“So the people gave Jacob all the foreign gods they had, and they gave him all the rings they were wearing in their ears. He buried everything under an oak tree near the town called Shechem.”*** Jacob took the things the people worshiped and buried them. Why? So they would not be tempted to worship those things again.

Today many people in the world worship false gods. These gods may be idols that they bow down and worship. Or they might worship their houses, their cars or their money. God does not want that to happen. He wants us to worship only Him.

Is there something in your life that is more important to you than God? If so, then that is your god. You need to remove that from your life and worship only God. He loves you and offers you salvation through Jesus. Be sure that God is the most important part of your life.

– Jo Krueger

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 35:1-15

Thursday, March 15

## Psalm 67

Psalm 67 is a short psalm of only seven verses. It is sometimes called a doxology — a song of praise to God. If we examine this psalm, we will see that it gives us an outline for us to use as we worship God.

First, we need to ask God for His mercy. All of us have sinned and disobeyed God. We all need God to show us His mercy and grace. God's greatest act of mercy was sending Jesus to earth to die so we can be forgiven and live with Him forever. And God continues to show us His mercy every day of our lives.

Second, we need to praise God. We have many reasons to praise God. He loves us, He has saved us and He continues to be with us every day. We can praise God through our prayers, our songs and our service to other people.

Finally, we should ask God to bless us. Psalm 67:5-6 talks about asking for God's blessing ***"God, our God, bless us. Let out land give us a great harvest. May God bless us, and may all people on earth fear and respect him."***

Use this psalm today in your time of worship. God will show you His mercy, receive your praise and bless you as you serve Him!

– Bonnie Hall

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Psalm 67:1-7

Friday, March 16

## Rich Grace

Do you know who is the richest person in the world? Often newspapers and magazines will publish a list of the richest people in the world. Many names on the list change, but some wealthy people are always at the top of the list.

I don't know who is the richest person in the world. But I do know that if you are a Christian, you are one of the wealthiest people on earth. You are wealthy in God's love and grace. You may not have earthly treasures like silver and gold, but you do have Jesus as your Savior. The blessings that we receive from God cannot be bought with money, but they are the most wonderful blessings of all.

Paul talked about these blessings when he wrote a letter to Christians in the city of Ephesus. In Ephesians 1:7-8a he talked about the blessing of God's grace. ***"In Christ we are made free by his blood sacrifice. We have forgiveness of sins because of God's rich grace. God gave us that grace fully and freely."***

As you go through this day, think about the wonderful blessings God has given to you. Remember that His rich grace sent Jesus to earth to die for your sins. Thank God and praise Him today!

– Lynette H. Denton

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Ephesians 1:1-8a

Saturday, March 17

## Truth

Sometimes life can be very confusing. People have different opinions about what is right or wrong. Is it okay to drink alcohol? Should Christians give money to their church or to charities? Is it right to have sex before marriage? There is a long list of questions like these.

So how can we know whose opinion is right? How can we know the truth about these questions in life? The only way to really know the truth about hard questions is to find the answers in God's Word, the Bible.

Paul was telling some Christians that they should wear God's armor to help fight against the devil and his temptations. In Ephesians 6:14, Paul talked about truth. ***"So stand strong with the belt of truth tied around your waist, and on your chest wear the protection of right living."***

Here Paul was saying that we need to know what is true. The only way to know what is true is to read God's Word. Then we can resist the devil's temptations. God's Word will also help us make good decisions and help us as we struggle with all the confusion in life.

Talk to God. Read His Word. Learn the truth. Then you will be able to make right choices in your life.

– Gayle Thorn

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Ephesians 6:10-20

Sunday, March 18

## Call God

Sometimes when we make a phone call, we get a recorded message that says we have to wait to talk with a person. Maybe we have to wait 15 or more minutes. That's a long time for a busy person to wait! When this happens to me, I become impatient. Sometimes I even give up before I can actually talk with a person.

Prayer is very important. That is the way we talk to God every day. But sometimes, like a phone call, we have to wait for God's answer. When we want help right away, we don't want to wait. But we need to be patient and wait for God's answers and help.

In the Old Testament, the Israelites could only come to God through the high priest. Because of Jesus' death on the cross, we now have direct access to God. The writer of Hebrews talks about this in Hebrews 4:16. ***"With Jesus as our high priest, we can feel free to come before God's throne where there is grace. There we receive mercy and kindness to help us when we need it."***

When you pray to God today, thank Him that He is always available and that He will pay attention to your prayers. And be patient as you wait for God to answer your prayers in the best way possible.

– Suzanne Austin-Hill

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Hebrews 4:14-16

Monday, March 19

## Joseph, the Dreamer

Joseph was born when Jacob, his father, was old. Jacob loved Joseph very much. He gave him a beautiful coat. Joseph's eleven other brothers were jealous. So they hated him.

Joseph had a dream about his brothers and bundles of wheat. Joseph's wheat stood tall. The brother's wheat bowed to Joseph's wheat. Joseph told his brothers about the dream. They became angry. Genesis 37:8 tells us what the brothers said. ***"His brothers said, 'Do you think this means that you will be a king and rule over us?' His brothers hated Joseph more now because of the dreams he had about them."***

Joseph had another dream about the sun, moon and eleven stars bowing to him. Joseph told his father about this dream. Jacob asked Joseph if he thought that he, his mother and his brothers would bow down to him.

One day Jacob sent Joseph to find his brothers who were caring for sheep. When they saw Joseph coming, they decided to get rid of him. They sold him as a slave to some traders. They dipped his coat in blood and let their father think that Joseph was dead.

Family arguments are terrible. God wants families to love each other. Be kind to your family members today.

– Karan Riley

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 37:1-11

Tuesday, March 20

## Comfort

Yesterday we learned that Joseph's brothers sold him as a slave. Then they told their father that Joseph had been killed. When Jacob learned about Joseph, he was very sad.

Genesis 37:34-35 describes how Jacob felt. ***"Jacob was so sorry about his son that he tore his clothes. Then Jacob put on special clothes to show that he was sad. He continued to be sad about his son for a long time. All of Jacob's sons and daughters tried to comfort him, but Jacob was never comforted. He said, 'I will be sad about my son until the day I die.' So Jacob continued to mourn his son Joseph."***

The Bible tells us about other people who were very sad. David was sad when he sinned against God. And Peter was sad when he denied Jesus three times. God comforted and helped these people. And God helped Jacob, too. Later Jacob learned that Joseph was really alive.

Maybe you are sad today. Maybe you are facing the death of a family member, a terrible sickness, financial problems or a divorce. No matter what has happened to you, God will give you comfort and help.

If you are sad today, remember that you can always trust God to comfort and take care of you.

– Steve Husting

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 37:12-36

Wednesday, March 21

## Remember

A few days before Jesus died, He went with His disciples to the town of Bethany. There they ate a meal with Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha. Mary brought some very expensive perfume and poured it on Jesus' feet. Then she wiped His feet with her hair.

One of Jesus' disciples, Judas Iscariot, was at the dinner, too. He did not like what Mary did. Judas thought that the perfume should have been sold, and the money given to poor people. John 12:6 tells us why Judas said this. ***“But Judas did not really care about the poor. He said this because he was a thief. He was the one who kept the money bag for the group of followers. And he often stole money from the bag.”***

Jesus scolded Judas for what he said. Then Jesus said that Mary was preparing Him for His burial. He knew that in a few days He would be killed. Jesus also reminded His disciples that He would not always be with them on earth.

Soon we will be celebrating the day when Jesus rose from the dead. As you prepare for this day, remember all that Jesus did for you. Thank Him for His wonderful sacrifice and His promise of eternal life.

– Bobbie Lake

*Suggested Bible Reading*

John 12:1-11

Thursday, March 22

## The Lord's Supper

The night before Jesus was crucified, He celebrated the Passover with His disciples. The Passover was an important Jewish holiday that looked back to the time when God saved the Israelites from death in Egypt. As they ate, Jesus told His disciples that He wanted them to remember Him. Jesus did not ask them to remember His miracles or His great wisdom. He asked them to remember His death.

Under God's agreement, the Jews killed animals so their sins could be forgiven. These sacrifices were only for the Jewish people. But when Jesus died on the cross, He gave His blood for the sins of all people. This is the new agreement between God and people who love and obey Him.

It is important for us to remember Jesus' death through the Lord's Supper. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 11:26 why we should eat the Lord's Supper. ***“This means that every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are telling others about the Lord's death until he comes again.”***

When you eat the Lord's Supper, think about Jesus' death. Think about how He suffered for you. Thank Him for the promise of eternal life in heaven.

– Naomi Wiederkehr

*Suggested Bible Reading*

1 Corinthians 11:23-34

Friday, March 23

## Jesus' Sorrow

After Jesus ate the Passover meal, He asked Peter, James and John to go with Him to a place called Gethsemane. Jesus told His disciples that He was very sad and full of sorrow. Then Jesus asked these three men to stay awake and wait for Him. Jesus walked a little farther and fell on the ground and prayed to God.

Jesus was sad and sorrowful because He knew that soon Judas would give Him to the soldiers. Judas planned to give Jesus to the soldiers so they could arrest Him and kill Him. Jesus also knew that soon He would suffer a terrible death on a cross. Remember that while Jesus lived on earth, He was in the form of a man. He felt pain just like we do.

Matthew 26:42 tells us what Jesus finally prayed to God. ***“Then Jesus went away a second time and prayed, ‘My Father, if I must do this and it is not possible for me to escape it, then I pray that what you want will be done.’”*** It was God’s plan for Jesus to die. Jesus accepted God’s will.

Sometimes it is God’s plan for us to suffer, too. We should remember that God was with Jesus, and God will be with us, too. He will help us face our problems and struggles.

– Eileen C. Wood

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Matthew 26:36-56

Saturday, March 24

## Mother and Son

Jesus was arrested and brought before some Jewish leaders. Finally Jesus was sent to the Roman governor, Pilate. Even though Pilate said that Jesus was innocent, he handed Him over to the Jews to be crucified.

Jesus was led out of Jerusalem to a place called “The Place of the Skull.” There He and two other men were nailed to crosses. While Jesus was on the cross, people made fun of Him and gambled for His clothes.

But Jesus was not alone. Jesus’ mother and some of His followers were there at the cross. Matthew 26:26-27 tells us that Jesus took care of His mother. ***“Jesus saw his mother. He also saw the follower he loved very much standing there. He said to his mother, ‘Dear woman, here is your son.’ Then he said to the follower, ‘Here is your mother.’ So after that, this follower took Jesus’ mother to live in his home.”***

The follower that Jesus was talking to was John. Probably Joseph, Jesus’ earthly father had died. Jesus wanted to make sure that someone took care of His mother. Jesus told Mary and John that from now on, they should be like mother and son.

Jesus thought about His mother, even as He was dying. We should be like Jesus and honor our parents.

– Duane King

*Suggested Bible Reading*

John 19:23-27

Sunday, March 25

# Forgiveness

Imagine that you have a beautiful son. He is your only child. You love him so much. This son never does anything wrong. He grows up to be a humble, honest, wonderful man. This son loves every person. He is kind and helpful.

Now imagine that people tease your son. They bring your son before a judge. But the judge is afraid of the people, so he says that your son must die.

You watch all of this. Your heart is breaking. When the people start to kill your son, he says to you, "These people do not understand what they are doing. Please forgive them!" Wow! It would be very difficult to forgive those people.

But that's exactly what happened when Jesus died. Luke 23:34 tells us what Jesus said to God. ***"Jesus said, Father, forgive them. They don't know what they are doing.' The soldiers threw dice to divide Jesus' clothes between them."*** Jesus could have asked God to punish the people who were killing Him. Instead, He asked God to forgive them.

God wants you to be like Jesus. He wants you to forgive people when they do something bad to you. Ask God to help you be forgiving today.

– Duane King

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Luke 23:32-37

Monday, March 26

# "I am Thirsty"

We know that Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus is also called the Son of Man. Why? Because Jesus was human, too. Jesus' mother was Mary. Jesus worked, ate, slept and cried — just like we do.

And Jesus felt pain when the soldiers whipped Him. They beat Jesus and kept Him awake all night. Jesus' body became weak. Then the soldiers forced Jesus to carry a heavy wooden cross. Jesus suffered terrible pain when they drove the nails through His hands and feet.

John 19:28 tells us that Jesus had another human experience as He hung on the cross. ***"Later, Jesus knew that everything had been done. To make the Scriptures come true he said, 'I am thirsty.'"*** It probably had been a long time since Jesus had a drink. Do you know what the soldiers gave Him? Sour wine! It must have tasted terrible. Even while Jesus was dying, people continued to tease and hurt Him. They wouldn't even give Him a drink of water!

Why did Jesus suffer so much pain? Because He loves you and me. He was willing to accept the punishment for our sin. Thank You, Jesus, for going through all that for me!

– Duane King

*Suggested Bible Reading*

John 19:28-37

Tuesday, March 27

# Jesus' Will

A will is a legal paper that tells what is to be done with a person's possessions after they die. A will is also called a "testament." Jesus made a will. Why? So that when He died, we could know what He wants us to do. Jesus' will tells us how to become a Christian and live with Him forever. We often call Jesus' will the "New Testament." The books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John tell us about Jesus' life on earth. Jesus' will is written in these books.

A will is not in control until a person dies. While a man is living, he controls his money and possessions the way he wants. After he dies, his will controls what will happen.

When Jesus died, His new plan went into effect. The old plan of Jewish law was gone. We should follow Jesus' will today. Matthew 28:19-20 tells us about Jesus' will for us. ***"So go and make followers of all people in the world. Baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything that I have told you to do. You can be sure that I will be with you always. I will continue with you until the end of time."***

Thank Jesus today for His wonderful plan of salvation. And be sure to obey His will.

– Jo Krueger

*Suggested Bible Reading*

James 4:13-17

Wednesday, March 28

# "In Your Hands"

Jesus was hanging on the cross. From about noon to 3:00, it was dark and the sun did not shine. Many people were watching Jesus. Luke 23:46 tells us what Jesus said right before He died. ***"Jesus shouted, Father, I put my life in your hands!" After Jesus said this, he died.*** Those words are wonderful words! Jesus was saying that He had obeyed God completely and He was willing to submit to God's plan to save people from their sins.

Many people wait until they are dying to become serious about God. When we are 12 years old, we want to play with our friends. When we are 33 years old, we want to work, make money and enjoy our families. Then, when we are dying, we are finally ready to think about God.

But waiting until we are dying to think about God is usually too late. By that time we have wasted our lives serving the devil instead of God. We have passed up many opportunities for God to bless us and for us to bless other people.

Give yourself to God today. Don't wait a few days, a few years or until you are dying. Live for Jesus now and experience a wonderful life filled with God's love and grace!

– Duane King

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Luke 23:44-47

Thursday, March 29

## Alone

Often sinful people ignore God and separate themselves from Him. They don't read the Bible. They don't pray, and they don't worship God. They just leave God alone.

God loves people. God hurts when people ignore Him or speak against Him. But don't worry — God is okay. The problem is that if people leave God alone, God will eventually leave them alone. People cannot survive without God.

When Jesus died, some very strange things happened. Matthew 27:51 tells us what happened. ***“When Jesus died, the curtain in the Temple was torn into two pieces. The tear started at the top and tore all the way to the bottom. Also, the earth shook and rocks were broken.”*** The curtain in the Temple divided people from God. But Jesus' death changed all that. Now all people have the opportunity to communicate with God and share in His wonderful blessings.

Jesus died on the cross for YOU! He accepted the punishment for your sins. Don't be alone and without God. Stop sinning, obey God and worship Him. Then God will always be with you.

– Jo Krueger

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Matthew 27:45-56

Friday, March 30

## “It is Finished”

American Sign Language has a sign that is used for the concept “finished.” “Did you do your homework?” “Finished” is the sign to use if the homework is done. “Are you going to get groceries?” The “finished” sign means you've already bought the groceries.

John 19:30 records what may be the last words Jesus said before He died. ***“When he tasted the wine, he said, It is finished. Then he bowed his head and died.”*** What was finished? Jesus' part of God's plan for saving people from sin was finished.

Before God made the world, He made a plan to save people from sin. God worked through people for thousands of years to prepare the world for the coming of His Son, Jesus. God's plan was finished when Jesus died on the cross.

Now it is your turn to complete your part of God's plan. What should you do to finish your part? Many of the New Testament books tell us what we need to do to receive God's salvation. Some of the things we need to do are believe in Jesus, repent of our sins, confess Jesus' name before others, be baptized and then continue to live for Jesus. God finished His part. Now, you finish your part!

– Duane King

*Suggested Bible Reading*

John 19:28-30

Saturday, March 31

# Resurrection Day

The past few days we have talked about the bad news that Jesus was killed on a cross. But today we will talk about the good news. Jesus took on all the sins of the world. During that time, God and Jesus were separated. But God accepted Jesus' sacrifice. Then God and Jesus were together again. The good news is that Jesus did not stay dead!

Today is Resurrection Day — the day when Christians around the world remember that Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead on the third day. That was the completion of God's plan. Because Jesus died, we can have our sins forgiven. And, because Jesus rose again, we can have the hope of eternal life with God in heaven.

I hope that you will take time today to be happy! Matthew 28:8 tells us about the women who went to Jesus' tomb. ***"So the women left the tomb quickly. They were afraid, but they were also very happy. They ran to tell his followers what happened."***

How can you be happy? Think about what Jesus did for you. Think about what heaven will be like. If you are happy that Jesus rose again, I am sure you will want to share that Good News with someone today. Happy Resurrection Day!

– Jo Krueger

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Matthew 28:1-10

Sunday, April 1

# Monday

Today is Monday — the day after Resurrection Day. I hope that you took time yesterday to think about Jesus' death and resurrection. It is very important that we think about Jesus' death and resurrection every day of the year, not just on Resurrection Day.

When we think about Jesus' death, we need to remember Jesus' sacrifice for us. 1 Peter 3:18 tells us what Jesus did. ***"Christ himself suffered when he died for you, and with that one death he paid for your sins. He was not guilty, but he died for people who are guilty. He did this to bring all of you to God. In his physical form he was killed, but he was made alive by the Spirit."***

That one verse from 1 Peter sums up God's plan of salvation. Jesus willingly gave up His life so that our sins could be forgiven and we could be made clean. Why did God plan for us to be saved? Because He loves us and wants us to live forever with Him.

Resurrection Day is over. But don't forget that Jesus died and rose again for you. Take time every day to examine your life. Ask God to forgive your sins. Then tell Him how thankful you are for Jesus' wonderful sacrifice on the cross.

– Bonnie Hall

*Suggested Bible Reading*

1 Peter 3:13-22

Monday, April 2

## Sinful World

The world today is full of sin. And things are changing so fast. I become worried when I see all the temptations that young people must face today. Many of these people grow up without knowing anything about God and the Bible. That is very sad!

As Christians in today's world, we need to be very wise. Our wisdom should not come from famous people or from television. Our wisdom should come from God's Word, the Bible. We also need to set a good example for people around us who are not Christians. Those people may not be willing to study the Bible, but they can see that we are acting and living differently than the world.

Finally, another thing we need to do is remember the importance of God's grace in our lives. In Titus 2:12, Paul talked about God's grace. ***"It teaches us not to live against God and not to do the bad things the world wants to do. It teaches us to live on earth now in a wise and right way — a way that shows true devotion to God."*** When we experience God's grace, we can share His grace with others who do not know Him.

You can make a difference in our world today. Let God use you to show His love and plan of salvation to others.

– Eileen C. Wood

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Titus 2:11-15

Tuesday, April 3

## God's Children

God's creation is filled with examples of love. We can see love as a mother bird feeds her newborn or as a mama bear protects her cubs from danger. But even more, we can see love in human families — a mother taking care of her sick child, a father teaching his son to ride a bike, or brothers and sisters working together to take care of their aged parents.

But love for our families is not the best love of all. The best love of all is God's love for us. John wrote about that in 1 John 3:1. ***"The Father has loved us so much! This shows how much he loved us: We are called children of God. And we really are his children. But the people in the world don't understand that we are God's children."***

God's wonderful plan for showing us His love began even before Adam and Eve sinned in the garden. God planned to send His only Son, Jesus, to earth to pay the price for people's sins. That is the greatest love of all!

There are no limits to God's love. He wants everyone to love Him and follow His Word. God wants every person on earth to be His child. Our job is to tell others about His love and be an example of His love in everything we do. Show others that you are one of God's children today!

– Lynette H. Denton

*Suggested Bible Reading*

1 John 3:1-10

Wednesday, April 4

## Escape Hatch

Often ships or airplanes will have escape hatches. These are special ways to get off the ship or out of the plane if there is an emergency. Escape hatches are developed to save people's lives.

Every person on earth faces an emergency situation in their life. This situation happens when they realize that they are sinners. God has said that sin must be punished by spiritual death. That means everyone who sins must be separated from God forever.

But God made a way so that we can escape this punishment and separation. John 17:2-3 tells us about that way of escape. ***"You gave the Son power over all people so that he could give eternal life to all those you have given to him. And this is eternal life: that people can know you, the only true God, and that they can know Jesus Christ, the one you sent."*** Our escape hatch is Jesus!

God sent Jesus to earth to make the sacrifice for our sins. When we know that we are a sinner and obey God's Word, we can escape the punishment that we deserve. We can become clean and pure again.

God found the perfection solution to our emergency situation — Jesus! I hope you look forward to serving Him every day and living with Him forever!

– Gayle Thorn

*Suggested Bible Reading*

John 17:1-12

Thursday, April 5

## Honor and Obey God

Many times people who are not Christians expect us to do things we know are wrong. Maybe a friend wants you to leave a restaurant without paying the bill. Or your co-worker encourages you to lie to your boss. Or your friend wants to share some gossip with you? What should you do? Should you do what these people want or what God wants?

Jacob's favorite son, Joseph, was taken to Egypt as a slave. He worked for a man named Potiphar. Joseph was a good worker, and he had a lot of responsibility in Potiphar's household. But Joseph had one problem. Potiphar's wife liked Joseph. Every day she asked Joseph to sleep with her. Genesis 39:9 tells us Joseph's response. ***"My master has made me almost equal to him in his house. I cannot sleep with his wife! That is wrong! It is a sin against God."***

Joseph always refused Potiphar's wife. But one day when Joseph tried to run away from her, she grabbed Joseph's coat and told her husband lies about Joseph. Joseph was sent to prison. But God always blessed Joseph for his obedience.

We should be like Joseph. When our friends or family want us to do something wrong, we should say "No!" It is important for us to always honor and obey God.

– Anonymous

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 39:1-10

Friday, April 6

## In Prison

Maybe there have been times in your life when you have felt like you were in prison. Maybe you were sick and could not leave your house. Instead of being thankful for time to study the Bible and pray, you complained because you couldn't go outside.

That kind of situation reminds me of Joseph. He was falsely accused and put in prison. I am sure Joseph thought his situation was not fair. Joseph did nothing wrong, but he was still thrown into prison. But Joseph did not become discouraged and start complaining. He stayed close to God.

Because Joseph chose to obey God, God blessed him and helped him be patient. Genesis 39:21 tells us about this. ***"The Lord was with Joseph and continued to show his kindness to him, so the commander of the prison guards began to like Joseph."***

Bad things happen every day. Often these things are not fair. We may feel hopeless and alone. We may not be able to control our situation, but we can control the way we react. If we are like Joseph, we will not become discouraged and grumpy. Instead, we will know that God is with us. We will praise God for bringing good things from our bad experience.

– Beverly Eliason

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 39:11-23

Saturday, April 7

## Joseph Gets a Reward

In prison, Joseph heard about the dreams of two of Pharaoh's servants. God helped Joseph tell the wine server and the baker what their dreams meant. Joseph's interpretations of these dreams came true.

Two years later, the Egyptian Pharaoh had a dream that no one could understand. The wine server remembered Joseph and told Pharaoh. Joseph was brought out of prison to interpret Pharaoh's dream. Pharaoh asked Joseph to explain his dream. Genesis 41:16 gives us Joseph's response. ***"Joseph answered, 'I cannot! But God can explain the dream to you, Pharaoh.'"***

Joseph told Pharaoh his dream meant that there would be seven years of good crops and plenty to eat in Egypt. Then, there would be seven years of famine with no food to eat. Joseph suggested that Pharaoh choose a wise man to collect food during the seven good years. Then this food could be eaten during the seven years of famine.

Pharaoh gave Joseph the job of gathering all the food. Joseph was given a royal ring and fine clothes to wear. God rewarded Joseph for his obedience and faithfulness. God will take care of us and bless us when we obey and follow Him.

– Karan Riley

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 41:1-49

Sunday, April 8

## Dreams Come True

After seven years of good crops, the famine began. Many people were hungry. They asked Joseph for food. But the famine was not only in Egypt. Genesis 42:5 tells us about some other people who were hungry. ***“The famine was very bad in Canaan, so there were many people from Canaan who went to Egypt to buy grain. Among them were the sons of Israel.”*** Jacob (Israel) sent his ten older sons to Egypt to buy food.

When Jacob’s sons arrived in Egypt, they were sent to Joseph. They did not recognize him, but Joseph knew his brothers immediately. He remembered his dreams about them. Joseph sold grain to them. He also tested them to see if they would treat his younger brother, Benjamin, as badly as they had treated him. But Joseph could see that his brothers had changed. Finally he told his brothers who he was.

Joseph forgave his brothers for the wrong things they had done to him. He promised to take care of them during the rest of the famine. Then the brothers brought their father, all of their family members and their possessions to Egypt.

God forgives us for many things. He wants us to forgive other people, too. Will you forgive people who do wrong things to you today?

– Karan Riley

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 42:1-24

Monday, April 9

## Love and Forgiveness

Many people think if a person cries, it shows that person is weak. But I think tears can also show that a person is strong. I imagine that Joseph cried several times during his life. He probably cried when his brothers threw him into a pit and sold him into slavery in Egypt. And maybe he cried as he spent several long years in prison.

Yesterday we learned that after many years, Joseph saw his brothers again. Genesis 45:1-2 tells us what happened next. ***“Joseph could not control himself any longer. He cried in front of all the people who were there. Joseph said, Tell everyone to leave here.’ So all the people left. Only the brothers were with Joseph. Then he told them who he was. Joseph continued to cry, and all the Egyptian people in Pharaoh’s house heard it.”*** Joseph was so happy to see his brothers that he cried!

Was Joseph a weak man? I don’t think he was weak. He was a powerful man who tried to serve and obey God. And Joseph was willing to show love and forgiveness to his brothers.

Perhaps you will face situations today where you need to show love and forgiveness to people who have hurt you. Ask God to help you be humble and kind like Joseph!

– Naomi Wiederkehr

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 45:1-28

Tuesday, April 10

## Love All People

James wrote a letter to encourage other Christians. James wanted his readers to understand that they needed to love all people. James said that one law ruled over all other laws. He called this law the “royal law.” What was this royal law? Love your neighbor the same as you love yourself.

It is hard to love all people the same. But in James 2:9, the writer makes it very clear that God wants us to love all people. ***“But if you are treating one person as more important than another, you are sinning. You are guilty of breaking God’s law.”***

We should not judge other people by how much money they have, the color of their skin or how beautiful they are. Instead, we should see that all people are the same — they all need to know and worship God.

Jesus is a perfect example of someone who loved all people. In fact, He especially reached out to people who were poor and lonely. Jesus did not treat rich and famous people better than other people.

Look at people around you today. Find someone who needs to know about Jesus and His gift of salvation. Love that person and show them God’s kindness and grace.

– Eileen C. Wood

*Suggested Bible Reading*

James 2:1-13

Wednesday, April 11

## Perfect Unity

I noticed a thread dangling from the shoulder of one my shirts. I gave a the thread a quick tug, hoping that it would break off. Instead, the thread pulled all along the seam and made a huge hole. That single thread was holding the shirt together.

When Paul wrote a letter to the Colossian Christians, he talked about their new life in Christ and how they should love each other. Paul encouraged them to be kind, humble and gentle, and to forgive one another.

Paul also talked about Christians being united. In Colossians 3:14, he described this unity. ***“Together with these things, the most important part of your new life is to love each other. Love is what holds everything together in perfect unity.”***

The thread in my shirt was very important — it held my shirt together. In the same way, it is very important for Christians to love each other. Love is what holds Christians together and gives them unity. When we love other Christians, we also encourage them to stand strong against the devil and his temptations.

Thank God today for other Christians who love you and support your ministry in His kingdom!

– Bob La Forge

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Colossians 3:12-17

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Thursday, April 12

## God's Glory (1)

Sometimes our fears, doubts and shame keep us from doing our best. If we don't think that we can do something, we probably will not be able to do it. We may think that we cannot do much for God. But as Christians, we have been glorified through Jesus' death on the cross. Our sins have been forgiven, and we have been made right with God. We do not need to hide ourselves from others or from God.

Paul wrote a letter to the Christians in the city of Corinth. He reminded them that their sins were forgiven and that they had freedom to serve God. Paul also explained that non-Christians have a "covering" that keeps them from showing God's glory. Then in 2 Corinthians 3:18, Paul explains how Christians show God's glory. ***"And our faces are not covered. We all show the Lord's glory, and we are being changed to be like him. This change in us brings more and more glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."***

If you are a Christian, you can show God's glory to other people. And you have the freedom to serve God and do your best for Him. Allow God's Spirit to work in your life and help you be more like Him!

– Matt Poe

*Suggested Bible Reading*  
2 Corinthians 3:12-18

Friday, April 13

## God's Glory (2)

In his letter, Paul continued to encourage the Corinthians Christians. He told them that God had given him a painful problem. We do not know what this problem was. But Paul explained that this problem kept him from being proud.

Instead of complaining about his problem, Paul accepted it and used it to show God's strength. Paul even was happy that he faced times of persecution. In 2 Corinthians 12:10, Paul talked about how he had become strong through his weaknesses. ***"Yes, I am glad to have weaknesses if they are for Christ. I am glad to be insulted and have hard times. I am glad when I am persecuted and have problems, because it is when I am weak that I am really strong."***

Even after we become a Christian, we still have struggles. We should not be ashamed of these struggles. Instead, we should look for ways to use these struggles to show God's glory. Other people can see our weaknesses and how God makes us strong to serve Him.

Tell other people how God has changed your life. Let your weaknesses be a testimony of God's great power and glory.

– Matt Poe

*Suggested Bible Reading*  
2 Corinthians 12:1-10

Saturday, April 14

# Judah

As Christians, we are on a spiritual journey in life. We will all face many temptations along the way. Sometimes we may give in these temptations and sin. We may even need to decide if we will reject God or serve Him completely.

In the book of Genesis, we learn about Judah, one of Jacob's twelve sons. Genesis, chapter 38, tells us that Judah committed adultery with his daughter-in-law. But chapters 43-46 show us that Judah took the leadership in going with his brothers to Egypt to buy food during the famine. It seems that even though Judah sinned, he chose to keep on serving God.

When Jacob was ready to die, he called his sons and told each son what would happen to them in the future. In Genesis 49:10, Jacob told what would happen to Judah. ***“Men from Judah’s family will be kings. The sign that his family rules will not leave his family before the real king comes. Then many people will obey and serve him.”*** The real king is Jesus! This is a prophecy that someday Jesus would be born through Judah’s family line. What a blessing for Judah and his family!

What will you do today? Will you accept God’s forgiveness and continue to serve Him? Or will you turn away from God? The decision is yours!

– Bob La Forge

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 49:1-21

Sunday, April 15

# Problems

Is there a person who makes your life difficult? Do you know someone who makes fun of you? Is there someone who never seems to understand you?

There always seems to be problems in our lives — financial problems, relationship problems, problems at work. We enjoy life, and then suddenly, a new problem happens. It may be hard for you to think about all the problems in your life. Maybe you feel alone and discouraged.

At the end of the book of Genesis, we learn that Jacob died. Then Joseph’s brothers were afraid that he would do something bad to them. But Joseph realized that God had been with him all throughout his life. Joseph talked about this in Genesis 50:20. ***“It is true that you planned to do something bad to me. But really, God was planning good things. God’s plan was to use me to save the lives of many people. And that is what happened.”*** Joseph realized that God had turned something bad into something good.

It is sometimes hard to understand God’s plan for our lives. But we should always remember that God can bring good things from our problems. God has given you this day to serve Him. Keep focused on Him and His Word!

– Anonymous

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 50:15-26

Monday, April 16

# God's Plan

During the past four months, we have studied verses from Genesis. We learned how Adam and Eve disobeyed God and sinned. Adam and Eve had children and grandchildren. Soon there were many people in the world. But these people became wicked, so God decided to destroy the world by a flood. Only Noah, his family and some animals were saved.

After the flood, people began to fill the earth again. Then God called Abraham to move to the land of Canaan. Abraham's son, Isaac, had twin boys, Jacob and Esau. Later Jacob had twelve sons. At the end of Genesis, all of Jacob's family members are in Egypt. Genesis 50:22 tells us what happened to Jacob's son, Joseph. ***“Joseph continued to live in Egypt with his father's family. He died when he was 110 years old.”***

The book of Genesis shows us God's plan for His people, the Israelites. Over the next four months, we will continue our study through the Bible. We will learn that many years after Joseph died, the Israelites began a long journey to return to Canaan. Sometimes they did not obey God, but He was always with them.

God wants you to love Him and obey His Word today. He will be with you, too!

– Jo Krueger

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 50:15-26

Tuesday, April 17

# Genesis for Today

The book of Genesis was written many years ago. The people we have learned about in Genesis lived thousands of years ago. So why is it important for Christians today to study Genesis?

Genesis tells us how the world began. It teaches us about obeying God. And it shows us how much God loves us. We can see God's love throughout the Bible, but the book of Genesis is where we first read about God's love. He loved you and me enough to make a way for us to have our sins forgiven.

God's plan of salvation began with Adam. Through Adam's descendants — Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, David, Solomon and many more — God's Son, Jesus was born. Jesus lived on earth and died for our sins. But Jesus rose from death and is now living with God. Someday Jesus will come back to take His followers to live with Him forever. Revelation 22:20 tells us Jesus' message for all His followers. ***“Jesus is the one who says that all of this is true. Now he says, ‘Yes, I am coming soon.’ Amen! Come Lord Jesus!”***

Praise God today for His wonderful plan of salvation. Look forward to the time when Jesus will come again!

– Jo Krueger

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Revelation 22:1-21

Wednesday, April 18

## Power

All computers need a power source. They need electricity. A computer needs to be connected to an electrical outlet or a battery. Without a power source, a computer is useless.

As Christians, God is our power source. We need to stay connected to God so that we have access to His strength, wisdom, knowledge, character and love. Without God's power, we become useless, powerless Christians.

Prayer is like a power cord that keeps us connected to God. We need to communicate with God every day. We also need to pay attention to His teachings by reading the Bible.

We also need to keep sin out of our lives. Sin is the one thing that keeps us separated from God and His power. Psalm 66:17-19 talks about that. ***"I cried to him for help, and I praised him. If I had been hiding sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened to me. But God did listen to me; he heard my prayer."*** When we do something wrong, we need to tell God about it right away. Then we need to ask God to forgive us. When we do this, we will be connected again to God and His power.

God will be with you today. When you sin, ask Him to forgive you. Keep connected to His power!

– Gayle Thorn

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Psalm 66:16-20

Thursday, April 19

## Faithful Love

One of the best examples of faithful love is a dog and his master. Dogs are very faithful pets. I have read many stories about how dogs have faithfully stayed near their masters and protected them. Friends may be good examples of faithfulness, too. Some friends are always available to love us, help us, encourage us and give us comfort.

But the very best example of faithful love is God. The Bible is filled with stories about God's faithfulness to His people, the Israelites. Even when they disobeyed God, He still loved them and was faithful to them and His plan for their lives.

In Lamentations 3:22-23, the prophet, Jeremiah, talked about God's faithful love for His people. ***"We are still alive because the Lord's faithful love never ends. Every morning he shows it in new ways! You are so very true and loyal!"*** Not only is God faithful, He shows His faithfulness to us in new ways every day.

Because God faithfully loves us, we should be faithful to Him. Love Him and trust Him today. Read His Word. Pray to Him and serve Him faithfully. And don't forget to thank God for His faithful love for you every day!

– Linda Lamb

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Lamentations 3:22-24

56

Friday, April 20

## Bible Questions (1)

Today we will begin a series about questions that we find in the Bible. The first question we will discuss is a sad question. Why? Because this question was asked by the devil when he tempted Eve to disobey God.

The devil was in the form of a snake in the garden of Eden. God had told Adam and Eve that they were not to eat from the tree that gave knowledge about good and evil. The punishment for eating from this tree was death. We find the devil's question in Genesis 3:1. ***"The snake was the most clever of all the wild animals that the Lord God had made. The snake spoke to the woman and said, 'Woman, did God really tell you that you must not eat from any tree in the garden?'"***

Notice that this verse says that the devil was very clever! He did not ask that question because he wanted to know the truth. He wanted Eve to doubt what God had said. The devil told Eve that she would not die. That was a lie! Eve believed the devil's lie. She and Adam disobeyed God and ate from the tree.

The devil is still very clever today. He tempts us and tries to get us to disobey God. We need to be careful and watch for the devil's temptations. Praying to God and knowing His Word will help us stand strong against the devil.

– Pam Davis

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 3:1-7

Saturday, April 21

## Bible Questions (2)

Our second Bible question is also from the book of Genesis. Adam and Eve gave in to the devil's temptation, and they sinned. They knew they had disobeyed God, and they were ashamed. So Adam and Eve hid themselves in the garden.

Genesis 3:8-9 tells us the question God asked Adam and Eve. ***"During the cool part of the day, the Lord God was walking in the garden. The man and the woman heard him, and they hid among the trees in the garden. The Lord God called to the man and said, 'Where are you?'"***

Could Adam and Eve really hide from God? No! God sees everything. Nothing is hidden from Him. So if God knew where Adam and Eve were, why did He ask this question? God wanted Adam and Eve to admit their guilt. God wanted them to understand that their sin separated them from Him.

But Adam and Eve did not admit their sin. Adam blamed Eve, and Eve blamed the snake. So God punished Adam and Eve and forced them to leave the beautiful garden.

God expects us to obey Him. When we disobey, we need to admit our sin to Him and ask for forgiveness. Thank God today for His great love and forgiveness.

– Pam Davis

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Genesis 3:8-24

Sunday, April 22

## Bible Questions (3)

Our question today is one that God asked Moses. Moses was on a mountain. He saw a burning bush. But that was not an ordinary fire. The fire did not burn up the bush; it just kept burning!

God called to Moses from the bush. God talked about the Israelites who were slaves in Egypt. God told Moses that He wanted him to go to Egypt and lead the Israelites out of slavery. But Moses was afraid, so he made excuses why he couldn't go to Egypt. He wanted God to send someone else to lead the Israelites. God told Moses that He would be with him and help him.

In Exodus 4:2-3 we read that God asked Moses a question. ***“But the Lord said to Moses, ‘What is that you have in your hand?’ Moses answered, ‘It is my walking stick.’ Then God said, ‘Throw your walking stick on the ground.’ So Moses threw his walking stick on the ground, and it became a snake. Moses ran from it.”*** God performed a miracle to show Moses His power. The power was not in Moses or the stick — the power was from God!

God has given every Christian special talents to use in His kingdom. God helped Moses, and He will help you serve Him and tell others about Jesus.

– Pam Davis

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Exodus 4:1-9

Monday, April 23

## Bible Questions (4)

Psalms 8 is a song written by King David. In this psalm, David is filled with praise for God. In verses 3-4, David asked God four questions. ***“I look at the heavens you made with your hands. I see the moon and the stars you created. And I wonder, ‘Why are people so important to you? Why do you even think about them? Why do you care so much about humans? Why do you even notice them?’”***

I have thought about how David must have felt as he wrote this psalm. David said that God's name is the most wonderful in all the earth. He also said that God is big and powerful. That makes me feel that I am small and unworthy. But I know that God truly loves me and wants to be involved in my life!

We cannot fully understand God's love for us. But we do know that He is our Father and He loves us as His children. God loves us so much that He sent His only Son, Jesus, to die on the cross. Why? So that our sins can be forgiven and we can live with Him forever.

Take some time to think about God's love for you today. Think about the blessings He gives you because you are His child!

– Pam Davis

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Psalms 8:1-9

Tuesday, April 24

## Bible Questions (5)

Today we will look at a question Jesus asked His disciples. While Jesus was on earth, He taught many people. But most of those people did not understand who Jesus really was. So one day Jesus asked His disciples who people said that He was.

The disciples gave Jesus several answers. They said some people thought that Jesus was John the Baptizer, Elijah, Jeremiah or another prophet who had come back to life. Then, in Matthew 16:15-16, Jesus asked an even more important question. And, these verses include Peter's important answer. ***"Then Jesus said to his followers, Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."*** Peter gave the right answer to Jesus' question. Jesus truly is God's Son!

Think about people in the world today. Who do they say Jesus is? Some people think that Jesus never lived on earth. Other people think that He was just a good teacher. And some think that Jesus was a person who told lies and deceived people.

Jesus asks you the same question today. Who do you think Jesus is? I hope that you are like Peter and you will say, "Jesus is the Son of God!"

– Pam Davis

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Matthew 16:13-20

Wednesday, April 25

## Bible Questions (6)

The angel Gabriel brought a message to a woman named Mary in the city of Nazareth. Gabriel told Mary that she would become pregnant and give birth to a baby boy. This boy would be Jesus, God's son.

When Mary heard this, she was confused. She asked Gabriel a question. Luke 1:34 tells us what Mary asked. ***"Mary said to the angel, How will this happen? I am still a virgin."*** Gabriel told Mary that she would become pregnant through God's power. He also said that the baby would be holy and would be called the Son of God.

There are two important things to learn from Mary's experience. First, Mary did not argue with the angel. Instead she told Gabriel that she was God's servant and she was willing to be the mother of God's son. Second, this event was an important part of God's plan of salvation. For thousands of years God had been planning for Jesus to be born exactly at the right time. Now God's plan was happening so that all people in the world could receive God's gift of salvation.

Maybe God has a special job for you to do today. Will you be like Mary and be ready to serve Him? Are you willing to trust God and allow Him to use you?

– Pam Davis

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Luke 1:26-38

59

Thursday, April 26

## Bible Questions (7)

Our Bible question today comes from Jesus. He was dying on the cross. The pain in his body was terrible. Jesus is God, but Jesus was also a man. Jesus was willing to give up His life to pay the penalty for our sins.

Matthew 27:46 records a question that Jesus asked God while He was hanging on the cross. ***“About three o’clock Jesus cried out loudly, ‘Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?’ This means ‘My God, my God, why have you left me alone?’”***

When Jesus was on the cross, He accepted the sins of all people. God is holy, and He cannot look at sin. So when Jesus took on our sins, God could not look at Him. But God was pleased with His Son. Jesus died and was buried. But on the third day, Jesus arose from the grave!

When Jesus was suffering on the cross, He asked God why He had to suffer. That encourages me. We all suffer, and we often wonder why God does not stop our suffering. But God loves us and understands our suffering. He always does what is best for us. When we pray and ask God to help us, He will give us strength and comfort.

Maybe you are suffering today. Remember that Jesus suffered, too. Ask God to give you His peace and love.

– Pam Davis

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Matthew 27:45-54

Friday, April 27

## Bible Questions (8)

Our last question comes from an experience that Paul and Silas faced. Paul and Silas preached about Jesus. They had done nothing wrong, but they were put in jail.

What did Paul and Silas do in jail? Did they get angry with the people who put them in jail? No! Paul and Silas worshiped God! They prayed and sang songs to God. Then God caused an earthquake to shake the jail. The doors were opened, and the prisoners’ chains fell off. This was a miracle — something that could only happen with God’s power.

The jailer thought that Paul and Silas had escaped. He was ready to kill himself, but Paul stopped him. Acts 16:30 tells us a very important question that the jailer asked Paul and Silas. ***“Then he brought them outside and said, ‘Men, what must I do to be saved?’”*** Paul and Silas told the jailer about Jesus. The jailer and his family believed in Jesus, and they were baptized.

Paul and Silas were witnesses for Jesus, even when they were in jail. Because of their witness and God’s message, the jailer and his family were saved. It is important that you live for Jesus today. Tell others about His salvation and the promise of eternal life.

– Pam Davis

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Acts 16:22b-33

60

Saturday, April 28

## Our Shepherd

I read a story about a tornado that destroyed a town. After the tornado, a woman was searching through the rubble of her house. She was searching for her dog. She was very tired, but she slowly picked up each piece of debris and looked for her dog. Finally, she removed a couple of pieces of wood. Underneath she saw the head of her dog. The dog jumped into her arms and licked her face.

After that, the woman continued to search for other possessions that she could rescue from her house. She said that finding her dog had given her the strength to continue searching.

That story reminds me of Psalm 23:3. ***“He restores my strength. He leads me on right paths to show that he is good.”*** The writer of this psalm compares God to a shepherd. In this verse he talks about God giving us strength and leading us in the right way.

Sometimes we are sad and discouraged. Maybe we don't know if we have enough strength to continue living. But God shares an unexpected blessing or gives us an extra amount of strength. Then we are no longer sad and discouraged. We know that God is with us and that we can continue to serve Him.

– Bonnie Hall

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Psalm 23:1-6

Sunday, April 29

## Follow Jesus

In our world today, it is easy to send someone an e-mail or text or to post on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter. But I still prefer to sit down and talk with people. I can send cards, e-mails or other messages to my family members. But I like to be with them and communicate in person.

I am so glad that it isn't hard to communicate with Jesus. He is never too busy to talk with me. I don't ever have to leave a message. I can talk to Jesus any time or any place. He is always willing to pay attention to me. And even though I can't see Jesus right now, I can learn about Him through the Bible.

One time Jesus was with His disciples. He told them a story about a shepherd who had names for all his sheep. When the shepherd called them, they followed him. The shepherd knew his sheep, and the sheep were willing to follow their shepherd. John 10:3 tells us about this. ***“The man who guards the gate opens the gate for the shepherd. And the sheep listen to the voice of the shepherd. He calls his own sheep, using their names, and he leads them out.”***

Jesus was talking about Himself. He is our shepherd. He knows that we want to love and follow Him. Talk with Jesus and pay attention to Him today.

– Suzanne Austin-Hill

*Suggested Bible Reading*

John 10:3

Monday, April 30



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# THE BOOK OF JOB



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