

DEVOTIONAL

MARANATHA!

By

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Dear Saints in Christ Jesus,

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

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

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

Selah,

Pastor Ray

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DAY 1

OUR MAKER, OUR HUSBAND, OUR EXAMPLE

What does a Spirit-filled husband look like? The very same thing that the Spirit-filled wife looks like — Jesus Christ. Examples of both submission and sacrificial love are found in Christ.¹

The conclusion is an obvious one. The root of our marriages is a spiritual union, consummated by physical intimacy, and intact till death do we part.²

As we look at the Biblical role of the husband today, as just stated, our Lord Jesus Christ is our example.³ His sacrifice and love for His bride, the church, is every husband's model to follow.⁴

Men, our wives, like sheep, are to be led not driven, comforted not intimidated, nourished not neglected. To not do these things is unloving, and when we refuse to love our wives we are being disobedient to God.

The blessed husband fears the Lord and delights greatly in His commandments.⁵ Do you?

1-Eph 5:22-33; 2-Matt 19:4-6; 3-Isaiah 54:5; 4-John 10:11;
5-Psalm 112:1.

DAY 2

MARRIAGE IS LIKE CAKE!

“What kind of a title is that?” you may ask. How is marriage like cake? It is in the sense that when we have all the proper ingredients and follow the instructions carefully, the end result is wonderful.

Each ingredient is of equal importance. Today we will look at the ingredients of focus,¹ flexibility,² faithfulness,³ and forgiveness.⁴ These are ingredients of a marriage ‘built by God’.⁵

It is not enough just to know what the ingredients are; they must become verbs, mixed in the bowl of life, and baked at the right temperature in order to obtain the right results.

As we allow the Holy Spirit to fill our lives,⁶ the overflow will be worship,⁷ thanksgiving,⁸ and submission⁹ to the One before whom we said, “I do”.

1-Psalm 121:1; 2-Psalm 32:9; 3-1 Cor 4:2; 4-Eph 4:32; 5-Psalm 127:1; 6-Eph 5:18; 7-Eph 5:19; 8-Eph 5:20; 9-Eph 5:21.

DAY 3

LESSONS FROM AQUILA AND PRISCILLA

The wisest decision a saved couple can make is the decision to devote their lives to the service of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is clearly seen in the lives of Aquila and Priscilla.

Their home was one of the meeting places for the early church.¹ It was in their home that the church gathered for the study of God's word, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and worship.² The home fellowships allowed the fledgling church of 3,120 saints³ to grow in Christ and get acquainted with one another.

(Check out our home fellowship brochure or the bulletin listings for a weekly menu of smaller group meetings!)

This Biblical couple served the Lord with gladness,⁴ but not without a price.⁵ The Holy Spirit has allowed us to 'peek' into the lives of a couple who were sold out for Jesus. They were hard working,⁶ hospitable,⁷ and co-laborers of Paul in making disciples.⁸ They went on missions trips together.⁹ They were indeed a beautiful example of the "threefold cord" union written about by Solomon.¹⁰

To say the least, this couple was involved in the church. Strong marriages in Christ are a vital part of a strong church for Christ. What better cause can a Christian couple be devoted to than serving the Lord Jesus in their hearts, in their church, and in their home?

1-1 Cor 16:19; 2-Acts 2:42,46-47; 3-Acts 1:15, 2:41; 4-Psalm 100:2;
5-Rom 16:3-4; 6-Acts 18:2,3; 7-Heb 13:2; 8-Acts 18:24-26;
9-Acts 18:18; 10-Eccl 4:9-12.

DAY 4

THE CALL OF GOD AND YOU

We finish our series on marriage by looking at God's word for those who are unequally yoked,¹ and at an exhortation to those who are single. No matter what our marital status, the word of God is clear that both married and single are called to live lives with a fixed purpose to serve Him diligently.² Granted, there are certain difficulties which singles and those who are unequally yoked have to deal with, but never forget that it is the power of God³ that will uphold you. His abundant grace is most powerful when in our weakness⁴ we reach out to Him for help.⁵

Never overlook the hand of Providence upon your life.⁶ As you commit your works to Him, He will establish your thoughts⁷ and steps.⁸ How wonderful it is for each of us to know that God's counsel is faithful and truth.⁹ No matter how tough things get, Jesus is there with us¹⁰ and for us.¹¹

Fear the Lord and obey His commandments, and your life will be blessed!¹²

1-1 Peter 3:1-7; 2-1 Cor 7:27-35; 3-1 Peter 1:5; 4-2 Cor 12:9;
5-Jeremiah 33:3; 6-Daniel 5:23d; 7-Prov 16:3; 8-Psalm 37:23;
9-Isaiah 25:1; 10-Isaiah 25:4; 11-Psalm 118:6; 12-Psalm 112:1.

DAY 5

PRACTICAL FAITH

Truth apart from practical application is a very dangerous thing because truth rejected will eventually result in a hardened heart.¹ Now doctrinal orthodoxy² is important in the life of a disciple of Jesus Christ. However, it is only in doing³ what God says that we experience freedom.⁴ God's word is to have an impact on how we honor our parents, train our children, and work.⁵

Theology without works of faith is merely a shell of truth, only "a form of godliness"⁶ that lacks true substance. Simply 'enjoying' the truth is not enough.⁷ Pray that the truth of God will come into your life by the power of the Holy Spirit.⁸ His word alone will make you free.⁹ If how you relate to your parents, children, and career are not being impacted by God's truth, then it is like trying to push a huge rock uphill.

Follow the Rock,¹⁰ diligently.¹¹ You never obey God in vain.¹²

1-Prov 29:1; 2-2 Tim 3:16, Acts 2:42; 3-John 7:17; 4-James 1:22-25;
5-Col 3:20-4:1; 6-2 Tim 3:5; 7-Ezekiel 33:31-33; 8-Luke 11:9-13; 9
-John 8:31,32; 10-Deut 32:4; 11-Heb 11:6; 12-1 Cor 15:58.

DAY 6

CHRIST OR CHRISTIANITY?

Our day is one that is filled with a lot of religious rhetoric, but without any true substance. This is called in Scripture “a form of godliness” that denies its power.¹ ‘Easter’ is one of those ‘religious’ holidays that for the vast majority of church-going people is nothing more than a habit. However, any observance of prayer or ‘worship’ which is void of the living Christ is merely a shell of Christianity.

In contrast, we celebrate the literal, physical resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.² We are not here to simply ‘go to church’; we are not here out of ‘obligation’. We are here to worship the risen King Jesus.³ Resurrection Sunday is all about resurrection,⁴ not ritual; a relationship with Jesus,⁵ not ritual.⁶ The day is about a new birth,⁷ not a new suit! It’s about walking in the power of God’s Spirit,⁸ not fulfilling a ‘40 day’ promise to God!

Religious Christianity is all about ‘How to’; it is methodology apart from the Master. It is about ‘feeling good’ instead of denying self.⁹ Religion, apart from a heart that loves Jesus, is a curse!¹⁰ Religion frustrates the grace of God.¹¹

Are you following Christ¹² or Christianity? Come to Christ, and He will give you rest.¹³ That’s what Resurrection Sunday is really all about!¹⁴

1-2 Tim 3:5; 2-Luke 24:5,6; 3-Rev 1:18; 4-1 Cor 15:1-8; 5-John 10:14;
6-Rom 4:1-8; 7-1 Peter 1:23; 8-Acts 1:8; 9-Luke 9:23-26;
10-1 Cor 16:22; 11-Gal 2:21; 12-Matt 4:19; 13-Matt 11:28-30;
14-John 11:25,26.

DAY 7

THE POWER OF PRAYER

God promises to show us great and mighty things when we call out to Him in prayer.¹ And Paul assures us that He is able to do “exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think!”²

It is so comforting to know that in spite of the tribulations we all face in this world,³ we have access by one Spirit to the Father.⁴ Prayer is God’s cure for anxiety, for it is the means whereby the peace of God overrules our heart and mind.⁵ Prayer is the most powerful weapon that Christ left His church. However, it is the often overlooked part of the believer’s armor.⁶ It is also the key to open doors for evangelism.⁷

Scripture tells us that secret prayer to the Father is rewarded openly.⁸ Secret prayer and the protection of the Almighty go hand in hand.⁹ Pray without ceasing¹⁰ and you will not faint¹¹ when the pressures of life or enemy attacks abound.

A committed life and effective prayer¹² are the heart and soul of the Lord’s church.

1-Jer 33:3; 2-Eph 3:20; 3-John 16:33; 4-Eph 2:18; 5-Phil 4:6-7;
6-Eph 6:18; 7-Eph 6:19-20, Col 4:3-4; 8-Matt 6:6; 9-Psalm 91:1;
10-1 Thess 5:17; 11-Luke 18:1; 12-Matt 4:19.

DAY 8

WITNESSES FOR CHRIST

“... you shall be witnesses unto Me...”¹ Every single child of God is called upon to represent Jesus Christ. We have been bought with a price in order that we might glorify the Lord.²

Our speech and our actions are to send a clear message to the lost that our lives belong to Jesus.³ Our lives are to reflect that “excellent spirit” which set Daniel apart from others in Babylon.⁴ Our mission is to follow the example of Jesus,⁵ and declare the glorious gospel.⁶

Being a witness for Christ in a lost world not only requires power from on high,⁷ but wisdom.⁸ James tells us what this wisdom looks like.⁹

By abiding in Jesus,¹⁰ all that is necessary to be His witness will be evident. Thus, the way to be the witnesses we ought to be can be summed up in two words: “Follow Me”.¹¹

1-Acts 1:8; 2-1 Cor 6:20; 3-2 Cor 5:15; 4-Dan 6:3,4; 5-1 John 2:6;
6-Acts 26:18; 7-Luke 24:49; 8-Col 4:5; 9-James 3:17; 10-John 15:4,5;
11-Matt 4:19.

DAY 9

APPRECIATING ONE ANOTHER

As we conclude our study of Colossians this morning, we hear Paul expressing appreciation for his brothers in Christ. This is something that he did often.¹

As a church we are seen by God, not only as His children personally,² but also as a body needing one another corporately.³ Scripture exhorts us to “exhort one another daily”.⁴ We are to consider one another, and in doing so, provoke each other to love and good works.⁵

Before we were born again,⁶ our flesh corrupted our relationships,⁷ but through our new birth we are given the ability to love one another fervently.⁸ However, Satan is ever seeking to get between brothers and sisters in Christ.⁹ We must not be ignorant of his devices.¹⁰ Conflicts and disagreements within the body are to be expected, but we should always seek to forbear and forgive,¹¹ instead of fleeing.

Paul does us a favor today by putting into writing his appreciation of those brothers and sisters that God had brought into his life. Do you appreciate your brothers and sisters in Christ here at Koinonia? Family, Jesus calls us to prefer one another,¹² love one another,¹³ receive one another,¹⁴ and serve one another.¹⁵ If we call Jesus Lord,¹⁶ disobedience to these ‘one another’s’ is not an option.

1-Rom 16:1-16; 2-Gal 3:26; 3-1 Cor 12:12-26; 4-Heb 3:13;
5-Heb 10:24; 6-John 3:3-7; 7-Titus 3:3; 8-1 Peter 1:22-23; 9-Gal 5:15;
10-2 Cor 2:11; 11-Col 3:13; 12-Rom 12:10; 13-Rom 13:8;
14-Rom 15:7; 15-Gal 5:13; 16-Luke 6:46.

DAY 10

THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE

“ ‘As My Father has sent Me, I also send you.’ ”¹ The Christian life is a life which is empowered by the Spirit of God.² Our flesh profits nothing.³

The religious activity of the Mosaic sacrificial system has been rendered obsolete⁴ now that Christ has come and finished⁵ the work of redemption.⁶ Having completed the work of propitiation,⁷ the Holy Spirit has now been poured out upon God's servants.⁸

The refreshment that our thirsty souls crave comes from God's Spirit,⁹ dwelling not only in us,¹⁰ but also upon us.¹¹ As the Holy Spirit leads us to the saving knowledge of Jesus,¹² likewise, Jesus baptizes us with the Holy Ghost!¹³ As we walk¹⁴ and worship in the Spirit,¹⁵ our lives are transformed¹⁶ into the image of Jesus.¹⁷

Let's take our Lord at His word today, and come and drink of the fountain of the water of life freely!¹⁸

1-John 20:21; 2-Acts 1:8; 3-John 6:63; 4-Heb 10:1-17; 5-John 19:30; 6-Eph 1:7; 7-1 John 2:2; 8-Acts 2:14-18; 9-Isaiah 44:3; 10-Eph 1:13; 11-Luke 24:49; 12-John 16:8-11; 13-Luke 3:16; 14-Gal 5:16; 15-Eph 5:18-19; 16-2 Cor 3:18; 17-Rom 8:29; 18-Rev 21:6.

DAY 11

WELCOME TO THESSALONICA!

Today we leave the city of Colosse and journey to the city of Thessalonica. The Apostle Paul visited this city on his second missionary journey,¹ where he established a church in just three weeks. It was in this city that Paul spoke about the Rapture of the church² and the need to walk in holiness.³

This church was an excellent witness for Jesus Christ to all of the surrounding areas.⁴ They put their faith into action,⁵ which was proof that they really listened to what God said,⁶ notwithstanding their need to be perfected in the things of the Lord.⁷

May we, like the Thessalonians, comfort and edify one another in the Lord.⁸ May “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ”⁹ encourage us to walk pleasing to Him,¹⁰ until we meet Him in the air!¹¹

1-Acts 17:1-10; 2-1 Thess 4:13-17; 3-1 Thess 4:1-7; 4-1 Thess 1:7-10;
5-1 Thess 1:3; 6-1 Thess 2:13; 7-1 Thess 3:10; 8-1 Thess 5:11;
9-1 Thess 5:28; 10-1 Thess 4:1; 11-1 Thess 4:17.

DAY 12

DIVINE ELECTION

The Greek word translated in English as “election” means “picked out or chosen”. It is important to remember that all predestination, or Divine election, is in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world.¹ Before anything was created, Jesus the Lamb of God was predetermined² to die for the sin of the world.³

Scripture calls any person⁴ who has repented and turned to Christ⁵ for forgiveness of sin, the “elect” of God.⁶ The Church consists of people who are now adopted children of God.⁷ The purpose for our election is that we be holy,⁸ fruitful people,⁹ who bring forth good works¹⁰ for the glory of our heavenly Father.¹¹

From A to Z election is the sovereign work of God’s grace.¹² Every single Christian is a “chosen vessel”.¹³ How awesome is that!

Remember, nothing can separate you from God’s love for you¹⁵ who have made your calling and election sure.¹⁶

1-Eph 1:4; 2-Acts 2:22-23; 3-John 1:29, Rev 13:8; 4-Rom 10:13;
5-Acts 2:38; 6-Rom 8:33; 7-Eph 1:5; 8-Eph 1:4; 9-John 15:16;
10-Eph 2:10; 11-Matt 5:16; 12-Rom 11:5,6; 13-Acts 9:15;
14-John 10:28,29; 15-Rom 8:35-39; 16-2 Peter 1:10.

DAY 13

FAITHFUL, NOT FAMOUS

“He must increase, but I *must* decrease.”¹

These words of John the Baptist reflect the heart of a true servant of God. John was more concerned about being faithful than being famous. Faithfulness is an essential quality of any person who desires to serve the Lord.² Jesus notices those who are faithful, even if it be over a few things.³

Faithful servants focus on what God calls them to do. They will not compare themselves with others, nor will they compete with others. It matters not to them how little⁴ or large the task is; what matters most is pleasing Jesus.⁵

Each and every day you and I are given multiple opportunities to be faithful.⁶ When we step out in obedience to Jesus, it refreshes our Master.⁷ When we are given an open door to share God’s Word, may we do it faithfully.⁸ A faithful person is a person, not only of great faith, but of integrity as well.⁹

May our goal be that of being faithful in all that we do,¹⁰ and in doing so, bring glory to God!¹¹

1-John 3:30; 2-1 Cor 4:2; 3-Matt 25:21; 4-Luke 16:10; 5-Rev 4:11;
6-Gal 6:10; 7-Prov 25:13; 8-Jer 23:28b; 9-2 Kings 12:15;
10-2 Chron 19:9; 11-1 Cor 10:31.

DAY 14

FORM OF GODLINESS

The Apostle Paul spoke about “a form of godliness” in his second letter to young Timothy.¹ The Greek word for “form” means an appearance or a formula, so in this context it means an appearance of godliness or a formula for godliness. By reading the messages of Jesus to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3, it quickly becomes evident that forms of godliness had already infiltrated the Body of Christ while John was still alive.

Christianity apart from consecration to the Lord² or intimacy with the Lord³ is nothing more than a form of godliness. Saying all of the right things and observing doctrines and commandments of men⁴ is nothing more than a form of godliness.

How do we get out of the religious trap? By listening to and obeying God,⁵ by walking in holiness⁶ and humility.⁷ Self renunciation⁸ coupled with a pure desire to know Jesus is the greatest need in the church today.⁹ Focus on your daily communion with Jesus; view every single thought, word, and deed through the lens of His truth.¹⁰ Be accountable to others.¹¹ Have a healthy respect for the damaging potential of your flesh.¹² Beware of attempting to use Jesus to fulfill your will, instead of submitting to Jesus to do His will.¹³

May we bring all of our heart, soul, mind and prayer to the Lord’s table today, and in doing so, burn away the form of godliness and take upon us the image of Christ.¹⁴

1-2 Tim 3:5; 2-Rom 1:1; 3-Jer 9:23,24; 4-Matt 15:1-9; 5-Prov 1:23;
6-1 Thess 4:7; 7-James 4:6; 8-Luke 9:23; 9-Phil 3:7-14;
10-Heb 4:12,13; 11-Prov 27:3,4,17; 12-Gal 6:7,8; 13-Matt 6:10;
14-Col 3:10.

DAY 15

LIVING TO PLEASE GOD

“Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me”;¹ “He must increase, but I *must* decrease.”² Those words of the Apostle Paul and John the Baptist came from hearts that lived to please Jesus Christ. They lived to give pleasure to God, which is why we were created.³ Giving pleasure to God is not punishment; it is a delight.⁴

When Jesus said, “Follow Me,”⁵ that was a call to live a life that brings pleasure to God at all times.⁶ If we live after the flesh,⁷ or are in love with this world,⁸ it is impossible to please God.⁹ Neither can we please God when we fail to take into consideration the infirmities of others,¹⁰ saved or unsaved.¹¹

Pleasing God requires obedience to His will,¹² and faith,¹³ both of which are provided for us by the Holy Spirit.¹⁴ As we yield ourselves to the Lord,¹⁵ we bring forth that fruit of holiness that blesses the Father’s heart¹⁶ and reflects His image¹⁷ in a lost and dark world.¹⁸

May pleasing Jesus, not self, be the passion in our hearts.¹⁹

1-Gal 2:20; 2-John 3:30; 3-Rev 4:11; 4-Psalm 40:8; 5-Matt 4:19;
6-John 8:29; 7-Gal 5:19-21; 8-1 John 2:15-17; 9-Rom 8:8;
10-Rom 15:1,2; 11-1 Cor 10:31-33; 12-1 John 3:22; 13-Heb 11:6;
14-Acts 1:8, 5:29; 15-Rom 6:16-19; 16-3 John 4; 17-1 Peter 1:14-16; 18
-1 Peter 2:9; 19-Col 1:10.

DAY 16

THE MIGHTY WORD OF GOD

The basis of what we believe doctrinally, and how we live out that belief practically, is Holy Scripture.¹ God's Word is established in heaven forever.² It is the seed or DNA of life itself,³ for God's Word is spirit and life.⁴

How blessed we are to have the Bible as a personal possession! Because God cannot lie,⁵ we can be confident that every promise,⁶ prophecy,⁷ and passage already has or yet will come to pass.⁸ We have the privilege of studying the Bible,⁹ meditating upon it day and night and standing firmly upon its truth¹⁰ in these days of fables¹¹ and winds of doctrine.¹²

Only the truth of God can make us free.¹³ Accept no substitutes! "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."¹⁴

1-2 Tim 3:16-17; 2-Psalm 119:89; 3-Luke 8:11; 4-John 6:63b;
5-Titus 1:2; 6-2 Cor 1:20; 7-2 Peter 1:20-21; 8-Numbers 23:19;
9-2 Tim 2:15; 10-Psalm 1:1-3; 11-2 Tim 4:3,4; 12-Eph 4:14;
13-John 8:31,32; 14-John 6:68.

DAY 17

WITNESS OR WIMP?

Self preservation¹ is a sure way to a lukewarm faith.² Self fights tooth and nail to avoid opposition or persecution that stems from being a disciple of Jesus Christ. When we attempt to protect ourselves from the rejection or ridicule that often occurs when we share Christ, it actually aborts fruitfulness and prevents its development to maturity.³

This world always has and always will hate the Christ of Scripture⁴ because Jesus testifies of its evil works.⁵ Men still love “darkness rather than light, because their deeds (are) evil.”⁶ Nevertheless, our mandate is to look on the fields that are white and ready for the harvest.⁷

Our focus needs to be on Christ’s command to “go into all the world and preach the gospel”.⁸ Our lifestyle needs to be one of constant readiness to share this hope we have at any given moment.⁹

Remember, there is joy in heaven when just one sinner repents.¹⁰ May we live and share Jesus boldly!¹¹

1-Mark 8:35; 2-Rev 3:16; 3-Mark 4:17; 4-John 15:18; 5-John 7:7;
6-John 3:19; 7-John 4:35; 8-Mark 16:15; 9-1 Peter 3:15; 10-Luke 15:7;
11-Prov 28:1.

DAY 18

CONSIDER

When we gather together¹ in the holy name² of Jesus,³ may we redeem the time to consider Him⁴ and all of His benefits.⁵ To consider means to think about carefully; to mentally digest the truths that God is revealing to us through His Scriptures.

We miss so much of what God has to say to us because our minds are always considering other things, like what we shall eat or wear.⁶ The enemy knows the power of ‘holy consideration’,⁷ and to offset that he is constantly bombarding us with vain imaginations⁸ and “fleshly lusts which war against the soul”.⁹ The key to victory in this mental battle is to use our minds to consider the spiritual instead of the carnal view of things.¹⁰

As we consider Jesus and other promises today, be determined to dwell on His truth throughout your day.¹¹ With this new way of thinking, we can enjoy a new way of living.¹²

1-Heb 10:25; 2-Psalm 103:1; 3-Matt 1:21; 4-Heb 12:3; 5-1 Sam 12:24; 6-Matt 6:25-33; 7-Col 3:2; 8-2 Cor 10:5; 9-1 Peter 2:11; 10-Rom 8:5,6; 11-Psalm 1:1-3; 12-Eph 4:23-24.

DAY 19

SEEING THE HAND OF GOD AT WORK

One of the great dangers in the Christian life is that of being lulled to a point of dullness with regards to the reality of how things are, as opposed to what they appear to be. What do I mean by this? Well, the Apostle Paul expressed his awareness of the fact that Satan had hindered his efforts to visit the church at Thessalonica,¹ and Peter wrote about our adversary the devil, who walks around “seeking whom he may devour.”² However, so many times we are oblivious to the things of the spirit realm because we are so fixed on this earthy, temporal life.³ How vital it is for us to have the discernment to see things from the eternal, spiritual perspective.⁴

There is the work of God going on right now in your life,⁵ which oftentimes does not make sense to us at all.⁶ Even those times of hindrance by the devil must be seen within the context of the sovereign work of God’s Spirit.⁷ We often miss what God is saying to us or working in us because we get lulled into spiritual slumber.⁸

We ought to be living holy lives with a heavenly perspective,⁹ and we ought not to think it strange when we encounter “fiery trials”.¹⁰ Earth is not a playground or an amusement park;¹¹ it is the arena where God chisels us into the image of Jesus.¹²

So don’t question the Maker.¹³ Trust Him!¹⁴

1-1 Thess 2:18; 2-1 Peter 5:8; 3-Rom 8:5-8; 4-2 Cor 4:18; 5-Phil 2:13;
6-Isaiah 55:8,9; 7-Luke 4:1-2; 8-Rom 13:11-14; 9-2 Peter 3:11-14;
10-1 Peter 4:12,13; 11-2 Tim 2:3,4; 12-Rom 8:29; 13-Isaiah 45:9;
14-Prov 3:5,6.

DAY 20

OUR GOD...OUR HELPER

In 1 Chronicles 14:12, there is reference to the Philistines who fled from David in battle. Scripture says that they left their gods or idols there. These “gods” were nothing more than superstitious religious relics that were looked upon for ‘good luck’, health or prosperity. Paul noticed this same kind of superstition in Athens, Greece.¹

These “gods” of ancient times, as those of today, are nothing more than man-made images² which millions of people praise and bow down to, blinded to the hand of God their Creator³ by the god of this world.⁴ But the God of Scripture is the Living God⁵ who made the heavens.⁶ This Creator God is to be feared and worshipped.⁷

He who made all things⁸ at one time physically dwelt among men.⁹ Even now in our battles in life, He is literally with us,¹⁰ and He has promised He will never leave nor forsake us.¹¹

“Blessed be His glorious name forever!”¹²

1-Acts 17:16-23; 2-Psalm 115:4-7; 3-Dan 5:23; 4-2 Cor 4:4;
5-Jer 10:10; 6-Psalm 96:5; 7-Rev 14:7; 8-John 1:3; 9-John 1:14;
10-Matt 28:20b; 11-Heb 13:5c; 12-Psalm 72:19.

DAY 21

INCREASING FAITH

Although we enjoy a glorious rest in Christ,¹ that certainly does not mean that we purpose to remain stationary in our walk. Paul exhorted the church in Thessalonica to increase and abound in love toward one another,² and we too need to keep growing in the practical expression of our faith towards one another.

Faith works by love.³ This increasing love develops personal and congregational holiness.⁴ As we pray for one another and exercise our spiritual gifts and talents, the body is edified and our love for Jesus and one another increases.⁵ All of this happens when Jesus increases and self decreases.⁶

As we exercise ourselves unto godliness,⁷ our faith increases. Increasing faith is a result of a deliberate choice to trust the Lord completely⁸ and walk in obedience to His Word, regardless of what my flesh or circumstances tell me.⁹ As we build one another up in Christ, our faith grows and Jesus is glorified.

Resist the “go with the flow”, cruise-control Christianity that is so popular today. Apply what you have learned, and not only you but others will be blessed.¹⁰

1-Heb 4:3-11; 2-1 Thess 3:12; 3-Gal 5:6; 4-1 Thess 3:13; 5-Eph 4:16;
6-John 3:30; 7-1 Tim 4:7; 8-Prov 3:5,6; 9-2 Cor 5:7; 10-James 1:22-25.

DAY 22

CLICHÉS

Webster says that a cliché is a trite phrase or expression. Have you ever stopped to consider the clichés that exist in the church world? For example, have you ever heard, “Where God guides He provides”? Of course you have; you may have even heard me say that. Well, God does provide for us.¹ In fact, that is one of His names!²

However, we need to find the balance in Scripture in order to avoid hurting others or misrepresenting Jesus. After all the clichés tossed at Job by his three “friends” about how wicked he was, the truth of the matter was (and still is) that God is sovereign in our lives,³ and the LORD is “very compassionate and merciful.”⁴

Read 1st Corinthians 4:11 in light of the “Where God guides He provides” cliché. You see, the real problem is when we ‘invent’ an unbiblical definition to our clichés. What will God provide? He provides strength to do His will⁵ and to follow Him,⁶ food and clothing.⁷ So let’s be careful when we share with one another, that it is Scripture that is being shared and not clichés.

Remember, saints, the Spirit of God convicts,⁸ not condemns⁹ the child of God. Let’s walk in His light and enjoy fellowship with one another.¹⁰ Compassionate truth,¹¹ not carnal clichés, is what helps to develop the image of Christ in our lives.

1-Phil 4:19; 2-Gen 22:14; 3-Job 38-42; 4-James 5:11; 5-Phil 4:13;
6-Acts 1:8; 7-Matt 6:25-32; 8-John 16:8; 9-Rom 8:1,2; 10-1 John 1:7;
11-Eph 4:15.

DAY 23

HONEST AND HARD WORKING

Following Jesus will motivate a person to work hard¹ and be honest.² The Holy Spirit is not the author of laziness or dishonesty.

In the infant stage of the church there were individuals who refused to work. They were disorderly and busybodies.³ It is one thing to be disabled or unable to work, but it is another thing altogether to make no effort to work. God wants His children to be industrious witnesses for Him.⁴ He also wants His children to be people of integrity⁵ and honesty.⁶

Seeking first the Kingdom of God⁷ does not make us irresponsible or dishonest people. Our lives are to send a clear message of diligence and truth in practical matters. Every aspect of our life, be it at home, work, or church, is to reflect the nature of Jesus Christ. It is to be a life of deep devotion to Him which provides the kind of fruit⁸ that draws the unsaved to Christ, not drives them away from Him.

1-Col 3:17; 2-2 Cor 8:21; 3-2 Thess 3:6-12; 4-Eph 6:5-9; 5-Prov 20:7;
6-Rom 13:13; 7-Matt 6:33; 8-Gal 5:22-23.

DAY 24

COME!

If Jesus did not submit to the Father's plan of redemption, mankind could not be saved.¹ But, blessed be His Name, Jesus did finish² all the work necessary for our forgiveness³ through His atoning sacrifice.⁴

Jesus was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.⁵ This is the message of the grace of God.⁶ This is the message of the love of God.⁷ This is the gospel that we are to proclaim, and by which we are saved.⁸

Isaiah foresaw the sacrifice of Messiah Jesus⁹ and prophetically delivered to everyone who thirsts for a real relationship with God the simple invitation to come.¹⁰ Jesus echoed those same words¹¹ even in anticipation of His death on the cross. The Holy Spirit and the bride of Christ are to extend the invitation¹² to whosoever hungers and thirsts for Jesus.¹³

What must you do to be saved today? Call upon the Name of the Lord with all your heart.¹⁴ "For 'whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'"¹⁵

1-Matt 26:39,42; 2-John 19:30; 3-Acts 13:38-39; 4-Rom 3:24-26, Col 1:14; 5-Rom 4:25; 6-Eph 2:8-9; 7-1 John 4:9,10; 8-1 Cor 15:1-4; 9-Isaiah 53; 10-Isaiah 55:1-3; 11-John 7:37-39; 12-Rev 22:17; 13-John 6:35; 14-Acts 16:30,31; 15-Rom 10:13 (Joel 2:32).

DAY 25

SEPTEMBER 11th ... FOUR YEARS LATER

Four years ago on this date our nation was brutally attacked, and it was reeling in the days that followed. Reportedly during those days our nation turned to God... Or did we?¹ What is the spiritual fruit today of that tragedy in our nation's history? Where are the packed churches? Where are the crowded prayer meetings? What happened to the "revival"?

The truth of the matter is that there was no genuine spiritual awakening or revival. The vast majority of people weren't coming to God with godly motives, but were coming for God's help.² You see, we really weren't interested in repenting of our sins; we just wanted God to get rid of the "bad guys" and come to the aid of us "good guys".³ Once again we sang in unison, "God Bless America" without any intention of changing our polytheistic theology⁴ or the murdering of innocent unborn children. We continue to this day to be the number one exporter of immoral filth to the rest of the world!⁵

We are losing our blessings, saints, because as a nation we have forsaken the Lord.⁶ Compare our nation's moral climate to Scripture.⁷ There may be more "consumers" of "ear-tickling" doctrines,⁸ but there certainly is no turning away from sin and self to Christ.⁹

Jesus calls the Church (beginning with the writer of this article) to repent!¹⁰ We need to be cleansed on the inside.¹¹ We need to expose the money-hungry¹² counterfeits¹³ and religious "CEO's",¹⁴ and come to God with broken and contrite hearts.¹⁵ That is what God is looking for.¹⁶

1-John 2:24; 2-2 Cor 7:10; 3-Luke 13:1-5; 4-1 Cor 8:4-6, Jer 10:10;
5-Rom 1:24-32; 6-Jer 17:3, Isaiah 1:14; 7-2 Tim 3:1-5; 8-2 Tim 4:3,4;
9-Luke 9:23-26; 10-Rev 2:5,16,21, 3:3,19; 11-2 Cor 7:1;
12-2 Peter 2:1-3; 13-Matt 7:15; 14-Rev 2:6,15; 15-Psalm 34:18;
16-2 Chron 7:14, Jer 18:7-10.

DAY 26

THE RAPTURE ACCORDING TO ENOCH

In the book of Genesis we read that a man named Enoch was taken off the earth by God without ever experiencing physical death.¹ The Holy Spirit confirms this truth in the book of Hebrews.² This translation of Enoch before the flood judgment of God provides you and me with a type of the Rapture of the Church before the outpouring of the wrath of God known as the “great tribulation”.³

There will be multitudes saved out of the great tribulation,⁴ but like Enoch, the Church will be removed before the time of God’s wrath.⁵ We do not know when Jesus will come to take us home, but we have His promise that He will come.⁶

The Bible tells us something very important about Enoch’s lifestyle, namely, “he walked with God”.⁷ That means that he walked in agreement with God’s truth.⁸ He also had this testimony, “that he pleased God.”⁹ Heaven-bound saints are people who walk with Jesus Christ and seek to please Him in all things.¹⁰

The name Enoch means ‘dedicated’. Have you dedicated your life to Jesus Christ? Are you maintaining a dedicated life?¹¹

Look to Jesus and be saved¹² in your day-to-day walk through life. Look to Jesus and find fresh strength.¹³ “...look up, and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.”¹⁴

1-Gen 5:24; 2-Heb 5:11a; 3-Matt 24:21; 4-Rev 7:14b; 5-1 Thess 1:10;
6-John 14:1-3; 7-Gen 5:22,24; 8-Amos 3:3; 9-Heb 11:5b;
10-1 Thess 4:1; 11-1 Cor 10:31; 12-Isaiah 45:22; 13-Heb 12:1-3;
14-Luke 21:28.

DAY 27

SLEEPING OR SOBER?

In light of the fact that the return of Jesus is imminent, we are exhorted today to be spiritually “sober”.¹ We must avoid anything that intoxicates us.² If there weren’t a danger regarding falling asleep spiritually, the Holy Spirit would have no need to warn us, but He does!³

To be sober-minded is a call to Spirit-filled,⁴ holy living.⁵ The grace of God calls us to live soberly⁶ and in purity.⁷

This living soberly for Christ can never be separated from spiritual warfare.⁸ But when we follow our Lord’s example in dealing with enemy attack⁹ and in prayer,¹⁰ victory is assured!¹¹

To avoid slumbering, we must watch out for thorns¹² which can choke the life out of us. We must maintain a well-balanced spiritual diet.¹³ Above all, we must absolutely rely upon the power of God.¹⁴ Also, forgetting the past and pressing on towards the prize are vital attitudes to staying awake spiritually.¹⁵

O beloved, drink abundantly¹⁶ from the river of life freely.¹⁷

1-1 Thess 5:5-8; 2-Eph 5:18; 3-Rom 13:11-14, Eph 5:14-16; 4-Acts 1:8; 5-1 Peter 1:13-16; 6-Titus 2:11-12; 7-1 John 3:1-3; 8-Eph 6:10-19, 2 Tim 2:3,4; 9-Matt 4:1-11; 10-Luke 11:1-4; 11-1 John 5:4; 12-Luke 8:14; 13-Acts 2:42; 14-2 Cor 4:7; 15-Phil 3:13-14; 16-Song 5:1; 17-Rev 22:17.

DAY 28

READY FOR THE RAPTURE

Although we are absolutely certain that Jesus is coming for His bride, the Church, we do not know exactly when that might be.¹ The uncertainty of the time of our Lord's return for us is a call for readiness.² We must guard our hearts constantly.³

The grace of God that has saved us also calls us to live a life that is totally devoted to Jesus Christ.⁴ To stay on track with Jesus, we need to be exhorting one another on a daily basis.⁵ We need to be praying for our brothers and sisters in Christ.⁶ We need to stay in fellowship⁷ on a regular basis.⁸

The key to doing all of the above is simply a matter of abiding in Jesus⁹ and being faithful with the gifts and talents He has entrusted us with,¹⁰ so that He would be glorified.¹¹

The end is at hand, saints!¹² Hallelujah!

1-Matt 24:42; 2-Matt 24:44; 3-Luke 21:34; 4-Titus 2:11-14;
5-Heb 3:13; 6-Eph 6:18; 7-Heb 10:25; 8-Acts 2:42; 9-John 15:4,
1 John 2:28; 10-Luke 19:11-27; 11-1 Peter 4:10,11; 12-1 Peter 4:7.

DAY 29

WHAT'S A BODY TO DO?

As we come to the close of 1st Thessalonians, we are introduced to some very practical exhortations pertaining to the Christian life.¹ Everything from dealing with different types of people² to avoiding all appearances of evil³ is covered. These nuggets of truth are the very things that are meant to be observed on a daily basis.⁴

When our doctrine,⁵ or what we believe, is correct and applied,⁶ our actions and attitudes likewise will be correct. Setting our affections on things above⁷ will always manifest itself in practical ways.⁸

It is important to remember that these exhortations were written to a young body of believers who were undergoing enemy attack.⁹ Likewise, when our faith comes under enemy attack,¹⁰ it is amazing to discover just how applying these simple truths can turn things around.

By hearing and heeding God's word, our lives and our church can be built upon the rock of truth¹¹ instead of the philosophies of men.¹²

1-1 Thess 5:12-22; 2-1 Thess 5:14; 3-1 Thess 5:22; 4-Prov 8:34;
5-2 Tim 3:16-17; 6-James 1:22-25; 7-Col 3:2; 8-James 2:17,18;
9-1 Thess 1:6; 10-1 Peter 4:12; 11-Matt 7:24-25; 12-Col 2:8.

DAY 30

HE CHANGES NOT!

There is without a shadow of doubt a sense of change in our nation. In a day and age of great perplexity,¹ it is comforting to remember that our God is forever faithful.²

The Holy Scriptures tell us that there is nothing new under the sun.³ The world will always be the world;⁴ it's fads and trends will constantly change, but our God changes not.⁵ We can talk of the world in variable terms like past, present, and future, but our God is forever the "I AM THAT I AM".⁶

The prophet Isaiah twice gave exhortation with these words, "Behold your God!"⁷ How important for us to behold our God, the God of Scripture. Yes, everything that is of this material, physical world is subject to change, but we look at things not seen, things eternal.⁸

Jesus Christ changes not.⁹ He forever is our bread of life,¹⁰ our light,¹¹ our door,¹² our Good Shepherd,¹³ our resurrection and life,¹⁴ our way, our truth, our life,¹⁵ and our true vine.¹⁶

In a world that is constantly changing, what is our calling? "Fear God and keep His commandments,"¹⁷ for to obey God is what true love is all about.¹⁸ And remember, saints, in these times of uncertainty, our God is forever faithful!

1-Luke 21:25; 2-1 Cor 1:9; 3-Ecc 1:9,10; 4-1 John 2:16; 5-Malachi 3:6;
6-Exodus 3:14; 7-Isaiah 35:4, 40:9; 8-2 Cor 4:16-18; 9-Heb 13:8;
10-John 6:48; 11-John 8:12; 12-John 10:7,9; 13-John 10:11,14;
14-John 11:25; 15-John 14:6; 16-John 15:1-5; 17-Ecc 12:13;
18-John 14:15.

DAY 31

THE POWER OF BELIEVING THE WORD

The Scriptures are powerful.¹ There is contained within every word of God² the authority of God Himself.³

However, the word of God will not do us any good at all if we fail to mix that word with faith in our lives.⁴ Faith in God⁵ is an essential part of every believer's life. God rewards that kind of faith.⁶

Precious child of God, take that issue in your life that is troubling you or hindering your growth in Christ and cast it fully upon the Lord.⁷ Simply have faith in God.⁸ Don't let unbelief rob you⁹ of the peace of God. Follow the example of Abraham, who despite all the circumstantial evidence against him, chose to believe the promise of God by faith.¹⁰

Unbelief can hinder us from entering into God's rest in our lives.¹¹ Therefore, we need to understand that faith is not 'mind over matter', but it is trust in God's work in my life.¹² Knowing that God is love¹³ and that He loves me¹⁴ enables me to press on in life in all things.¹⁵

Like the nobleman in the Gospel of John, believe the word that Jesus has spoken¹⁶ and go forward in your life knowing that whatever He has spoken, He is able to bring to pass.¹⁷

1-Heb 4:12; 2-Prov 30:5; 3-2 Tim 3:16,17; 4-Heb 4:2; 5-Mark 11:22;
6-Heb 11:6; 7-1 Peter 5:7; 8-Matt 21:21,22; 9-Matt 13:58;
10-Rom 4:19,20; 11-Heb 3:18,19, 4:6,11; 12-Rom 8:28; 13-1 John 4:8;
14-John 17:23; 15-1 Cor 13:7; 16-John 4:50; 17-Numbers 23:19.

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