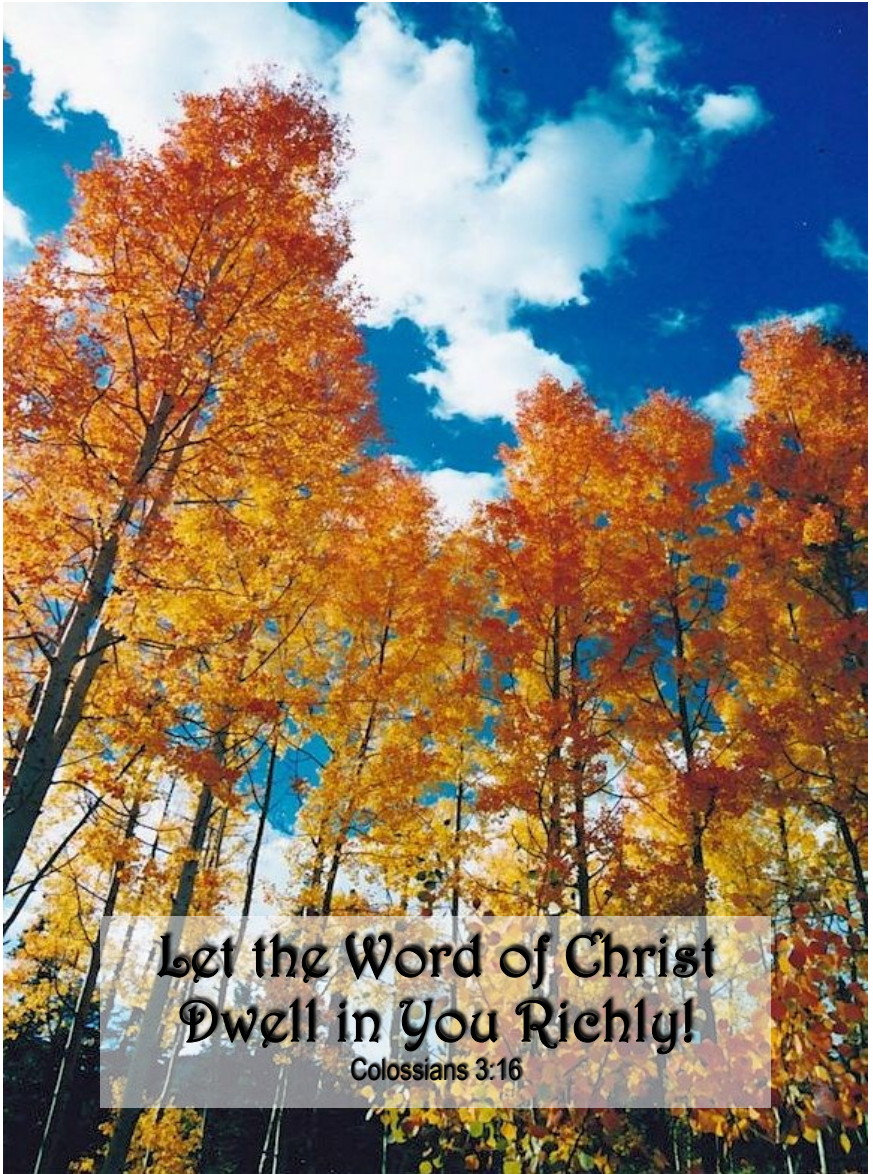


October 2025 Daily Devotional



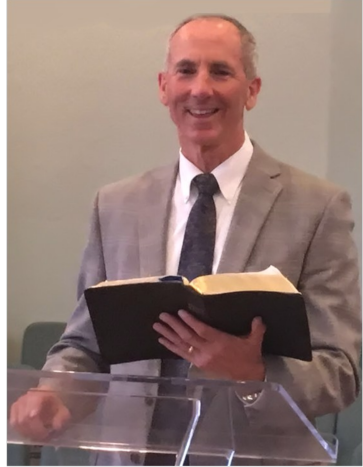
Let the Word of Christ
Dwell in You Richly!

Colossians 3:16

Vistoso Community Church

Foreword

In our October devotions, we are going to, first, continue studying some Old Testament truths found in the lives of two Old Testament Characters: Kings Saul and David. We will then return to our discussion of the *foundations* of our faith and move right into some of the deeper truths of the faith in Ephesians and Romans.



I trust you will take up the challenge to put all of this together. May God bless you as you know Him more fully through His Word, and:

... participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

II Peter 1:4

To that end, I trust that this month's readings will encourage you in the faith!

In His grace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Redig'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'K' and 'R'.

Kevin Redig

All Scripture quotes have been taken from either the NKJV (1992 edition) or the NIV (1984 edition).

Old Testament Characters

Wednesday, October 1: Read I Samuel 13 and 15

Today's reading highlights two areas of Saul's failure that resulted in the kingship being transferred to David. Let's make sure we understand these failures. First, in Chapter 13 Saul took on the role of priest by making the burnt offering as a way to obtain blessing from the Lord. He is severely rebuked by Samuel for his actions.

Then, in Chapter 15, God decides to bring judgment on the Amalekites and gives the order:

"Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy everything that belongs to them. ..." I Samuel 15:13

God's command was that nothing was to be spared, right down to the cattle and sheep, but Saul spared the king and the best of the sheep and cattle. Saul reports back to Samuel that he has carried out his mission. Samuel responds with sarcasm:

... "What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears? What is the lowing of cattle I hear?" I Samuel 15:14

Saul tries a second line of defense by claiming the best were saved to sacrifice to the Lord. Samuel is having none of it and tells Saul:

"... To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams." I Samuel 15:22

At this point Saul finally acknowledges what happened:

"... I was afraid of the people and so I gave in to them." I Samuel 15:24

Continued on the next page.

Old Testament Characters

Wednesday, October 1:

Read I Samuel 13 and 15 (Continued)

Then, for the second time, Samuel makes clear that the kingdom is going to be removed from Saul and from his family line:

“... You have rejected the Word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you as king over Israel.”

I Samuel 15:26, see also 13:13-14

By way of application, how often do we try to solve problems when we should simply wait? How often do we try to make it up to God, which simply amounts to another form of sacrifice, when we should have just been obedient to His Word? What a great line by Samuel to echo in our souls:

“... To obey is better than sacrifice ...”

I Samuel 15:22



1 Samuel 15:22 KJV

And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

Old Testament Characters

Thursday, October 2:

Read I Samuel 19

Although we have had only a partial reading of the Book of I Samuel, we have seen that, after a good start, Saul was guilty of a number of sins against the Lord. As a result, the Lord pronounced discipline upon him. This included the transfer of the kingship from his family line to that of David's. In today's reading, we see that Saul responds, on multiple occasions by trying to kill David. If we kept on reading, we would see that, for an extended period of time, King Saul tries to hunt down and kill the Lord's anointed—David. Saul's existence becomes one of paranoia and the influence of evil spirits.

Here is my question: What if, after being caught in sin and being told God had decided to take the kingdom away from him, Saul had said, "I am guilty! I confess my sin unto the Lord. What can I do to help install God's chosen as the next king of Israel?" In our day of political in-fighting, this might seem far-fetched, but wouldn't it actually be an example of obedience to the Word of God—the written Word and also the Word through the prophet Samuel? What would have happened if he had chosen to cooperate with the plans of God? Do you think the Lord would have been able to find a use for him, to bless him, and to hold him up as an example for those who would follow? I do!

Understanding this truth has made me desire to do the following: When sin is brought to light, confess it; when discipline is required, accept it from the hand of a loving Father; when God sets me aside, put myself at His disposal in order to further His plans and purposes! I feel strongly about this because I don't want my life to end like Saul's! And, all God's people said, "Amen!"

Old Testament Characters

Friday, October 3: Read I Samuel 16

As we have learned, God set Saul aside as king and is going to replace him with someone from outside of his family line. In today's reading we find out who is to be the replacement. There are some very practical lessons to be learned in the process of identifying this new king.

First, even though Samuel has roundly denounced Saul's disobedience, as our reading begins we find him still mourning for what could have been:

The Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? ..."

I Samuel 16:1

In essence, God is asking, "Why are you holding on to the past? I am moving in a new direction—come with me!" How often do we mourn over what could have been in our lives or the lives of our children? It is so much better to develop the ability to be attuned to what the Lord is doing and where He is moving. Notice how this is exactly what God prompts Samuel to do:

... "Fill your horn with oil and be on your way ..."

I Samuel 16:1

In short, the Lord has plans and He wants Samuel in step with them.

Second, look at how it is possible, even for a godly prophet like Samuel, to allow circumstances to loom larger than the plans of God:

But Samuel said, "How can I go? Saul will hear about it and kill me."

I Samuel 16:2

Old Testament Characters

Friday, October 3:

Read I Samuel 16 (Continued)

Finally, fortunately for Samuel, He listened to the Lord and was on his way. But, even then, he continued to display a worldly attitude, for:

**When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought,
“Surely the Lord’s anointed stands here ...”** I Samuel 16:6

Once again, the Lord has to correct Samuel’s thinking, for haven’t they already seen the failure of Saul with his impressive exterior but lack of character on the inside? Here is the way God puts it:

**... “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I
have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things
man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but
the Lord looks at the heart.”** I Samuel 16:7

There you have your introduction to David, a man with a heart such that God chose him to lead His people. With the right heart and family background, work history doesn’t matter so much, as we shall see.



Old Testament Characters

Monday, October 6:

Read I Samuel 17

Today's reading gives us an immediate picture of both the external behavior and the *heart* within, that were the reasons David was chosen by God to be King over Israel. Consider the following:

1. David is obviously a very capable young man. He is *bivocational* in that he is both serving in Saul's court and tending his father's sheep. (I Samuel 17:15) He is also trustworthy enough for his father to send him to the front with food for his three brothers.
2. Note the contrast in attitude between Saul, and his entire army, and David:

On hearing the Philistine's words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified. I Samuel 17:11

Compare Saul's response with David's:

"Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" I Samuel 17:26

A man or woman after God's heart sees his or her God as larger than any boastful giant in this life.

3. Listen to David's testimony regarding his understanding of what it means to walk by faith:

"... The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." I Samuel 17:37

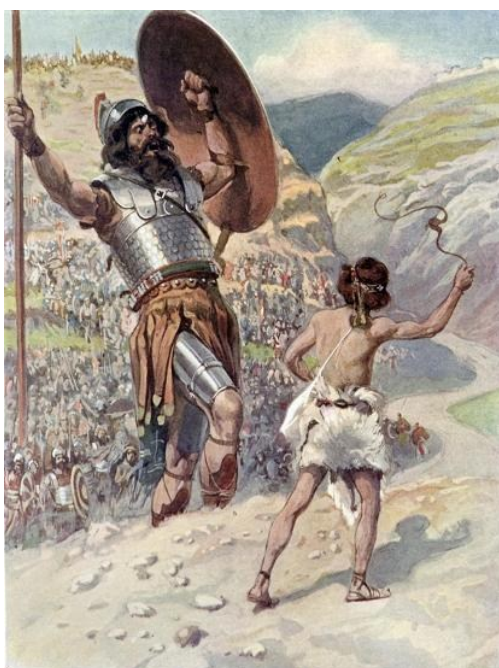
Old Testament Characters

Monday, October 6:

Read I Samuel 17 (Continued)

God has been faithful in the past, and He will be just as faithful, despite the circumstances, in the future.

4. Despite his personal abilities, consider the way in which David relied on the capabilities of his God, rather than his own:



“... it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; the battle is the Lord’s, and He will give all of you into our hands.”

I Samuel 17:47

There, in part, is what it means to be a man or woman after God’s own heart. It is to see God as bigger than any obstacle, to project His faithfulness in the past into the future, and to rest in His infinite capabilities!

We can and should be men and women after God’s own heart as well!

Old Testament Characters

Tuesday, October 7:

Read I Samuel 24

As you learned in today's reading, David had a chance to kill Saul and chose not to do so. His men certainly encouraged him to kill his enemy:

The men said, "This is the day the Lord spoke of when He said to you, 'I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish.'"

I Samuel 24:4

But David would have none of it and tells us why:

... "The Lord forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the Lord's anointed, or lift my hand against him ... "

I Samuel 24:6

Let me suggest that this speaks volumes about David's character and why he was said to be "*a man after God's own heart.*" (I Samuel 13:14) Put yourself in David's shoes: God has promised that you will be the next king of Israel; the current king is trying to unjustly kill you; and now that king unexpectedly and defenselessly shows up in the very cave in which you are hiding. I think most of us would be tempted to justify that as a sign from God, especially if our supporters encouraged us to see it that way too!

Shockingly, we don't read that David ran Saul through with his sword. Instead, we read that he was conscience-stricken over the thought of harming the king that God had put on the throne. What an amazing example of trusting the Lord! Now, why do I say this is an example of trust? David has a promise from God and He is content to wait for God to fulfill that promise—in God's time, not his! He doesn't feel

Old Testament Characters

Tuesday, October 7:

Read I Samuel 24 (Continued)

the need to take matters into his own hands or justify doing so because of circumstances.

Contrast this with the way Abraham tried to fulfill God's promise of an heir through Hagar. What a lot of heartache came through that! David's faith even drowns out the voices of his loyal supporters—truly remarkable.

Can you make the application? Are you and I willing to take God at His Word and let Him fulfill His promises to us, without trying to speed things along? We should be, and in doing so be men and women after God's own heart!

**Wait for the LORD;
be strong and take heart
and wait for the LORD.**

Psalm 27:14



Old Testament Characters

Wednesday, October 8:

Read II Samuel 11

The way the Bible pulls no punches is one of the things that supports its claim that its source is the mind of God rather than that of men. The Jews are proud of David's accomplishments—and rightly so. However, in today's reading, God reveals to us David's great sin! We have space to consider a few important items:

1. First, what was the sin? It was adultery, terribly deceitful behavior with the wife of one of his loyal soldiers, and, then the murder of that loyal soldier.
2. What were the consequences for David's sin? It is the death of the child born in adultery plus calamity within his own family that goes on for the next half dozen chapters.
3. What is it that led to the failure of this man with such a blameless and godly past? Let me suggest several possibilities.

First, David was out of the geographic will of God:

**In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war,
David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole
Israelite army. ...**

II Samuel 11:1

The army was in the field, but David stayed at home with way too much time on his hands. The old adage, *an idle mind is the devil's workshop* comes to mind.

Second, David had separated himself from the spiritual center of Israel. Verse 11 of today's reading makes it clear that the Ark was in the field with the army. That

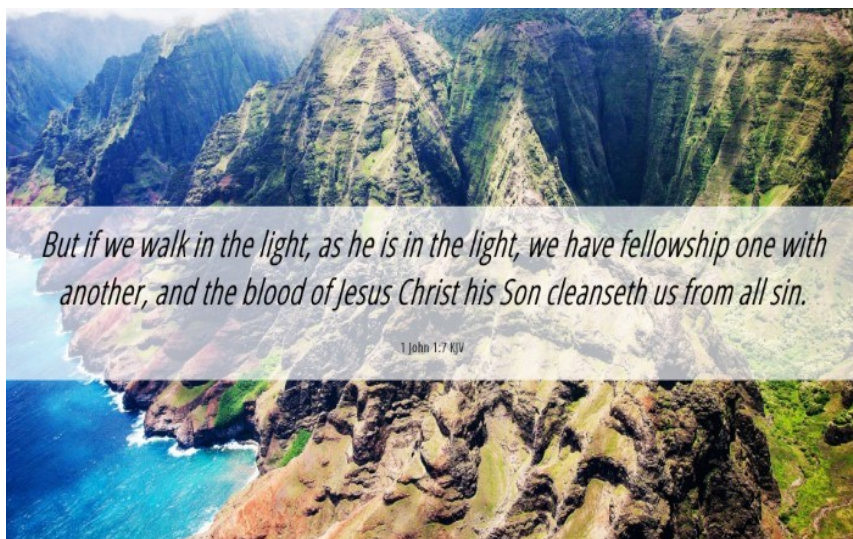
Old Testament Characters

Wednesday, October 8:

Read II Samuel 11 (Continued)

also means at least some of the priests would have been there as well. In short, David is out of touch with his place as commander-in-chief and out of touch with spiritual things. As a result, he comes under the control of his own lusts.

What is the take-home lesson for us? If a man after God's own heart can fall into sin—egregious sin that makes him look no better than an unbeliever—it can get hold of us too. It is no wonder the majority of the New Testament epistles are cautionary in tone. We all need constant reminders to be alert, to be on guard, to stay away from this, to avoid going near that. We would do very well to pay attention to these warnings as we walk in the Spirit and are guided by the Word of God!



Old Testament Characters

Thursday, October 9: Read Psalm 51

Psalms 32 and 51 are believed to have been written by David following his sin with Bathsheba. There is much we can learn from David's response to sin, which is in great contrast to Saul's response. Consider the following:

1. Once convicted by the words of Nathan, David becomes keenly aware of his sin.

For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.

Psalm 51:3

2. Note this carefully. In our reading of II Samuel 11, we learned of David's sin against a number of others, but this psalm says it is against God.

Against You, You only, have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight ...

Psalm 51:4



Sin is an affront to God's holiness!

Old Testament Characters

Thursday, October 9: Read Psalm 51

(Continued)

That is because all sin is primarily against God. Sin is an affront to His holiness and, as Christians, it is completely out of nature for who and what we are in Christ. With any and every sin, I suggest we recognize that we have first sinned against God and then, depending upon the sin, towards others. This is important because we need to address the effects of sin between us and God first, before we can address its impact on others.

3. What does God desire when we sin? How should we approach Him?

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—These O God, You will not despise.

Psalm 51:17

Far too often we try to address our sin by *making it up* to God. This verse makes it clear that what He is looking for begins with a certain attitude of heart.

4. Then, once we have come to Him broken and contrite, what do we do? Let me borrow from Psalm 32:5:

Then I acknowledged my sin to You and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord." And You forgave the guilt of my sin.

New Testament or Old, confession from a humbled and contrite heart leads to forgiveness—thanks to the finished work of the cross and the graciousness of our God!

Returning to Foundations

**Friday, October 10:
Read I Corinthians 3:1-15**

As we pick up our consideration of the *Foundations of the Christian Life*, we are going to begin with a topic that nobody wants to hear about. In fact, many even deny it is possible for the Christian. The Word of God, however, assures us that it is. I am speaking of the potential for *carnality* in the life of the Christian.

The word carnal literally refers to that which has the nature and appetites of the flesh. It is a term used to describe the individual who is living in accordance with the desires of their sinful nature. Allow me to show you this possibility from the Scriptures:

And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ.

I Corinthians 3:1

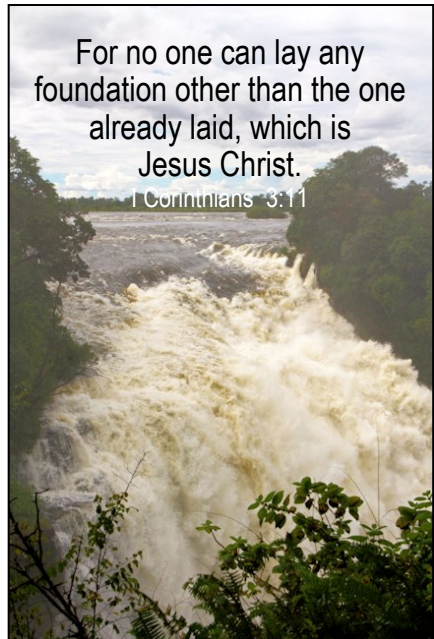
Paul is speaking to the church in Corinth and refers to them as *brethren* and *babes in Christ*. Clearly, he is referring to a group he considers to be saved individuals. Their problem is not one of being lost rather than saved, for their salvation has already been addressed at the point they placed their faith in Christ and became positionally sanctified in Christ. (I Corinthians 1:2) Rather, their problem is that, although eternally saved, they are carnal Christians rather than spiritual ones. And, that is a recipe for receiving discipline from the Lord—something we should want to avoid at all costs. For the Corinthian church, this is a well documented problem.

Returning to Foundations

**Friday, October 10:
Read I Corinthians 3:1-15
(Continued)**

A quick survey of problems in the church include: incest (Chapter 5), law suits among brethren and sexual immorality (Chapter 6); idolatry (Chapter 10); drunkenness at the Communion Table (Chapter 11); and the misuse of spiritual gifts (Chapter 14). Now, Corinth was a very pagan and debauched place, so it is not surprising that new believers would bring old practices into the church. But it is most certainly not an acceptable part of the Christian Life!

So, the Book of Corinthians is all about how Paul is seeking to guide the church out of carnality and into a sanctified life. It is a process in which we all as Christians need to be fully engaged. So, we conclude for today having documented the possibility of carnality in the life of the Christian. Tomorrow we will take a look at the solution. As you can imagine, it is going to include the Word of God, faith, and the Holy Spirit!



Returning to Foundations

Monday, October 13:

Read I Peter 2:1-11

So, how is the Christian to live a life that is spiritual rather than carnal? That is the issue we raised in yesterday's devotional and will try to answer today. Today's reading includes some very practical advice:

Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

I Peter 2:1-3

Let's start from the end of this passage and work back towards its beginning:

1. Who is it that has *tasted* that the Lord is good? The ones who have placed their faith in Christ unto eternal life.
2. So, what does such an individual need more than anything else? Our passage tells us—to grow up in his or her salvation!
3. How do you grow spiritually? The passage tells us that as well: By craving *pure spiritual milk*—that would be the truths of God's Word.
4. What happens when any of us grow spiritually? Why, the old manner of life goes and is replaced by that which we find in the Word of God. We may not quite have arrived at the point of *spirituality* instead of *carnality*, but we are on the right path.

Returning to Foundations

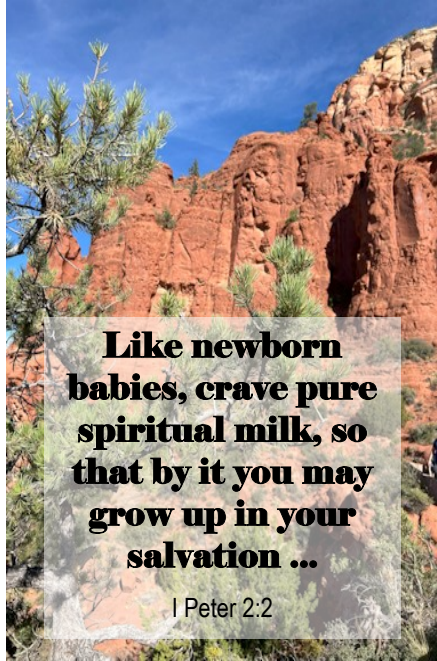
Monday, October 13:

Read I Peter 2:1-11 (Continued)

There are two more things to glean from today's reading. Peter sees those who have responded in faith to the person and work of Christ to be:

... chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God ... called out of darkness into His wonderful light. I Peter 2:9

With this being the case, of course, it is inappropriate for us to live carnal lives! We are to be a spiritual people simply because that is the only kind of life that would match with who we are in Christ. Peter further adds, it is the only kind of life that fits with our heavenly citizenship.



Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. I Peter 2:11

The struggle is real. We start with *craving the pure spiritual milk of the Word*, but there is more!

Returning to Foundations

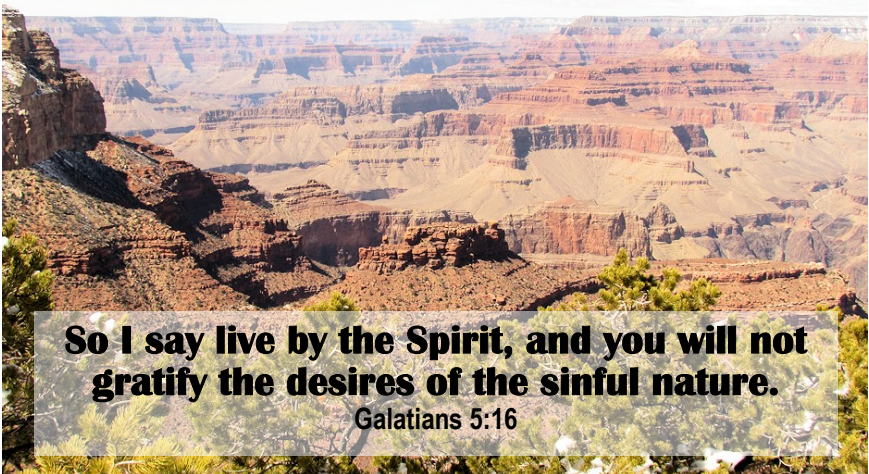
**Tuesday, October 14:
Read Galatians 5:13-26**

We have looked at this passage during our study of the Holy Spirit, now let's consider it in terms of pursuing *spirituality* as infinitely preferable to *carnality*.

So I say live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.

Galatians 5:16-17

We grow by first taking in the Word. Then, we must put it into practice through a life lived by means of the Holy Spirit. He teaches us, He enables us to avoid the desires of the flesh, and He produces fruit in our lives. We must thoroughly understand that the flesh will constantly seek to have its own way, and that way will be contrary to what the Spirit desires.



So I say live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

Galatians 5:16

Returning to Foundations

Tuesday, October 14:

Read Galatians 5:13-26 (Continued)

How can we know which is which? That is easy: What the Spirit desires is what the Word of God has to say! The Word of God and the Spirit will always be in alignment. This is just another of the many reasons why we must *crave the pure spiritual milk of the Word!*

So, using language we have covered earlier in our study:

To be spiritual is to be in fellowship with God, and walking in light of both the Word of God and the enabling power of the Holy Spirit! In contrast, to be carnal is to live under the influence of the flesh—the sinful nature, which remains even though we are children of God.

What are we to do if we realize we have become carnal in our thought life or behavior? We have covered this as well. From God's perspective, the only acceptable response from the carnal Christian is to repent and confess the sin. That is, to recognize the carnality and take up God's provision to change our status.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:9

This is where faith comes in. We take God at His Word that, if we confess, He will forgive and purify. Not only that, He will restore us to fellowship and once more allow the indwelling Holy Spirit to fill and influence the soul in keeping with the light of God's Word. That's spirituality—and nothing else will do for the child of God!

Returning to Foundations

Wednesday, October 15:

Read I John 2:1-17

To be spiritual is to walk (live) by the Spirit. Allow me to remind you of our definition of what it means to do so.

To walk (live) in the Spirit is to moment-by-moment maintain the filling of the Spirit, through the influence of both the indwelling Spirit and indwelling Word of God, that the life of Christ might be manifest in us as we navigate life's daily demands.

As we have seen, the sin nature seeks to derail such a walk and instead have its own way. It is an internal voice that we must allow the Spirit of God to render impotent in our lives. But we also have an external adversary of which we must be aware. The Bible calls it *the world*.

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

I John 2:15-17

Actually, in the same way the Word of God and the Holy Spirit work in tandem, so too do the sin nature and the world. For the world seeks to stimulate the sin nature that it would gain control in the life of the individual. As you can see in today's reading, it does that by seeking to stimulate the craving or appetites of the flesh, through images that stimulate various kinds of lust or pride. Just think of how much both commercial advertising and Hollywood seek to do exactly this.

Returning to Foundations

Wednesday, October 15:

Read I John 2:1-17 (Continued)

Now, why is this collectively called *the world*? It is because the things that come from the fallen world, which are external to the Christian, are not the things of God. There is a reason for that:

We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.

I John 5:19

Adam and Eve were given dominion over this world but, when they sinned, Satan usurped the rulership intended for mankind. His actions are bounded by our sovereign God, but he is the current ruler of this world—and he is very actively working behind the scenes to “*blind the minds of unbelievers*” so that they would not believe. (II Corinthians 4:4). And, it is not just unbelievers! Satan is equally happy to entangle the believer in carnality.



... If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

I John 2:15

Thankfully, we know the way forward: A walk of faith, by the Spirit, and as guided by the Word of God!

And all God's people said, "Amen!"

Lessons from Ephesians

**Thursday, October 16:
Read Ephesians 1:15-23**

It will take several days to even scratch the surface of the rich content on prayer that is in these few verses of the Book of Ephesians. Paul is going to start with a very general prayer request on behalf of the believers in Ephesus and then move to the specific. Let's start with the general:

**... ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus
... I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ ... may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know Him better.**

Ephesians 1:15-17

The word translated *prayer* conveys the idea of expressing a desire toward another. Paul has a desire for those to whom he ministered in Ephesus, and so he is bringing it right to the Lord, repeatedly. When he prays for a Spirit of wisdom and revelation, he is praying for the ongoing ministry of the Holy Spirit that Jesus promised.

"But when the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth ..."

John 16:13

Then, Paul is praying for revelation to foster the process of ongoing sanctification described by Jesus in John 17:17.

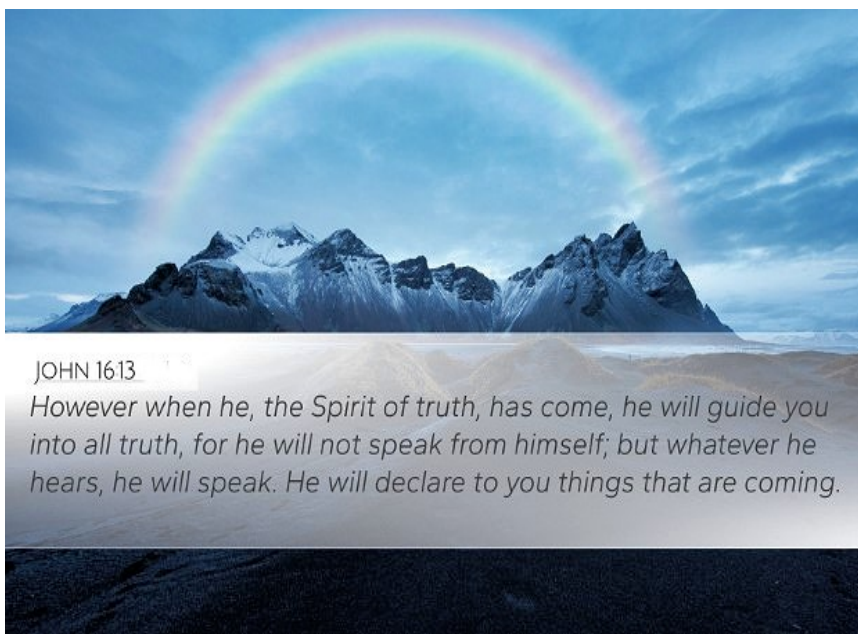
"Sanctify them by Your truth, Your Word is truth."

Lessons from Ephesians

Thursday, October 16:

Read Ephesians 1:15-23 (Continued)

Don't miss this connection. Paul doesn't want them to have wisdom and revelation in order to achieve intellectual mastery of Biblical subject matter. Instead, he wants them to better know the Living Word who stands behind the written Word—the Lord Jesus Christ. I would suggest that this is the Father's desire for all those who have believed down through the ages.



Lessons from Ephesians

Friday, October 17: Read Philippians 3

We continue today with Paul's prayer in Ephesians 1 for the believers to whom he has ministered. Today we get into the details. He has three specific requests that can be summarized by these terms: *hope*, *inheritance*, and *power*. Let's focus upon the first part today—hope:

**I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened
in order that you may know the hope to which He has
called you ...** Ephesians 1:18

What is this hope? We typically think of hope related to spending eternity in heaven, and that is most certainly the believer's confident expectation. But that interpretation in this case is to miss the qualifier, "*the hope to which He has called you.*" What is God's calling, and in what way is it our hope? If we allow the context of the Book of Ephesians to answer our questions, then the answer is quite clear. For the second half of the book is all about:

**... walk worthy of the calling to which we have been
called,** Ephesians 4:1

In this context, we are called to live a transformed life!

**For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be con-
formed to the image of His Son ...** Romans 8:29

Do you see it? Our expectation, as those who have been blessed in Christ with every spiritual blessing, should include the hope of transformation!

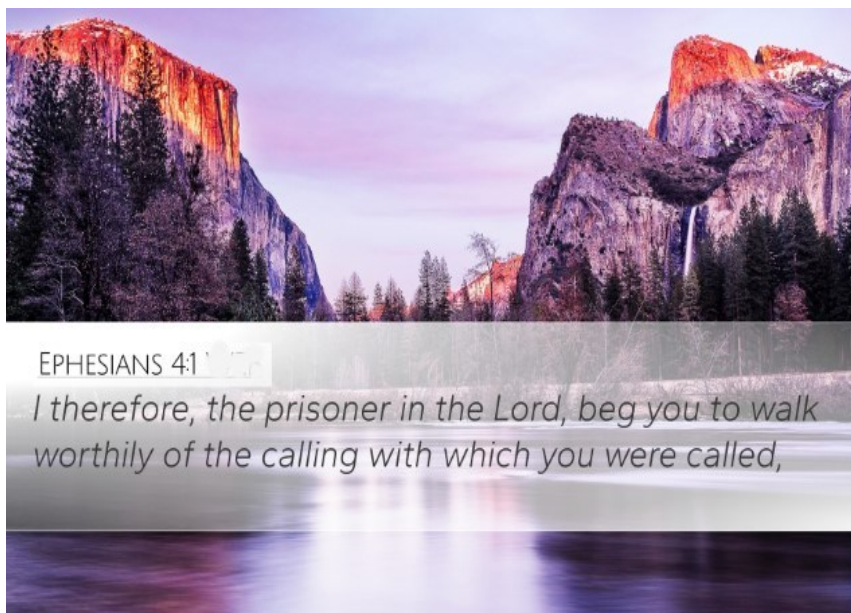
Lessons from Ephesians

Friday, October 17: Read Philippians 3 (Continued)

In contrast, what hope does the world offer? What is the hope of many who retire to the northwest side of Tucson? I hope ours would include ongoing change—something like this:

... forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:13-14



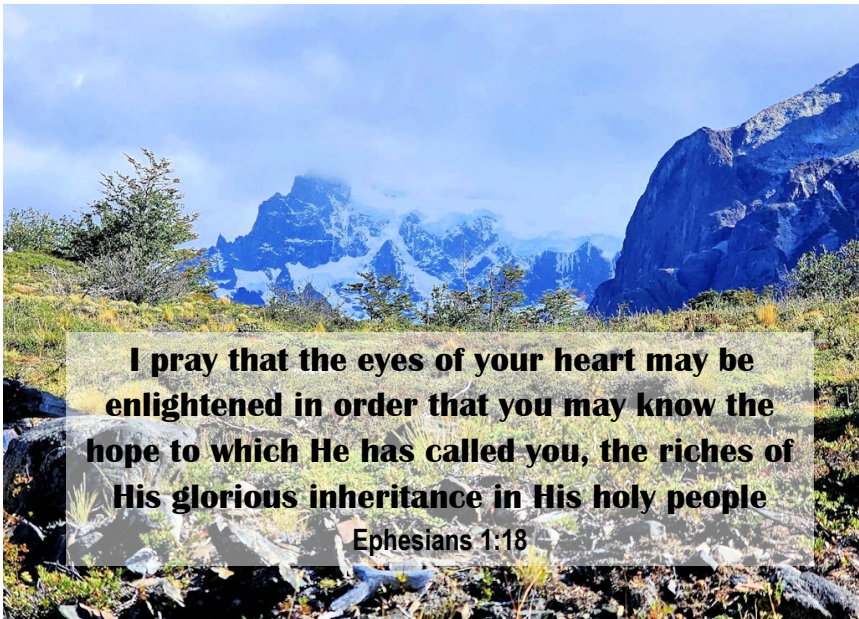
Lessons from Ephesians

Monday, October 20: Read Romans 8

We are continuing our investigation of Paul's prayer in the opening verses of his letter to the Ephesians:

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know ... the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, ... Ephesians 1:18

Today's devotional focuses on the word *glorious*. For, we know that our inheritance consists of things like an eternal home, an eternal state in an incorruptible body, and many other blessings.



Lessons from Ephesians

Monday, October 20: Read Romans 8

(Continued)

But, have you ever realized the *glory* aspect of our inheritance? Consider the following:

1. Sin leads to a shortcoming with respect to glory:

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 3:23

2. God's plan of reconciliation includes a return to glory. In fact, the nature of our position *in Him*, as laid out in the Book of Ephesians, guarantees we are recipients of glory by virtue of our association with Christ!

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs ... that we may also be glorified together.

Romans 8:16-17

Amazing! Every child of God is going to be glorified with the Lord Jesus Christ!

3. It is almost too much to comprehend—the Father's so-great salvation includes a provision for all of heaven to be populated with glorified heirs. We have an inheritance and one that is glorious. Our good news Gospel provides that promise:

Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

Romans 8:30

Lessons from Ephesians

Tuesday, October 21:

Read Philippians 4

Today we look at the third and final part of Paul's powerful prayer for the Church—power.

**... that you may know ... His incomparably great power
for us who believe ...** Ephesians 1:18-19

Let's break this down to extract as much as possible:

1. Did you note this power is for us who believe? What hinders the power of God in our lives? Unbelief! Take careful note that I am not asking what checks the power of God, I am asking what keeps it from being manifest in our lives. Again, the answer is unbelief! This applies, first of all, to a lost person getting saved. Secondly, it applies to a saved person living the abundant life that God is willing to provide.
2. This incomparably great power for those who believe is a proven power. I say this because we sometimes question whether or not God is capable of handling the situation we are facing. Of course He is! His power is incomparable and it has been tested and proven more than sufficient. How do I know this? Because scripture tells me that this:

**... power is like the working of His mighty strength,
which He exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the
dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly
realms, ...** Ephesians 1:19-20

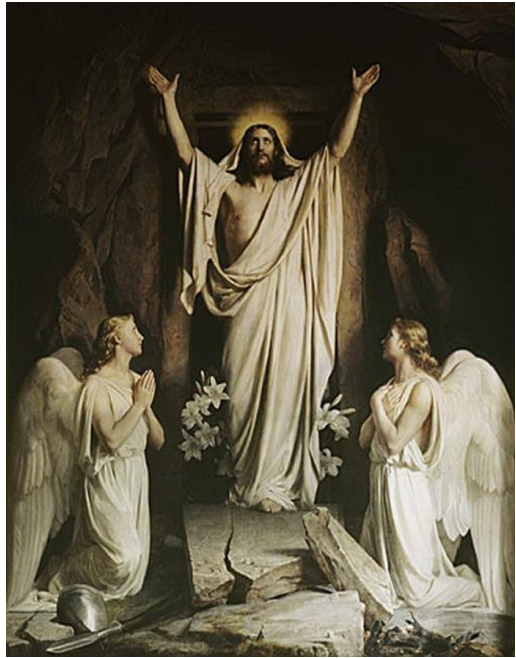
Lessons from Ephesians

Tuesday, October 21:

Read Philippians 4 (Continued)

Are you following? The same power that raised Christ from the dead and seated Him in the highest place, *far above all rule and authority, power, and dominion* is available to be at work in our lives. That kind of power is more than enough to meet any need we might ever have.

3. Lastly, just a reminder about whose power we are discussing. It is not our power! We often wish that we were stronger



with respect to our spiritual lives. Let me suggest the real answer is to see ourselves as weak and helpless. If we do, we are much more likely to know the incomparable power of God available through His Son because:

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Philippians 4:13

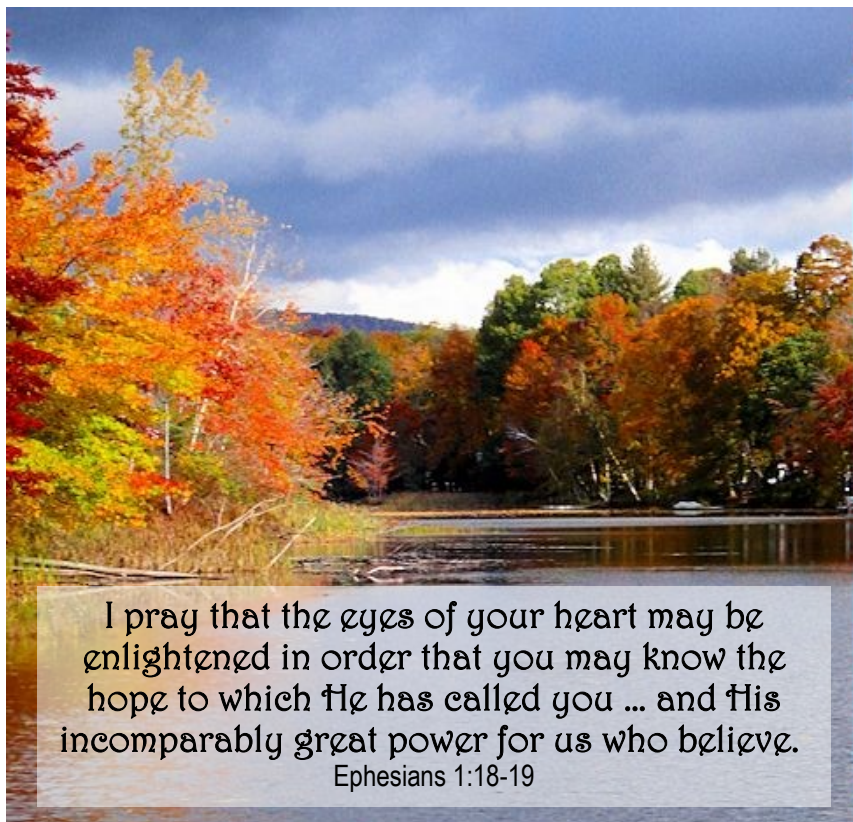
Lessons from Ephesians

Wednesday, October 22:

Read II Peter 1

That we would know *His incomparably great power for us who believe!*

We were introduced to this great prayer request by Paul yesterday. Now I would like to give you a few questions to ponder. Do you know this power in your life? Is this just an exaggeration regarding the Christian Life? Should we all just get used to living at a level that is less than depicted for the believer in the Bible?



I pray that the eyes of your heart may be
enlightened in order that you may know the
hope to which He has called you ... and His
incomparably great power for us who believe.

Ephesians 1:18-19

Lessons from Ephesians

Wednesday, October 22:

Read II Peter 1 (Continued)

I trust you want to know the power of God at work in your life, and realize that anything else is somehow a failure. Let me show you this from today's reading:

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, and escape the corruption in the world ...

II Peter 1:3-4

The provision to live a godly life is complete! It is possible for us to participate in the divine nature. Then, why don't we? Let me suggest these reasons:

- A failure on our part to know the promises contained in the Word
- A failure to appropriate by faith what God has promised
- A failure to rest from our own efforts while depending solely upon Him.

It is God's will that we know His promises to us, bring them into our lives by faith, and then rest in His sufficiency. God's promises are typically not fulfilled apart from this process. This can be a hard lesson that God is going to require us to learn. For, just as there was no way of salvation apart from His way (faith in Christ), neither is there a way to spirituality apart from His way of *know, appropriate by faith, rest!* We'll do more tomorrow, but this should give you something to think about.

Lessons from Ephesians

Thursday, October 23:

Read Zechariah 4

Let's build our understanding of yesterday's reading in Ephesians by asking the question, "What exactly is this exceedingly great power for which Paul is praying?"

1. This power is a reference to the Holy Spirit as we see in this promise Jesus made to His disciples:

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you ..."

Acts 1:8

2. The Spirit of God has always been the means by which God enables His people and allows them to accomplish His purposes.

... "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the Lord of hosts. ..."

Zechariah 4:6

You see Paul knows that the very same Spirit of God that enabled Governor Zerubbabel to rebuild the temple—the very same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead—is available to every born-again child of God!

3. Who exactly has the Holy Spirit and how do you get Him? All who have placed their faith in the person and work of Christ are indwelt by the Holy Spirit:

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, Who is in you, whom you have received from God? ...

I Corinthians 6:19

Lessons from Ephesians

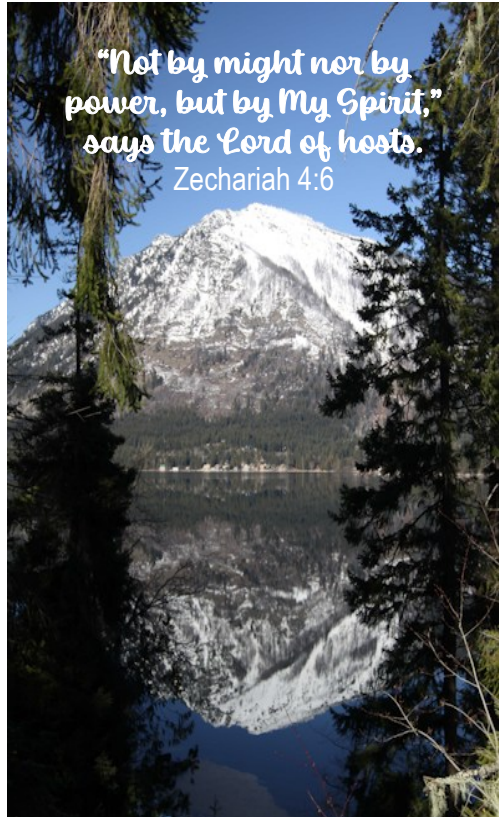
Thursday, October 23:

Read Zechariah 4 (Continued)

4. Now here is something really important to ponder: If every Christian has the Holy Spirit, then does every Christian know the incomparably great power of the Holy Spirit in his or her life? Let me suggest to you the answer is: "No!" Thus, the issue for us becomes manifesting His power!

No Christian can claim he or she doesn't have the Spirit of God because the Spirit is ours from the moment we believe. Rather, the problem is often one of not having the Spirit's power. All Christians have a relationship with the Spirit, but not all manifest His power in their daily lives.

We'll explore some reasons this can occur tomorrow.



Lessons from Ephesians

Friday, October 24: Read Galatians 5

We are going to press right on today with devotional thoughts regarding the ministry of the Holy Spirit—specifically, how can His power be manifested in our lives. Consider three points for today:

1. At issue for the Christian is not whether or not he or she has the Spirit, but whether or not he or she is filled with the Spirit:

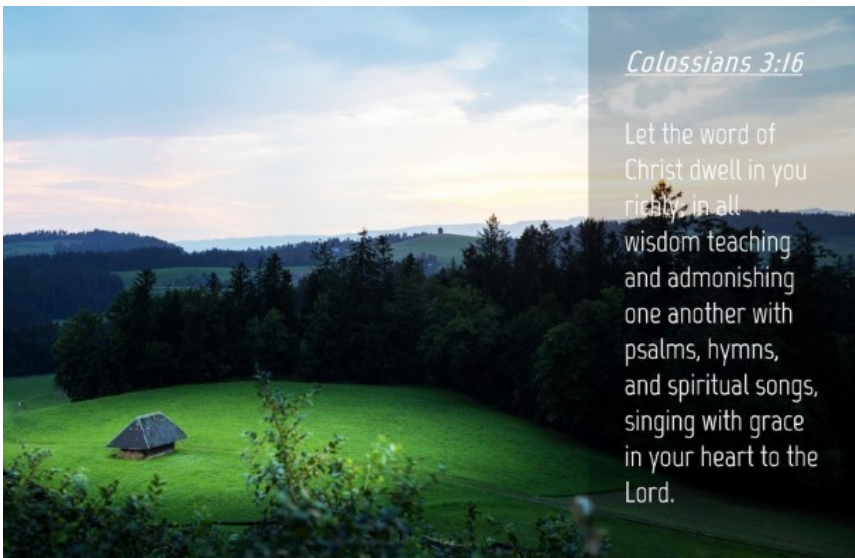
And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, ...

Ephesians 5:18

Note that the above verse is written to believers. In addition to being filled, there is the walk of the Spirit:

I say then: Walk by the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Galatians 5:16



Lessons from Ephesians

Friday, October 24: Read Galatians 5

(Continued)

2. The two preceding verses are two sides of the same coin. The filling of the Spirit raises the issue of our moment-by-moment status. At any given moment, we are either filled with the Spirit or we are not. The walk of the Spirit refers to our perpetuating the filling of the Spirit through time.
3. The ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian is a deep and rich topic. It is well beyond the scope of a daily devotional, but let me suggest two things that will help maintain the filling of, and walk by, the Spirit:
 - First, keep short accounts. By that I mean regularly spend time examining your life and confessing any sin of which the Spirit convicts. To have unconfessed sin in the life grieves the Spirit (Ephesians 4:30) and compromises the filling of the Spirit.
 - Second,

Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly.

Colossians 3:16

For the Word of God gives the Spirit the raw material needed to perpetuate a walk of the Spirit. For the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17), and we are sanctified by the truth (John 17:17).

This is much to think about, but it is worth the effort in order to have the exceedingly great power of God manifested in us!

Returning to Romans

Monday, October 27:

Read Romans 6:15-23

I trust you recall what we have learned thus far in this second half of Romans. God, through Paul's writing, has asked us to evaluate closely who, or what, we have chosen to serve. It is possible to serve the sinful nature, which leads to broken fellowship and slavery to increasing wickedness. We lose if we go there!

However, we learned that what God is after, and has provided for, is putting ourselves under orders to obedience—leading to righteousness and a life that God would label as *holy!* I trust you saw exactly this in today's reading. I have come back to exactly the point at which we left off because of the importance of understanding this very clear and straight-forward way of looking at the life we are called to live.

Let's start here! From here I want to spend a few days looking at the foundation from which we are to live the quality of life to which we are called.

First, contrary to some popular theologies, it is quite possible for the life of a Christian to be a spiritual disaster. All that has to happen for that to occur is for the believer in Christ to become entangled in the things of this world and/or put themselves under orders to the appetites and desires of their sinful nature. The whole dialogue of Romans 6, and most of the New Testament epistles, spend the majority of their time warning Christians of both pitfalls and error to

Returning to Romans

Monday, October 27:

Read Romans 6:15-23 (Continued)

avoid. The reason they do that is because it is entirely possible for the Christian to err, and we must be constantly on-guard against doing so.

Second, acknowledging the reality of failure is most certainly not condoning it. Nor is it meant to seem like a hopeless task. On the contrary, it is to force us to pay very close attention to what God has in grace provided, and rejoice in promises such as this:

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. II Peter 1:3-4



As you can see, God has provided what we need to participate in His nature and escape both the desires of the flesh and the lure of the world. We'll pick it up here tomorrow.

Returning to Romans

Tuesday, October 28:

Read Ephesians 2

For the next two days, I would like you to take a *big picture* view of the life of the believer in Jesus Christ. On the one hand, God has given us everything we need for life and godliness. Romans 6 documents many of those things including our identification with both the death of Christ as the means to separate us from sin's power in our life, as well as our identification with the resurrection of Christ as the source of the new life we have in our Savior. Yet the sin nature remains.

Paul has laid it out for us that we will serve one or the other: Obedience leading to holiness and fullness of life or sin leading to broken fellowship and nothing of value. The challenges associated with living up to this very high standard are very real and failure can lead to discouragement! So, let's pause and remind ourselves of something else that God has provided: Our *Position in Christ*! Every child of God has a *Position in Christ*. This is our firm anchor and our guarantee of the future.



Ephesians 1:6

*to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which
He freely bestowed favor on us in the Beloved,*

Returning to Romans

Tuesday, October 28:

Read Ephesians 2 (Continued)

This is what allows us to be *highly favored in the Beloved* (Ephesians 1:6), even on a day marked with failure. Here is something that can help us manage the demands of the Christian Life:

The sanctified life to which we are called is simply the process of becoming, in our daily walk, what we already are in our position!

Now let me prove it to you from the Scriptures: If you have placed your faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ unto eternal life, then here is just a sampling of the things that are true of you—whether you know it or not!

- You are now alive in Christ, raised up with Him, and right now seated with Him in the heavenly realms! (Ephesians 2:4-6)
- As a *new creation in Christ*, your life is now hidden with Him in God. (Colossians 3:3)
- You died with Christ and have been raised up with Him to newness of life. (Romans 6:3-6)
- You have every spiritual blessing on reserve for you in heaven. (Ephesians 1:3)

Not a single one of these marvelous blessings are yours because you did something to earn them. They are yours for the sole reason that, as a child of God, you are now so intimately related to your Savior that the Bible over and over again refers to the child of God as one who is *in Christ!* There it is, the most important prepositional phrase in the Bible, and it is a grace blessing for you and me! We'll pick up right here tomorrow.

Returning to Romans

Wednesday, October 29:

Read I Corinthians 1

Yesterday we took up the Biblical concept of *Positional Truth*—that which is ours by virtue of being *in Christ* which, in turn, is a part of our salvation. We'll pick right up where we left off yesterday.

Positional Truth is not something we experience, it is something that is true upon the authority of the Scripture. This means it is not something we *feel*, it is something that we believe. And, we are most certainly to take the position:

We live by faith and not by outward appearances.

II Corinthians 5:7

So, when the Scriptures tell us that God has put us *in Christ* and for that reason we are righteous, holy and redeemed (I Corinthians 1:30), we are to take Him at His Word!

As a closely-related corollary, there is no way for us to come to an understanding of our position in Christ apart from it being so clearly disclosed in God's Word. Thus, we must be diligent to learn these truths, rejoice in them, and stand firm in them!

Paul's greeting to the church in Corinth is very helpful in helping us to understand the relationship between our *position* and our *walk*.

To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours.

I Corinthians 1:2

Note that those who made up the church in Corinth had brought all kinds of sin from the culture into the church.

Returning to Romans

Wednesday, October 29:

Read I Corinthians 1

And, Paul is going to spend most of this letter trying to straighten them out. But notice how he starts:

... to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be His holy people ...

I Corinthians 1:2

At first glance, this phrase makes no sense because the word translated sanctified and the one translated holy are basically the same word. How can you be holy and at the same time called to be holy? Here is the answer: They are holy (sanctified) because they are *in Christ Jesus*, a reference to their position. But they are having a lot of problems with respect to their daily *walk*. Paul, in no uncertain terms, is going to lay out for them the need for a holy walk.

This brings us back to where we started yesterday. As Christians, we should glory in our *position* in Christ. As we do, one very important way to understand what God wants

us to do in our lives is to realize He wants to bring our daily *walk* into conformity with the *position* that is already ours in Christ. It will take a life-time to get there, but the goal should remain perfectly clear for everyone seeking to be a follower of Jesus: Our goal is to become in our daily walk what we already are as a result of our position *in Christ*!



Returning to Romans

Thursday, October 30:

Read Romans 7:1-13

Upon leaving Romans Chapter 6, we have a Christian who is not only forgiven, not only clothed with the righteousness of Christ, but also dead to the power of the sin nature and alive unto God in Christ Jesus. You would think that such a spiritual person now has everything he or she needs to live the Christian Life. Almost! There is one more thing we need and that is gloriously developed in Chapter 8. But before we get there, most of us are going to learn the hard way that there is a major pitfall we must avoid.

Specifically, we need to determine what are we going to count on to enable us to live the *Christian Life*? Romans 7 tells us what not to do. In no uncertain terms, it tells us that trying to live the Christian Life by the Law is not the way to go! And, this prohibition doesn't have to refer just to the Mosaic Law, it can be any system of do's and don'ts.



**Now that faith has come, we are no longer
under the supervision of the law. Galatians 3:25**

Returning to Romans

Thursday, October 30:

Read Romans 7:1-13 (Continued)

These systems are not based on faith—and the child of God is to unequivocally live by faith!

... “The righteous will live by faith.” The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, “The man who does these things will live by them.” Galatians 3:11-12

The problem is that we have many theological voices in our day, telling us to live by the law, for example:

Genuine sanctification will show itself in habitual respect for God’s law, and habitual effort to live in obedience to it as the rule of life. Ryle

Now, let’s see what the Word of God has to say:

So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ ... by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we may serve in the new way of the Spirit ... Romans 7:4-6

The law is absolutely not meant to be the rule of life for the Christian—walking by the Spirit is! That will be the subject of Romans Chapter 8 because:

Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law. Galatians 3:25

Does this mean we are lawless? Certainly not! God has provided exactly what we need:

... in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature, but according to the Spirit. Romans 8:4

You see an external set of rules will not do it. We need the internal enabling power of the Holy Spirit! More to come.

Returning to Romans

**Friday, October 31:
Read Romans 7:14-24**

Yesterday I hinted at a major pitfall we need to avoid. That pitfall would be thinking that any system of do's and don'ts would enable us to live the Christin Life. They will not! They have no power to deal with this:

I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.

Romans 7:18-19

No set of rules has the power to deal with the flesh. And, if we try to keep it under control from the source of our own will power, Romans 7 tells us exactly where we are going to end up:

What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?

Romans 7:24

Trying harder is not going to do it! Finding the right system is not going to do it! Maintaining our separation from the flesh, and accomplishing the good works that God has in mind for us to do, requires a supernatural source of enablement. And, God has indeed provided that supernatural source through what Romans 8 is going to refer to as the *Spirit of Christ*!

And, by the way, if you look at Romans 7 again, you will notice that even the apostle Paul could not avoid what I call the *wretched man syndrome*. Just like Paul, we can't do it on our own.

Returning to Romans

Friday, October 31:

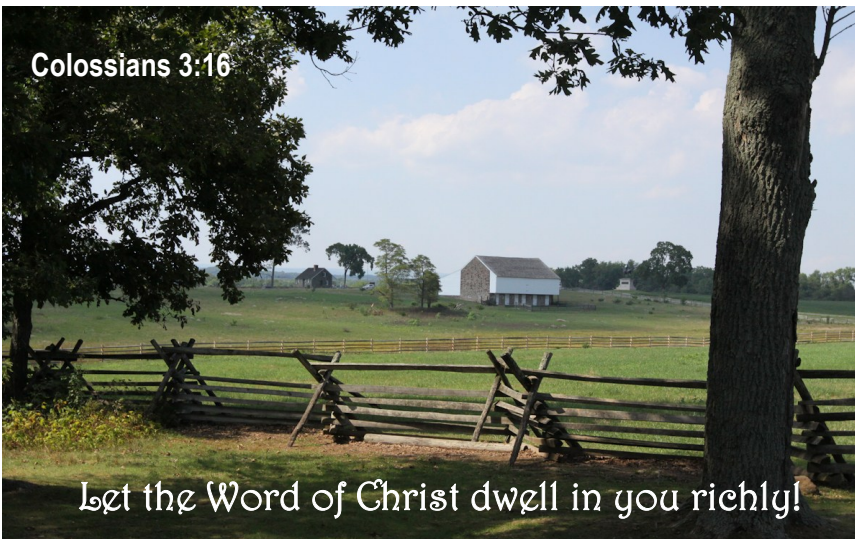
Read Romans 7:14-24 (Continued)

Look at what Paul says after declaring he is a wretched man:

Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Romans 7:25

That's where the answer is to be found—in our Savior. The Father's plan of redemption has covered everything. We have the *Cross of Christ* to break the sin nature's power, and the *Life of Christ* to replace who we were in Adam. Now, when we return to Romans, we are going to be introduced to the *Spirit of Christ* who will both maintain our death to the flesh and enable our new life in Christ. In the meantime, we need to be convinced that we cannot do this from our own strength, instead that we need that which God provides. And, thankfully, He has!



Colossians 3:16

Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly!

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Community Church

He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit...*John 15:5*

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