

THE APOSTLE PAUL'S
Prison
Epistles

OUTLINES & DEVOTIONS
FOR

EPHESIANS
PHILIPPIANS
COLOSSIANS
& PHILEMON

COMPILED BY
PASTOR STEPHEN HILDEBRANDT
© FEBRUARY 2009

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Ephesians

(20 sermons)

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Ephesians

Written by
The Apostle Paul

60 A.D.

City of Ephesus

- Fourth largest city in the world in the first century.
- Trade center between east & west and the richest city in Asia.
- “the greatest emporium of Asia” (Strabo, 63 BC-24 AD, Greek historian)

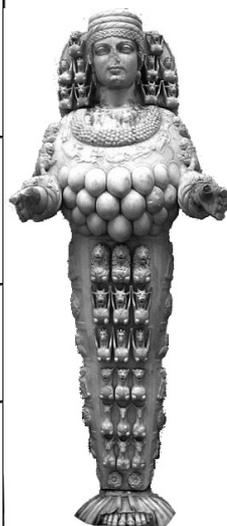


- Temple of Artemis (570 BC-262 AD)
One of the seven wonders of the ancient world.
- 418 x 240 ft, 127 - 56 ft high columns, 100% marble.
- Treasury inside regarded as “the safest bank in Asia.”
- Art gallery displaying many masterpieces.

- Greek goddess Artemis (Roman goddess Diana).
- The many-breasted sex & fertility goddess.
- Multitudes of temple prostitutes were connected with the immoral temple rituals.

- Amphitheater unearthed in Ephesus with a seating capacity of 24,000, likely where Paul says, “I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus.” (1 Cor. 15:32).

- Inscription found in Ephesus names the “divine” Caesar Augustus” (c. 29 A.D.). By the time John wrote Revelation, emperor worship led to great persecution of Christians who refused to confess “Caesar is Lord,” but shouted, “Jesus is Lord!” (Rom. 10:9).



Church of Ephesus

A.D.	Church Event	Biblical Reference
51	Church planted by Paul at the end of his Second Missionary Journey (49-51 A.D.)	Acts 18:19-21
52	Apollos taught in Ephesus.	Acts 18:24-26
52-55	Paul spent two+ years in Ephesus during his Third Missionary Journey (52-56 A.D.)	Acts 19:1-20:1
55	Paul may have fought with wild beasts in the amphitheater in Ephesus.	1 Corinthians 15:32
55	Paul wrote 1 Corinthians during his stay in Ephesus.	1 Corinthians 16:8
60	Paul wrote Ephesians from prison in Rome to the nine-year-old church at Ephesus. Ephesians is one of four "prison epistles" (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians & Philemon), written during Paul's first Roman imprisonment (60-62 A.D.)	Ephesians 3:1, 4:1, 6:20
62-80	Timothy is ordained as pastor of the church at Ephesus.	1 Timothy 1:3
69	The Apostle John moved to Ephesus before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.	History
85-90	John wrote the Gospel of John from Ephesus.	History
95	John exiled to Patmos by Emperor Domitian and writes Revelation, describing the Ephesian church.	Revelation 2:2-4
96-101	Emperor Domitian died in 96 A.D. and John returned to Ephesus from exile. There John wrote 1, 2 & 3 John and died at the age of 85.	History

Ephesians 1:1-3 Devotions

☐ Monday - By the Will of God.

Ephesians 1:1

Paul was “an apostle of Christ Jesus *by the will of God*” (Eph. 1:1), for nothing less than God’s immutable will could transform persecutor into apostle. Can the church today proclaim what Job declared, “I know that Thou canst do all things, and that no purpose of Thine can be thwarted” (Job 42:2). O, I wonder if the ancient people of God, acquainted with only part of His Word, understood and accepted the sovereignty of God’s will better than many Christians today. Dear friend, the will of God is a mighty river and none can withstand its currents. Ours is but to sail atop its majestic waves and let it carry us merrily toward the destination God has determined. This does not make the Christian a fatalist, but one who trusts unreservedly in the perfect will of God. Those who perfect this art, discover “the kind intention of His will” (Eph. 1:5). Read Psalm 135:6; Daniel 4:35

☐ Tuesday - Saints by Calling.

Ephesians 1:1

“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the *saints* who are at Ephesus, and who are faithful in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 1:1). The word translated “saints” is the Greek word, *hagiois*, meaning holy ones. Whether you feel particularly saintly or not, Christian, the Scriptures declare you to be so. You are “saints by calling” (1 Cor. 1:2); now “walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called” (Eph. 4:1). “Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy; for I am holy,” says the Lord. “Holiness is the family likeness” (Calvin). Read 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1

☐ Wednesday - Faithful in Christ.

Ephesians 1:1

Paul writes to those in the church at Ephesus who are “faithful in Christ”. There are *tares* among the *wheat* even in the best church (Mt. 13:24-30, 36-43), but *faithfulness* is the distinguishing mark. Herein lies the fundamental difference between the true Christian and the pretender. Jesus said, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and *faithfulness*...” (Mt. 23:23). Christian, “Trust in the Lord ... and cultivate *faithfulness*” (Psalm 37:3). Read Psalm 37

☐ Thursday - Grace Then Peace.

Ephesians 1:2

The apostle greets the church at Ephesus, “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph. 1:2). Grace and peace *always* go together -- the Bible connects the dots -- we are justified by grace and the result is peace with God (Rom. 5:1). Recently, I saw this bumper sticker (which is usually a bad place to get your theology): “No God, no peace; know God, know peace.” Read John 14:27, 16:33; Luke 2:14

☐ Friday - Grace & Peace Come Only From God.

Ephesians 1:2

Paul writes, “Grace to you and peace *from* God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph. 1:2). Grace and peace come *only* from God. He is the Fountain (Rev. 22:1), the Well-Spring, whose life-giving streams pour forth *grace* and *peace* “like a river” (Isa. 66:12). Jeremiah chastened his own people for forsaking “the Fountain of living waters, to hew for themselves broken cisterns” (Jer. 2:13). But of God’s people, it is written, “Thou dost give them to drink of the river of Thy delights” (Psa. 36:8). And so, “let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost” (Rev. 22:17). Read Isaiah 48:18; Psalm 36:8-9

☐ Saturday - Spiritual Blessings In Christ!

Ephesians 1:3

Whether it fits into our personal theology or not, the Bible declares that the Christian was chosen “in Christ” before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4; cf. 2 Tim. 1:9). Rather than balk at this glorious doctrine, look at its wonderful effects: Christian, because you were chosen “in Christ”, when Christ was crucified, you were crucified *in Christ* (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20); when He died and was buried, you died (Rom. 6:4-5) and were buried *in Christ* (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12); and when He rose from the dead, God “raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, *in Christ Jesus*” (Eph. 2:5-6). So then, if He is blessed, we are blessed with every spiritual blessing *in Christ* (Eph. 1:3). And if the Father says, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased” (Mt. 3:17), then we are beloved and well-pleasing to God, because we are *in Christ!* Read Romans 8:1; 2 Corinthians 2:14, 5:17; Philippians 4:19

Ephesians 1:4-6 Bible Devotions

☐ Monday - Blessed "in Christ".

Ephesians 1:3-4

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places *in Christ*, just as He chose us *in Him*..." (Eph. 1:4). God has blessed us just as He chose us -- *In Christ*. All of God's blessing, all of His amazing promises, everything, is available to those who are *in Christ*. Friend, abide in Christ! (John 15:5). "He who believes in Him will not be disappointed" (Rom. 9:33).
Read 2 Corinthians 1:20; Colossians 1:28, 2:3

☐ Tuesday - Election Results.

Ephesians 1:4

Nothing will humble a man as *low* as the doctrine of election, for it strips away every vestige of human pride that says he had some part in his salvation, and it places the cause solely upon the sovereign decree of God. Likewise, nothing lifts our hearts as *high* as the doctrine of election, for when feelings of unworthiness would consume us, we need only remember that our salvation depends not upon our worthiness, but upon God's choice to love us. Read Acts 13:48; Rom. 8:30; 9:10-24; Eph. 1:4-5, 11; 1 Peter 2:9

☐ Wednesday - Chosen in Eternity.

Ephesians 1:4

Jesus said, "All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out... And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose none, but raise him up on the last day" (Jn. 6:37, 39). God has given to His Son "a people for His own possession" (Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:9). But when did God give them to His Son? It was not the day you were saved, Christian; and not even the day Christ died for you. No, we must look back further still: "He chose us in Him *before the foundation of the world*" (Eph. 1:4). In eternity past, God chose for Himself a people, whom He gave to His Son to redeem. His thoughts of you predate Creation itself. O Lord, "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" (Psa. 8:4). Selah, pause and meditate.
Read John 6:37-40; 10:24-29; John chap 17

☐ Thursday - Choosing Christ.

Ephesians 1:4

Jesus said, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him..." (Rev 3:20). How did you receive Christ? For many of us, Christ had been knocking quite some time. We didn't open the door, but barricaded ourselves inside. What then, does Christ break down the door and violate our will? No, He lights a fire in the basement, and when the smoke reaches our nostrils, we frantically tear down the barricade, throw open the door, and there He is! This is how we "choose" Christ. But the truth of the matter is, as Jesus said, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you" (Jn 15:16).
Read Joshua 24:15; 1 Kings 18:21; Hebrews 3:15

☐ Friday - The Grand Initiator.

Ephesians 1:4

God, not man, chooses, seeks, and knocks: "He chose us" (Eph. 1:4), we did not choose Him (Jn. 15:16); He seeks the lost (Lk. 19:10), the lost do not seek Him (Rom. 3:11); and not one of us has worn out any skin "knock, knock, knocking on Heaven's door", rather, it is He who stands at the door and knocks (Rev. 3:20). Yes, He is the Grand Initiator. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). "We love, because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19; cf. 4:10). [Note: Mt .7:7 concerns believers' prayers, not unbelievers' salvation].
Read 1 Peter 1:3

☐ Saturday - God's Choice People.

Ephesians 1:4

"For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has *chosen* the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has *chosen* the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised, God has *chosen*, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are, that no man should boast before God" (1 Cor 1:26-29).
Read 2 Peter 2:5-11

Ephesians 1:3-14 Bible Devotions

☐ Monday - Every Spiritual Blessing.

Ephesians 1:3

Someone has defined grace as God's Riches At Christ's Expense, and God's *riches* are precisely what the apostle has in mind in Ephesians (mentioned six times in the first three chapters!). God is not greedy with His grace, or miserly with His mercy. He does not dispense such things with an eye-dropper, but is *rich* in grace (Eph. 1:7, 2:7) and mercy (Eph. 2:4), which He "lavishes" upon His people (Eph. 1:8). And so, Ephesians challenges the believer to carefully consider "the unfathomable riches of Christ" (Eph 3:8). Dear Christian, you are blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ (Eph. 1:3). "Taste and see that the Lord is good!" (Psa. 34:8). Read Rom. 2:4, 9:23, 10:12, 11:33; Phil. 4:19

☐ Tuesday - In Love He Predestined Us.

Ephesians 1:5

What was it *within God* that moved Him to choose me? Our text says, "In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will" (Eph. 1:5). Conversely, what was it *within me* that affected His choice? Nothing. His love was/is unconditional (1 Cor. 1:26-29). And what shall we say concerning these things except, "O, what manner of love is this, that we should be called children of God!" (1 John 3:1); and again, "O the deep, deep love of Jesus, vast, unmeasured, boundless, free; rolling as a mighty ocean in its fullness over me!" (Hymn). Spurgeon wrote, "The foreordination of God in no degree interferes with the responsibility of man. I have often been asked by persons to reconcile the two truths. My only reply is, 'They need no reconciliation, for they were never at odds.' Why should I try to reconcile two friends? The two facts are parallel lines." To this, I can only add, O Lord "such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is too high, I cannot attain to it" (Psa. 139:6).
Read Romans 9:10-23

☐ Wednesday - Redeemed!

Ephesians 1:7

"In Him we have *redemption*" (Eph. 1:7), Gk. *apolutrosis*, lit. "to release from". "Christ redeemed you *from* the curse of the Law" (Gal. 3:13), "*from* every lawless deed" (Titus 2:14), "*from* your futile way of life" (1 Pet. 1:18). "For He delivered us *from* the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son in whom we have *redemption*, the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:13-14).
Read John 8:31-36

☐ Thursday - The Forgiveness of Sin.

Ephesians 1:7-8

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the *forgiveness* of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us" (Eph. 1:7-8); "forgiveness," Greek *aphiami*, to send away. In the Old Testament, the high priest would confess the sins of the people over the head of the scapegoat and then send it into the wilderness, symbolizing Israel's sins being taken away (Lev. 16:8-10). "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us" (Psa. 103:12). God casts our sins "into the depths of the sea" (Mic. 7:19), and He posts a sign that says, "No fishing!"
Read Psalm 32:1; Isaiah 43:25; John 1:29

☐ Friday - Conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 1:13-14

"In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation--having also *believed*, you were *sealed* in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13). Unless the Spirit gives a man ears to hear, he will not listen; unless He bestows faith, he will not believe; unless the Spirit seals him, he will not remain. As surely as Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary, so He must be conceived in the heart of man by the same Spirit. Do Thy wondrous work within our hearts, precious Spirit, that Christ may be fully formed in us today.
Read John 6:63

☐ Saturday - Our Engagement Ring.

Ephesians 1:14

The Spirit "is given as a *pledge* of our inheritance" (Eph. 1:14). Christian, you are betrothed to Christ (Hosea 2:19-20; 2 Cor. 11:2), and the Holy Spirit is your engagement ring. Soon Christ will return for His Bride, the church, and together we will sing, "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready. ... Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Rev. 19:7-9).
Read Matthew 25:1-13

Ephesians 1:15-19 Bible Devotions

☐ Monday - Knowing God.

Ephesians 1:17

Honest inquirers, seeking to truly know the Lord, are never turned away. Moses asked to see God's glory and his request was met (Ex. 33:18-23). David thirsted to know God (Psalm 42:2, 63:1), and he was called a man after God's own heart (1 Sam. 13:14). "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened" (Matt. 7:8). The Lord does not play hide-and-seek, "if you seek Him, He will let you find Him" (2 Chron. 15:2). We might think it strange, but Paul prayed for the church (those who already knew the Lord), that God would give them "a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him" (Eph. 1:17). For the Lord desires, not just that we know *about* Him, but to really know Him -- personally, intimately. Read Isaiah 55:6

☐ Tuesday - Open the Eyes of My Heart, Lord!

Ephesians 1:18

Satan "has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ" (2 Cor. 4:3-4). "While seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand" (Matt. 13:13). This is our sad state before Christ. And so, we enter the Christian life like blind Bartimaeus, who spent a lifetime in darkness, but believed in Christ and his eyes were opened (Mark 10:46-52). Yet our new eyesight is not 20/20. In fact, spiritual eyesight, unlike physical eyesight, can improve with age. This is the apostle's plea for us, "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened" (Eph. 1:18), that we may behold and comprehend the Lord with ever-increasing clarity. "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me; I once was lost but now am found, was blind but now I see" (Hymn). Read John 1:9; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Ephesians 5:8

☐ Wednesday - The Hope of His Calling.

Ephesians 1:18

The apostle writes to the church, "I pray that ... you may know what is the hope of His calling" (Eph. 1:18). There is no hope more sure, for "God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, in order that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have strong encouragement, we who have fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil" (Heb 6:17-19). Read 1 John 3:3

☐ Thursday - His Inheritance in the Saints.

Ephesians 1:18

Of all the things that the apostle might pray, He lays this petition before the throne of God: that Christians might know the dimensions, *not* of their own eternal inheritance, but "the riches of the glory of [God's] inheritance in the saints" (Eph. 1:18). God saved us for "the praise of the glory of His grace" (Eph. 1:6, 12, 14). What an amazing thought, that the saints, you and I, Christian, are God's inheritance. And that inheritance, in God's estimation, is incredibly rich and glorious, according to our text. Read Eph. 1:3-14

☐ Friday - His Power Toward Us Who Believe.

Ephesians 1:19

God is omnipotent, infinitely powerful, almighty. God's infinite power, like His covenant lovingkindness, is directed toward an object -- His people. Paul prayed that God's people might wrap their minds around "the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might." Infinite love toward ME (Psa. 103:11, 17). Infinite power toward ME (Eph. 1:19). Now we are beginning to scratch the surface on what the apostle means when he says that we are "blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3). Never underestimate God's power toward you, Christian, for He "is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works *within us*" (Eph 3:20). Read Mark 10:27; Luke 1:37; Philippians 4:19

Ephesians 1:19-23 Bible Devotions

☐ Monday - The Full Power of Love Released. Ephesians 1:19-20

The apostle Paul speaks of “the surpassing greatness of [God’s] power toward us who believe ... which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead” (Eph. 1:19-20). Why was the release of this power conditioned upon Christ’s resurrection? The answer lies within the nature of God. You see, God is perfectly holy and every sin must receive its just recompense (punishment). If God could simply sweep sin under the rug or turn His back and look the other way, then He would not be holy. But God is also merciful and the tension between God’s justice and mercy can be seen throughout the whole Old Testament. However, at the cross, the tension is relieved. On Calvary, the penalty of the Law was paid in full, as our sins were punished in Christ (Col. 2:14), vindicating God’s righteousness. The just demands of the Law having been met, the floodgates of God’s unbridled grace, mercy and love were unleashed like a mighty river. And so we sing, “O the deep, deep love of Jesus, vast, unmeasured, boundless, free; rolling as a mighty ocean, in its fullness over me” (Hymn). Revel in the boundless love of God, released when Christ rose from the dead. Read Rom. 8:35-39

☐ Tuesday - A Throne of Power. Ephesians 1:20-21

“[God] raised [Jesus] from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places” (Eph. 1:20-21). The right hand of God represents a position of power and authority. Elsewhere, Christ’s throne is a throne of grace (Heb. 4:16), a throne of righteousness and justice (Psa. 89:14), a throne of glory (Rev. 4:2-6); but here, a throne of power! And that life-changing, wonder-working power is in Christ. Is your spiritual battery running low? Maybe its time to get plugged back into Christ! Read Eph. 6:10

☐ Wednesday - Crown Him Lord of All! Ephesians 1:22

“And [God] put *all things* in subjection under [Christ’s] feet, and gave Him as head over *all things*” (Eph. 1:22). “All things” means ALL things. Jesus Christ is King of heaven (Rev. 4-5), and King of all the kings of the earth (Rev. 17:14, 19:16), Captain of the angelic hosts (Josh. 5:14), and Ruler over the realm of mankind (Dan. 4:17). He is crowned with many crowns: “His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems” (Rev. 19:12). And so our hearts rejoice, “Crown Him with many crowns, the Lamb upon His throne!” (Hymn), and, “Bring forth the royal diadem, and crown Him Lord of all!” (Hymn).
Read Psalm 2

☐ Thursday - The Head of All Things is Yours! Ephesians 1:22-23

The Christian Church need never tremble before her adversaries, for “[God] put all things in subjection under [Christ’s] feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church.” And though the false gods of man-made religion cannot entertain the prayers of their followers (Psa. 115:3-8; Jer. 10:3-6), the Christian need never wonder about the efficacy of his or her prayers, for “[God] put all things in subjection under [Christ’s] feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church”. O what confidence should be yours, dear Christian, for God has given Him who is Head over all things to you! “Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:16).
Read Colossians 1:15-18

☐ Friday - Christ Fills All in All. Ephesians 1:23

Pantheism is the belief that god is all things: god is the earth, the trees, the rocks, the animals; yes, even we are god. This is Oprah Winfrey’s new religion, which is gaining strength in the United States, but it is an age-old heresy. So then, what does our text mean when it says that Christ “fills all in all”. It is a declaration of the omnipresence of God. Christ created all things (Col. 1:16-17), and He is everywhere present in the universe that He created, yet He is distinct from those things. “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble” (Psa. 46:1).
Read Psalm 73:28

Ephesians 2:1-7

“From Graveyard to Glory”

Outline

1. Sin’s Work in Us.

a. Death. (Eph. 2:1)

FOUR characteristics:

- Dead people are so insensitive.
- Dead people don’t eat lobster.
- Dead people are equally dead.
- Dead people can’t be fixed.

b. Disobedience. (Eph. 2-3)

THREE forces at work:

- The world.
- The devil.
- The flesh.

c. Depravity. (Eph. 2:3)

TWO indulgences:

- The flesh.
- The mind.

d. Doom. (Eph. 2:3)

ONE eternal future to avoid:

- Children of wrath.

2. God’s Work for Us.

a. He Loved Us. (Eph. 2:4)

- The biggest “but” in the Bible
- Even when we were dead.

b. He Made Us Alive. (Eph. 2:5)

c. He Raised Us Up. (Eph. 2:6)

- Seated with Christ in Heaven.

d. He Blessed Us. (Eph. 2:7)

- Past. (Eph. 1:3) / Future. (Eph. 2:7)

Notes

Ephesians 2:1-3

“dead in sin” -- spiritual deadness

1 Cor. 2:14 -

Matt. 4:4 -

Rom. 3:23 -

John 3:3 -

“sons of disobedience” -- an awful ancestry

1 Cor. 15:33 -

1 Pet. 5:8 -

1 Pet. 2:11 -

“total depravity” -- scope, not depth

Jam. 1:14-15 -

“children of wrath” -- a horrible heritage

Rom 9:22 -

Ephesians 2:4-7

Rom. 3:21 -

Rom. 5:8 -

1 Pet. 1:3 -

Rom. 8:30 -

Psa. 23:6 -

Ephesians 2:1-7 Bible Devotions

☐ Monday - Dead in Sin.

Ephesians 2:1

Paul reminds us of our former estate: “You were *dead* in your trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1). No death is so complete as being dead in sin. Sin hardens the heart, deadens the senses, and extinguishes every spark of holy desire. It is the truest killjoy and an insatiable parasite that drains the life of its host. It disfigures beautiful angels into hideous demons and turns men into monsters. Our text says that the unbeliever is a *dead* man, and so, cannot be resuscitated, but must be resurrected, raised from the dead. And even after he is raised, sin will adhere to him, like Lazarus’ rotting grave clothes, to which Jesus said, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go!” (Jn. 11:44). Dear friend, flee from sin, it has never done you any good. The only wages it can pay is death (Rom. 6:23). Read Romans 8:10-11

☐ Tuesday - Children of Wrath to Children of God.

Ephesians 2:2-3

John writes, “Behold, what manner of love the Father has given unto us, that *we* should be called children of God” (1 Jn. 3:1). Why does the apostle write as if our adoption were some peculiar thing? Ephesians 2 provides the answer. A man at an orphanage will likely look for an obedient child to adopt, but we were “sons of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2); he looks for a likeable child, but we were “children of wrath” (Eph. 2:3), i.e. the adopters wrath. What manner of love is this, then, that *we*, “sons of disobedience” and “children of wrath,” should be called the children of God! Read 1 Corinthians 1:26-31; John 1:12

☐ Wednesday - He Needs Not, But Loves.

Ephesians 2:4

The essence of God is Self-sufficient, Self-existent, Self-replenishing, eternal Being. Before God created anything, there was nothing but God alone; and that, not for a day, or a year, but “from everlasting” (Psa. 90:2). Creation was purely the sovereign act of His will. He was under no constraint, no obligation, no necessity to create, and in creating He added nothing to His essential nature. God needs nothing and no one (Psalm 50:12; Acts 17:24-25). Yet this does not diminish God’s love, but heightens it. God saved you, not because He needed you, but because of “the kind intention of His will” (Eph. 1:5), because of the lavishness of His grace (Eph. 1:7-8), and because of the “great love with which He loved us” (Eph. 2:4). His love toward His people is unailing (1 Cor. 13:8), unstoppable (Rom. 8:35-39), unchanging (Mic. 7:18), and unmotivated by need. Read Psalm 136; Jeremiah 31:3

☐ Thursday - My Contribution to My Salvation.

Ephesians 2:4-6

Read Ephesians 2:1-10. Here is your contribution to your salvation: “you were *dead* in your trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1). And here is God’s part: “But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ...and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:4-6). Charles Spurgeon was once asked what part he played in his salvation, to which he replied, “I was the sinner.” From first to last, your salvation was all of grace, Christian. “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. For we are His workmanship...” (Eph 2:8-10). Read 1 Corinthians 1:30; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:3

☐ Friday - Seated With Christ in Heavenly Places.

Ephesians 2:6

Christian, how certain are you that you cannot lose your salvation? “I have my doubts,” says one. Well then, how certain are you that Christ rose from the dead and is seated at God’s right hand? “O, of that I am certain, for the Scriptures have declared it!” My friend, Scripture also declares that when God raised His Son, He “raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph 2:6). So certain is your salvation that, from God’s vantage point, you are already raised and seated with Christ in the heavenly places in Christ! Read Rom. 8:30; Jude 1:24-25

Ephesians 2:8-10 Bible Devotions

☐ Monday - The Greatest Gift Ever Received. Ephesians 2:8

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8-9). When the apostle says, “*it* is the gift of God,” what does the “*it*” refer to? Basic grammar insists that we start with the nearest antecedent, which in this case is “faith”. At the very minimum, “*it*” refers to faith, but probably also refers to the whole first half of the sentence; so that, “grace”, “salvation” and “faith” should all be understood as the gift of God. The preponderance of biblical evidence tells us that the faith necessary to believe in Jesus Christ does not evolve from nothing, by spontaneous generation, but must be given by God, or a person cannot believe. It is part of the effectual call by which God draws His people to Himself (John 6:44). If you are a Christian, the greatest gift anyone has ever given you is when God gave you faith to believe in His Son. Read Rom. 12:3; Gal. 5:22-23; Phil. 1:29; Acts 13:48

☐ Tuesday - Filthy Rags Cannot Save Us. Ephesians 2:8-9

What is to become of the unbelieving philanthropist who stands before the throne of God, with only his works to commend him? “What of my righteous deeds?” he cries; to which a filthy pile of putrid clothing is added to the scales. “No!” he protests, “Show me my *righteous* deeds!” But the reply comes, “These are your righteous deeds.” Friend, if our best works are like filthy rags (Isa. 64:6), then works cannot save us -- we must be saved another way: Jesus is The Way (John 14:6). Yet, once you became a child of God, the King of kings will not have His children dressed in rags. In Christ, your imperfect deeds are washed in the blood of the Lamb and made acceptable. Your righteous deeds, which were once a filthy garment, are now a white robe! Read Rev. 7:13-14; 19:7-8

☐ Wednesday - Dead Men Can't Work. Ephesians 2:8-9

As we read earlier in Ephesians, the unbeliever is “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1). What can a dead man do to improve his condition? Nothing, because he is dead. Likewise, one who is spiritually dead can do nothing to save himself. God does not stand in a graveyard and command dead men to work, but raises the dead by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, before commissioning their services. Read Eph. 2:1-10

☐ Thursday - The Work is Already Done. Ephesians 2:8-9

Jesus endured six torturous hours on the cross. Not until every last one of your sins was paid in full (Col. 2:13-14), Christian, was He willing to give up His spirit (Lk. 23:46). And He reserved perhaps His most famous words until the end: “It is finished!” (Jn. 19:30). Christian, you *are* saved by works, not your own, but Christ's. The religion of man says, “Do, do, do,” but Christ says, “Done!” He worked for your salvation, so that you could rest in it. “For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works ... Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest” (Heb. 4:10-11). Revel today in the finished work of Christ. Read Rom. 3:28, 4:5; Gal. 2:16, 3:11;

☐ Friday - Faith That Works. Ephesians 2:8-10

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them” (Eph. 2:8-10). Here is perhaps the most balanced treatment in Scripture concerning the position of works with respect to faith. We are saved by grace through faith alone, yet faith that saves is never alone, but overflows with good works. Paul wants to insure that we do not put the cart before the horse. We are saved, not by faith *plus* works, but by faith *that* works. The Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses and others, believe this is just mincing words; but no, the distinction here is more than just semantics. It is the difference between heaven and hell. Let us be clear to explain it and careful to practice it. Read James 2:14-26

Ephesians 2:11-22 Bible Devotions

☐ **Monday - How Close Do You “Orbit” the Son?** Ephesians 2:13
Pluto’s average distance from the Sun is 3.7 *billion* miles and its average temperature is a frosty -446° F! By comparison, Mercury, just 36 *million* miles from the Sun, has an average temperature of +354° F. Temperature is inversely proportional to distance from the Sun. By analogy, the spiritual “temperature” of the heart is inversely proportional to its distance from the Son [of God]. The old adage, “Distance makes the heart grow fonder,” certainly does not apply in spiritual matters. Distance from Christ makes the heart grow colder. Here we read, “But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ” (Eph. 2:13). How close are you to the Son? During Jesus’ arrest, Peter “followed Him at a distance” (Mk. 14:54). You know the rest -- three times he denied even know Christ. Perhaps we should ask ourselves, “Am I following Jesus at a distance?” “Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:16).
Read Hebrews 10:22; James 4:8

☐ **Tuesday - Good For What Ails Ya’.** Ephesians 2:13
The travelling medicine men of yesteryear sold various tonics and miracle elixirs, but no cure-all so potent as the blood of Jesus Christ. Count its cures: we have “propitiation in His *blood*” (Rom. 3:25); we are “justified by His *blood*” (Rom. 5:9); reconciled “through the *blood*” (Col. 1:20); “brought near by the *blood*” (Eph. 2:13); and “the *blood* of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 Jn. 1:7). Friend, it’s just plain good for what ails ya’. Christ truly is a great Physician!
Read Hebrews 9:11-28

☐ **Wednesday - Citizen of Heaven.** Ephesians 2:19
Paul writes, “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household” (Eph. 2:19), and again, “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Phil. 3:20). Three things mark a *citizen*: identity, loyalty, and duty: [1] The Christian’s *identity* is wrapped up with the people of God – we “are fellow citizens with the saints” (Eph. 2:19); [2] Our *loyalty* is to the church – “As for the saints who are in the earth, they are the majestic ones in whom is all my delight” (Psa. 16:3); and [3] our duty is this: “through love serve one another” (Gal. 5:13).
Read Galatians 6:10

☐ **Thursday - Our Cornerstone.** Ephesians 2:19-22
Christian, you “are of God’s household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the Cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit” (Eph. 2:19-22). In ancient architecture, the entire edifice was aligned on the chief cornerstone. Dear church, let us align our plans and decisions upon Christ.
Read 1 Peter 2:4-8

☐ **Friday - Living Stones.** Ephesians 2:21-22
The church is pictured as a building (Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Pet. 2:4-8) and each Christian as a living stone (1 Pet. 2:5). Spurgeon writes to unchurched Christians, “I know there are some who say, ‘Well, I have given myself to the Lord, but I do not intend to give myself to any church.’ Now, why not? ‘Because I can be a Christian without it.’ Are you quite clear about that? You can be as good a Christian by disobedience to your Lord’s commands as by being obedient? There is a brick. What is it made for? To help build a house. It is of no use for that brick to tell you that it is just as good a brick while it is kicking about on the ground as it would be in the house ... I do not believe that you are answering your purpose. You are living contrary to the life which Christ would have you live.” Christian, “Let us not forsake assembling together as is the habit of some” (Heb. 10:25).
Read 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19,-20

Ephesians 3:1-13 Bible Devotions

☐ Monday - Prisoner of Christ.

Ephesians 3:1

Paul called himself a “prisoner of Christ Jesus” (Eph. 3:1; cf. Eph. 4:1; Philem. 1:1, 1:9). A prisoner has no will of his own. And so, to be a prisoner of Christ requires unconditional surrender to the will of God. It means, as Luther said, “My mind is *held captive* to the Word of God” (cf. 2 Cor. 10:5). The Lord’s prisoner is “controlled” (NAS), “compelled” (NIV), and “constrained” (KJV), by the love of Christ (2 Cor. 5:14); he is “enslaved to God” (Rom 6:22), a “slave of righteousness” (Rom. 6:16-18), and “a bond-servant of Christ” (Gal. 1:10). Christian, surrender yourself into the Lord’s hands and become even as Paul was, “a prisoner of Christ Jesus”. In so doing, you will never feel so free (John 8:36; Gal. 5:1, 13).

Read 1 Peter 2:16

☐ Tuesday - Stewards of God’s Grace.

Ephesians 3:2

Paul had a “stewardship of God’s grace” (Eph. 3:2). None but once vile offenders can have such a stewardship. God demonstrates the radical nature of His grace by choosing His servants from among the dregs of society. He takes “fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals, thieves, the covetous, drunkards, revilers, swindlers” (1 Cor. 6:9-10), for he says, “and such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:11). God’s grace is shocking! “Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me!” (John Newton). Christian, praise God today for His amazing grace to you.

Read 1 Cor. 1:26-31; Matt. 21:28-31

☐ Wednesday - This Treasure in Earthen Vessels.

Ephesians 3:8

What poor self-esteem the apostle reveals. He calls himself “the very least of all saints” (Eph 3:8), “the least of the apostles” (1 Cor. 15:9), and the “chief of sinners” (1 Tim. 1:15). Paul’s confidence and self-worth came, not by thinking better about himself, but by considering Christ (2 Cor. 3:4-6). The value of the treasure chest is measured, not by its rusty hinges, weathered exterior, or rugged lock, but by the treasure inside. Likewise, the value of a Christian is infinitely greater than his self-esteem; but is measured by the treasure in him. “We have this treasure in earthen vessels,” who is Christ (2 Cor. 4:7). Christian, your thoughts about yourself will always be up and down, depending upon your mood or disposition. Why not stop buying tickets on that roller coaster ride of emotions and fix your self-worth on Christ.

Read 2 Cor. 4:6-7

☐ Thursday - Manifold Wisdom.

Ephesians 3:10

The apostle Paul speaks of “the manifold wisdom of God” (Eph 3:10). The word “manifold” is the Greek *polupoikilos*, used only here in the Bible; compound adjective from *polus*, “many” and *poikilos*, “many colored.” God’s wisdom is literally “many, many colored”. God’s purposes are a finely woven tapestry which, seen from the front, displays the beauty of His design, yet from the back are a complex labyrinth of the threads of millions of events. We tend to look at life one-dimensionally, misunderstanding or misinterpreting most of what goes on in the world around us. But God’s wisdom is multi-faceted, weaving together a myriad of details, causes, and effects. “His understanding is infinite” (Psa. 147:5). Christian, when life doesn’t make sense, take comfort in the manifold wisdom of God. “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!” (Rom 11:33).

Read Proverbs 8

☐ Friday - Confident Access.

Ephesians 3:12

In Christ we have “boldness and confident access” to the Father (Eph. 3:12). Humbly, we come before His throne in prayer. Confidently, we can expect to receive an audience with the King. Boldly, we may present our requests, because we come in the name of His Son (John 14:13-14; 1 John 5:14-15). Read Hebrews 4:16, 10:19, 35, 12:18-24

Ephesians 3:14-21 Bible Devotions

☐ Monday - A Life Bowed Down.

Ephesians 3:14

Paul writes, “For this reason, I *bow my knees* before the Father” (Eph. 3:14). The apostle’s contemplation of “the surpassing riches of God’s grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” sends him to his knees (Eph. 2:7). The stalk of wheat bows as the head of grain matures. So the sign of mature fruit in the Christian is a life bowed down. “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God” (1 Pet. 5:6). “He gives a greater grace” [Greek: *mega* grace], i.e. to the humble, “therefore it says, ‘God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble’” (James 4:6). Until the Gospel causes us to prostrate ourselves before the Lord, it is likely we have never fully understood it. “Come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker” (Psalm 95:6).
Read Philippians 2:9-11

☐ Tuesday - Strengthened in the Inner Man.

Ephesians 3:16

The fitness industry in America is a multi-billion dollar business. We buy Ab-Blasters[®], Thigh Masters[®], and Abdominators[®], so we can have “8-minute abs” and “buns of steel”! Yet the Bible says, “Bodily exercise is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come” (1 Tim. 4:8). Sampson defeated the Philistines through sheer physical strength, but he was unable to defeat the lusts of his own heart. Christian, you have need to “be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the *inner man*” (Eph. 3:16). How about exercising your faith today! Read Jeremiah 9:23-24; John 6:63; 2 Corinthians 4:16

☐ Wednesday - The Drawing Power of God’s Love.

Ephesians 3:18

How does the Lord woo us away from sin? “I have drawn you *with lovingkindness*,” He declares (Jer. 31:3). The comprehension of God’s love is the sweetest remedy for “the sin which so easily entangles us” (Heb. 12:1). And so Paul prays that God’s people would “comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth” of Christ’s love (Eph. 3:18). Though sin tugs at our hearts, the consideration of God’s lovingkindness leads us to repentance (Rom. 2:4).
Read Romans 8:38-39

☐ Thursday - Uncharted Waters Yet to be Mapped.

Ephesians 3:18-19

Early seafarers would not sail into uncharted waters, except for a few brave souls who, in so doing, discovered new worlds. Christ’s love is such an ocean, so “vast, unmeasured, boundless, free” (hymn) that it “surpasses knowledge” (Eph. 3:19). No other creature has the capacity to ponder the love of God; but you, Christian, are so equipped, that you might “comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth” of Christ’s love (Eph 3:18). Set sail today! There are unmapped regions in your experience of God’s love yet to be discovered. Read Exodus 34:6; 1 Cor. 13:4-8

☐ Friday - God is Exceedingly Abundantly Able.

Ephesians 3:20

Paul places this carrot before us: God “is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us” (Eph. 3:20). What then shall we do, but pray *more*, ask *more*, and think *more* highly of His ability – yes, exceedingly more! Dear friend, too often “we have not because we ask not” (Jam. 4:2). “Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you” (Matt. 7:7). For nothing is impossible with God! (Lk. 1:37).
Read

☐ Saturday - The Only Light to a Our Generation.

Ephesians 3:21

“To God be the glory *in the church* and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.” (Eph 3:21). The glory of God shines to each generation, through His Son shining through His people. Jesus said, “While I am in the world, I am the light of the world” (John 9:5). But Jesus has ascended and now, Christian, “you are the light of the world;” that is, Christ shining in you (Matt. 5:14). There is no other light in your workplace, neighborhood, or extended family. You are it! Read Prov. 4:18; Dan. 12:3

Ephesians 3:17-19 Bible Devotions

☐ Monday - God's Intrinsic Love.

In Greek and Roman mythology, there were goddesses of sensual love, but nowhere in the pantheon of man-made deities do we find a god of covenantal love. Yet of the one true God, the Bible says, "God is love" (1 Jn. 4:8). To not avail the prophets of Baal assembled on Mount Carmel and cut themselves to arouse Baal's attention (1 Kgs. 18:20-40), but the Christian need never kindle God's affections – He is love. In truth, *everything* that happens to the Christian is in some way an expression of God's love.
Read Psalm 115:3-8; Isaiah 146:5-7; Jeremiah 10:3-12

☐ Tuesday - God's Independent Love.

What was there in me to attract the heart of God? Absolutely nothing. But, to the contrary, there was everything to repel Him, everything to make Him loathe me, everything sinful, depraved, a mass of corruption. There is nothing whatsoever in the creature to attract or prompt God's love – it is unearned, unmerited, free, spontaneous, independent, and uncaused. God loves His people out of the free exercise of His will, "according to His own purpose" (2 Tim. 1:9). Neither did God love us because we loved Him, but He loved us before we had a particle of love for Him (1 John 4:19). He loved us when we were loveless (Rom. 5:8). Marvel in God's sovereign love to you! Read Eph. 1:4-5, 2:1-7

☐ Wednesday - God's Infinite Love.

God declares to His people, "I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness" (Jer. 31:3). How blessed to know that God loved His people before heaven and earth were called into existence, that He had set His heart upon them from all eternity. And how tranquilizing to the heart to know that since God's love toward me had no beginning, it can have no end! Read Psalm 103:17

☐ Thursday - God's Immutable Love.

God delights in unchanging love (Micah 7:18). His love knows "no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17). Even when his own disciples forsook Him, "He loved them unto the end" (Jn. 13:1). The Divine love is subject to no vicissitudes, "many waters cannot quench it" (Song of Sol. 8:6,7). "His love no end nor measure knows, no change can turn its course; Eternally the same it flows, from one eternal source" (poem).
Read 1 Samuel 15:29; Hebrews 13:8

☐ Friday - God's Inseparable Love.

Relentlessly Christ pursues the object of His affection, namely His people; He is the "Hound of Heaven." Recall the obstacles listed in Romans 8:35-39 which Christ's love overcomes: [1] Various kinds of tribulation are listed first. Yes, "In this world you will have tribulation," but neither tribulation, nor distress, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor the sword can separate us from His love, for He has "overcome the world" (Jn. 16:33). [2] Death is listed next. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me" (Psa. 23:4, 139:8). [3] Can angels or principalities withhold Him? No, He has "triumphed over them" (Col. 2:15; 1 Jn. 3:8). [4] Shall anything past, present or future restrain His love? Never, for He loves us "from everlasting to everlasting" (Psa. 103:17). [5] Neither height nor depth can separate us from His love, for His lovingkindness extends to the heavens and His faithfulness reaches to the skies (Psa. 36:5, 103:11); and, even in the remotest depths of the sea, His hand could reach me (Psa. 139:9-10). [7] Neither shall any created thing stand between us, for He is the Creator of all things (Jn. 1:3; Col 1:16), who upholds all things by the word of His power (Heb. 1:3; cf. Col 1:17). Revel in the unstoppable, unquenchable love of God in Christ!
Read Romans 8:35-39

☐ Saturday - God's Impeccable Love.

God's love is a holy love: "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated wickedness" (Psa. 45:7). God draws us with His lovingkindness (Jer. 31:3), to Himself (Jn. 6:44), to holiness, to repentance (Rom. 2:4). God's love is extreme; He disciplines us in love that we may enjoy the "fruit of righteousness". God's love is shed abroad in our hearts (Rom. 5:5), that it may reverberate back to Him in obedience to His Word (Jn. 14:15; 1 Jn. 5:3; Psa. 119:47).
Read Hebrews 12:6-11

Ephesians 4:1-6 Bible Devotions

☐ Monday - Therefore Walk.

Ephesians 4:1

Christian, you have been called with a “holy calling” (2 Tim. 1:9), a “heavenly calling” (Heb. 3:1), an “irrevocable” calling (Rom. 11:29). You are “called into fellowship with [God’s] Son” (1 Cor. 1:9), “called out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Pet. 2:9), “called to His eternal glory, in Christ” (1 Pet. 5:10), “called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing” (1 Pet. 3:9). There is no higher calling, no greater honor and, therefore, no greater responsibility, than to “walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called” (Eph. 4:1). Read 1 Thess. 4:7; 2 Thess. 1:11; 1 Tim. 6:12

☐ Tuesday - Walk Humbly With Thy God.

Ephesians 4:1-2

Around the throne of God are 24 thrones (Rev. 4:4), a symbol of God’s Old and New Covenant people (12 Old Testament tribes + 12 New Testament disciples = 24); i.e. a symbol of all God’s people of all times. Christian, a throne and a crown await you. You are a member of the royal family, the King’s kid. You were once a pauper, but by a decree of adoption, signed by the King’s own hand, you were made a prince (or princess). The High King of Heaven, the King of kings, is your Father! But how can we possibly walk worthy of such a regal calling? This is His command: walk “with all humility and gentleness” (Eph. 4:2). It neither pleases the King, nor befits His children, when they are ostentatious or pretentious. “He has told you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God” (Micah 6:8). Read Psalm 25:9; Proverbs 29:23; Isaiah 66:2; 1 Peter 5:5-6

☐ Wednesday - Unity in One Spirit.

Ephesians 4:3-4

The Spirit is the church’s common bond of unity: “By one Spirit we were all baptized into one body ... we were all made to drink of one Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:13). Where the Spirit of God is working within a church, a home, or a marriage, there is unity. Paul exhorts the Ephesian Christians to be “*diligent* to preserve the *unity* of the Spirit” (Eph. 4:3). Unity is a china teacup – beautiful, but fragile – it must be preserved, not casually, but *diligently*. Sin is the unity-breaker, the bull in the china shop. It quenches the Spirit, and so, breaks the link believers have one with another. Read Psalm 133:1; Philippians 2:1-3

☐ Thursday - Fellowship in One Body.

Ephesians 4:4

“There is *one* body of Christ (Eph. 2:14-16), *one* holy bride (Eph. 5:23-33), *one* people of God (1 Pet. 2:9-10), from “every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues” (Rev. 7:9). As a wife takes the name of her husband, the church should be denominated by the name of Christ alone. If God’s people would bow before the written Word, and own no authority but the Bible, the church would not be divided (Spurgeon). Read Romans 12:4-5

☐ Friday - Assurance in One Hope.

Ephesians 4:4

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one *hope* of your calling” (Eph 4:4). Hope deferred (i.e. unfulfilled) makes the heart sick (Prov. 13:12). But the Christian’s hope of eternal life is both sure and steadfast, for it rests upon the unchangeable promises of God (Heb. 6:17-19). “My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame but wholly lean on Jesus name...” (Hymn). Here is our confidence: “We have fixed our hope on the living God” (1 Tim. 4:10). Read Psalm 31:24, 71:5, 146:5

☐ Saturday - Salvation in One Faith.

Ephesians 4:4

There is *one faith* and true religion whereby we must be saved; that is, the Christian faith; which is by *grace alone*, not just undeserved, but the opposite of our just deserts; by *faith alone*, apart from the works of man; and by *Scripture alone*, apart from any extra-biblical literature or wisdom of men. “Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. But the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it” (Matt. 7:13-14). Read Acts 4:12; John 14:6; 1 Timothy 2:5

Ephesians 4:7-16

“Five Characteristics of a Healthy Church”

Outline

- 1. Christ’s Descent:
His Incarnation.** (Eph. 4:9)
 - Christ’s descent.
 - Christ’s “part”.
(Lk. 2:7-8; Mt. 13:55, Lk. 9:58)
 - Christ, King of commoners.
(1 Cor. 1:26-31)
- 2. Christ’s Ascent:
His Exaltation.** (Eph. 4:8, 10)
 - Christ, the Conqueror.
(Rev. 6:2; Psa. 38:2)
 - Antinomies in Scripture.
(Mt. 16:25; Mt 23:12; 1 Pet. 5:6)
 - He gave gifts to men.
 - Humility, then exaltation.
- 3. Christ’s Body:
His Church.** (Eph. 4:11-16)
 - Responsibility OF the church:
 - a. Equipping the saints.
(Eph. 4:12)
 - b. Building up the body.
(Eph. 4:12, 16)
 - Responsibility TO the church:
 - a. All Growing Up:
No Peter Pan Christians.
(Eph. 4:13-15)
 - b. All Serving:
No Unemployment.
(Eph. 4:12, 16)

Notes

Greek: meros - portion, share

Characteristic #1

*The Body of Christ is made up of:
ordinary people*

Characteristic #2

*The Body of Christ is made up of:
conquered people*

Def: antinomy - a real or apparent contradiction; a paradox

Characteristic #3

*The Body of Christ is made up of:
humble people*

Characteristic #4

*The Body of Christ is made up of:
growing people*

Characteristic #5

*The Body of Christ is made up of:
serving people*

Ephesians 4:7-16 Bible Devotions

☐ **Monday - Christ, the Conqueror.** Ephesians 4:8
“Therefore it says, ‘When [Christ] ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives’” (Eph. 4:8). Christ is a Conqueror, as John sees in Revelation, “And I looked, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to Him; and He went out conquering, and to conquer” (Rev. 6:2). Christ came to conquer men’s hearts. The psalmist says, “Thine arrows have sunk deep into me” (Psa. 38:2). Place this beside the antinomies of Scripture: to live we must die daily (Mt. 16:25; 1 Cor. 15:31); to be exalted, we must humble ourselves (Mt. 23:12; 1 Pet. 5:6); and to be truly victorious, we must be utterly conquered. Read Job 16:12-14

☐ **Tuesday - Spiritual Gifts Vs. Spiritual Fruit.** Ephesians 4:8
“Therefore it says, ‘When [Christ] ascended on high ...He gave gifts to men’” (Eph. 4:8). Picture a warrior prince returning home, victorious from battle, ascending the throne, crowned as king, and showering his subjects with the spoils of his warfare (cf. Isa. 53:12). Likewise, Christ ascended victorious over the grave, is crowned King of kings (Rev. 17:14, 19:16), and from His glorious throne dispenses spiritual gifts to His people. Spiritual gifts, then, are a reflection of Christ’s victory, charity, and sovereignty, and are not intended to draw attention to ourselves, nor are they any indication of spiritual maturity. For elsewhere we read that the Corinthian Christians were gifted (1 Cor. 14:12), but immature (1 Cor. 3:1-3, 11:18). Rather, the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) are the truest measure of Christian growth (1 Cor. 13:1-3). Read 1 Peter 4:10

☐ **Wednesday - A King for the Common Man.** Ephesians 4:9-10
“Now this expression, ‘He ascended,’ what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower *parts* of the earth?” (Eph. 4:9). The word translated here “parts” is the Greek word *meros*, meaning part, share, or portion, from *meiromai*, to receive one’s portion. Christ’s “descent” is accepted by most commentators as a statement of His incarnation. Yet His “portion” in the earth was among the lowest strata of society: He was born in a manger (Lk. 2:7), revealed to poor shepherds (Lk. 2:8ff), a simple carpenter’s Son (Mt. 13:55), who had nowhere to lay His head (Lk. 9:58). The commoner need not despair of his lack of pedigree, for Jesus is a king for the common man (1 Cor. 1:26-31). Therefore, let “the brother of humble circumstances glory in his high position” (James 1:9). Read 2 Corinthians 8:9; Matthew 20:28

☐ **Thursday - The Last Shall Be First.** Ephesians 4:10
Although He is God, Christ assumed the position of a bond-servant on earth, but now fills the highest place in heaven: “He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things” (Eph. 4:10). Let the kingdom seeker discover what this means: “Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted” (Mt. 23:12). Christian, if you want to be great in God’s kingdom, learn to be the servant of all! Read Philippians 2:3-11

☐ **Friday - Moving on to Maturity.** Ephesians 4:14
“As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming” (Eph. 4:14). An immature Christian is like a boat adrift at sea – he is a little dinghy. Let us “grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ” (Eph. 4:15), lest we suffer shipwreck in regard to our faith (1 Tim. 1:19). Read Hebrews 5:13-14

☐ **Saturday - No Unemployment Benefits.** Ephesians 4:16
How is the local church held together? “Every joint supplies, according to the proper working of *each individual part*” (Eph. 4:16). A human body in which only 20% of its members work is a vegetable. One in which even 80% work is still handicapped. In a healthy body and a healthy church 100% of its members are working. Read Romans 12:3-8

Ephesians 4:17-32 Bible Devotions

☐ **Monday - They Weren't the Good Old Days.** Ephesians 4:17-19
“This I say therefore, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the *futility* of their mind, being *darkened* in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the *ignorance* that is in them, because of the *hardness* of their heart; and they, having become *callous*, have given themselves over to *sensuality*, for the practice of every kind of *impurity with greediness*” (Eph. 4:17-19). The Christian does not look back at his life before Christ and think, “Those were the good old days!” No, they were days of futility and darkness (Col. 1:13-14). The Christian life can be difficult, but it is the better than any other, and the best is yet to come!
Read Psalm 103:2

☐ **Tuesday - The Truth Will Set You Free.** Ephesians 4:21
Pontius Pilate asked Jesus, “What is truth?” (Jn. 18:38). Politicians today still seem unclear about the answer to that question. Few hold to any standard of absolute truth, but believe that truth is relative. Absolute truth has been exchanged for popular opinion and situational ethics. Yet our job as Christians is not just to proclaim principles of truth, but to point people to Jesus, who is the Truth. Our text says, “Truth is in Jesus” (Eph. 4:21). “I am the way, and the *truth*, and the *life*,” was Christ’s self-revelation. (Jn. 14:6). And this is His promise, “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (Jn. 8:32). But the “truth” to which He refers is not just a set of principles that will make anyone, believer and unbeliever alike, successful in life. No, the truth that frees us is the experiential knowledge of Christ Himself. Read John 1:14, 17

☐ **Wednesday - The Old and New.** Ephesians 4:22-24
Paul exhorts Christians, “That, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the *old self*, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the *new self*, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth” (Eph 4:22-24). This is not a one time act, but, like putting on clean clothes, something the Christian must do each day.
Read 2 Corinthians 5:17

☐ **Thursday - Lion on the Loose!** Ephesians 4:27
Christian, “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1 Pet. 5:8). In a pride of lions there can be only one dominant male. In Christendom it is Jesus Christ, the Lion of Judah (Rev. 5:5). Satan is the old alpha male, chased off from the pride, he roams the earth (Job 1:7, 2:2). Though defeated, “His craft and power are great, and armed with cruel hate” (Martin Luther). Christian, beware of that old lion, he is an ambush predator and a crafty opportunist, “the fierce and greedy pursuer of souls” (Matthew Henry). If Satan were a lion at the zoo, this would be the sign warning people not to walk too close to the exhibit: “Do not give the devil an opportunity!” (Eph. 4:27). Read Rev. 12:10-11

☐ **Friday - Five Parts of Godly Speech.** Ephesians 4:29
Christian, “Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear” (Eph. 4:29). Note the five parts of godly speech: (1) it is wholesome, (2) good, (3) edifying, (4) it meets needs, and (5) it is gracious. “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.” (Psa. 19:14).
Read James 3:2-12

☐ **Saturday - Grieve Not the Spirit.** Ephesians 4:30
“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption” (Eph. 4:30). God is not dispassionate or unfeeling. The infinite heart of God can be pleased or grieved.
Read Eph. 5:10; Col. 1:9-11; 1 Thess. 4:1

Ephesians 5:1-16 Bible Devotions

☐ Monday - Imitators of God.

Ephesians 5:1

The Bible exhorts, "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children" (Eph. 5:1). Right or wrong, people judge parents by the behavior of their children. Likewise, the world either blasphemes God, because of the behavior of His children (Rom. 2:24), or glorifies Him: Therefore, "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Mt. 5:16). Read 1 Peter 2:12

☐ Tuesday - Taming the Tongue.

Ephesians 5:4

Concerning the tongue, we read, "And there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks" (Eph. 5:4). The tongue is likened to a fountain (a babbling brook, in some cases). "Does a fountain send out from the same opening both fresh and bitter water?" (James 3:11). Filthy language, silly talk, and coarse jesting are "bitter water" – unpleasant and unwholesome (cf. Eph. 4:29). Christian, your lips were ordained for praise. "Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name" (Heb. 13:15).
Read Psalm 51:15; James 3:2-11

☐ Wednesday - Fruit and Light.

Ephesians 5:8-11

Our text says, "And do not participate in the *unfruitful* deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them" (Eph. 5:11). You can't grow apples in the basement, because fruit doesn't grow in the dark. But "the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth, trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord" (Eph 5:8). "If we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). Read Rom. 13:12-14; John 8:12

☐ Thursday - God-Pleaser.

Ephesians 5:10

Olympic champion Eric Liddell, fondly called the "Flying Scotsman", was the winner of the men's 400 meters at the 1924 Olympic Games in Paris. Nevertheless, after the Olympics, Liddell turned in his running shoes to become a missionary to China. Years later his life was portrayed in the movie *Chariots of Fire* (1981). Liddell is quoted as saying, "I believe that God made me for a purpose... for China. But He also made me fast, and when I run, I feel His pleasure." Christian, are you running in such a way that you feel God's pleasure? By our behavior, God can be pleased (Col. 1:9-11; 1 Thess. 4:1), or He can be grieved (Eph. 4:30; Heb. 11:6). So then, let us "learn what is pleasing to the Lord" (Eph. 5:10). Here are just a few of the benefits: [1] "When a man's ways are *pleasing* to the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Prov. 16:7); [2] "And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are *pleasing* in His sight" (1 Jn. 3:22); and again, [3] "I have made the earth, the men and the beasts which are on the face of the earth by My great power and by My outstretched arm, and I will give it to the one who is *pleasing* in My sight" (Jer. 27:5).
Read 2 Corinthians 5:9; 1 Thessalonians 2:4

☐ Friday - Don't Die in Your Sleep!

Ephesians 5:14

My Uncle John died in his sleep. Unfortunately the other people in the car he was driving didn't go so peacefully (old joke). Falling asleep at the wheel in our spiritual duties -- Bible study, prayer, Christian fellowship, and personal outreach -- can be just as detrimental. Dear Christian, I hope and pray that there is someone who cares about you enough, when you're spiritually weary, to say, "Wake up! You're drifting!" "For this reason it says, 'Awake, sleeper!'" (Eph. 5:14).
Read Rom. 13:11; Gal. 6:9; 2 Thess. 3:13; Rev. 3:2

☐ Saturday - Walk Wisely.

Ephesians 5:15-16

"Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil" (Eph 5:15-16). Here the apostle lists two reasons we ought to walk wisely and carefully: (1) our time here is short; (2) the days we live in are evil.
Read Proverbs 12:15; 14:15-16

Ephesians 5:17-20 Bible Devotions

☐ Monday - Understand God's Will.

Ephesians 5:17

Paul writes, "So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:17). "Ignorance is bliss," is an old adage, but here we read that ignorance of God's will is to join ranks of fools. The injunction is, "understand what the will of the Lord is," yet we cannot stop there. To your understanding add doing God's will (James 1:22-25). Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who *does* the will of My Father who is in heaven" (Mt. 7:21).
Read James 2:14-26

☐ Tuesday - Sin's Wastefulness.

Ephesians 5:81

"And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation" (Eph. 5:18). The word dissipation is the Greek, *asotia*, which literally means "unsaving," i.e. wasteful. It is the same word used of the prodigal son (Lk. 15:13). Don't waste your life in sin is the thrust of Paul's argument here. Sin impoverishes us, and saps us of energy, resources, and life, as the prodigal son discovered when he came to his senses. Christian, do not waste your life in sin, but make the most of every opportunity (Eph. 5:16).
Read Psalm 39:4-5; 144:3-4

☐ Wednesday - Filled With the Spirit.

Ephesians 5:18

One who is *filled* with rage is, at that moment, controlled by rage. Everything, his actions, words, and thoughts, reflect rage. So also, to be *filled* with the Spirit is to be controlled by the Spirit – every action, word, and thought is affected. And such filling is not reserved for some spiritually elite class, but is normative rank and file Christianity. Moreover, the Greek participle indicates continuous action, i.e. "Keep on being filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18). The result is submission to the will of God and conformity to the Word of God.
Read Acts 4:31

☐ Thursday - Jesus Put a Song in Your Heart

Ephesians 5:18-19

"Be filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19). The child of God, filled with the Spirit of God, is like a nightingale making his melody in a dark world. Friend, has Jesus put a song in your heart? "And He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God" (Psa. 40:3).
Read Acts 16:22-25

☐ Friday - Thanksgiving Secret.

Ephesians 5:20

"The *secret* of the Lord is for those who fear Him" (Psa. 25:14). And here is the secret: "God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28). Notice, the secret is only for those who fear God, only for those who love God, only for those who are called according to His purpose. That is you, dear Christian -- the secret is for you, the promise is for you, and you alone! As a result, we should be "always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God" (Eph. 5:20), seeing that God works all things out for our good and His glory. Therein lies the strength of your testimony. Only when you give thanks in all things, is the world inclined to ask you "to give an account for the hope that is in you" (1 Pet. 3:15). Read Psa. 9:1, 109:30; 1 Thess. 5:18; Heb. 13:15

Ephesians 5:21-33 Bible Devotions

☐ Monday - The Fear of Christ.

Ephesians 5:21

The Christian need never fear God's wrath (1 Thess. 1:10, 5:9; Rom. 5:9). Not one of God's children will ever taste a single drop of "the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath" (Rev. 14:9-10, 16:19). For him alone, God's wrath has been propitiated (Rom. 3:25; 1 Jn. 4:10). Likewise, the Christian need fear neither God's condemnation (Rom. 8:1), nor His punishment (1 Jn. 4:18). Yet, there remains a "fear of Christ" (Eph. 5:21) that every Christian should not only have, but cultivate (Prov. 23:17), "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (2 Cor. 5:10-11). The "fear of Christ" is, in part, a fear that my life's work will be "burned up"; that I shall "suffer loss"; that I shall be saved "yet so as through fire" (1 Cor. 3:15). It is a fear that I will have no crown to cast at Christ's feet as the multitude of the redeemed worship Him (Rev. 4:10). "Now then let the fear of the Lord be upon you; be very careful what you do, for the Lord our God will have no part in unrighteousness" (2 Chron. 19:7). Read Isaiah 66:2; Prov. 9:10, 14:26-27, 15:16, 15:33, 19:23, 23:17

☐ Tuesday - Three Reasons to Submit.

Ephesians 5:21-22

"Be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. Wives, [be subject] to your own husbands, as to the Lord" (Eph. 5:21-22). Here are three reasons a wife ought to submit to her husband: [1] since Christians, in general, are to be subject to one another, certainly a wife can be so to her own husband; [2] because a Christian wife is to have a wholesome "fear of Christ"; and [3] because she is doing it "as unto the Lord". Read 1 Peter 3:1-6

☐ Wednesday - The Heart of Marriage.

Ephesians 5:22-25

Within marriage, God has given husband and wife tangible ways to show their love for Him: [1] a Christian wife is to submit *everything* (Eph. 4:24) unto her husband, as she would to unto Christ (Eph. 5:22); and [2] a Christian husband, is to imitate Christ's love and sacrifice for the church (Eph. 5:25). This he does, not only by sacrificing *every thing*, but by the sacrifice of *himself* for His dear wife. These two, submission and sacrifice, are the heart of a Christian marriage, and they require an all out assault on "self" as two become one.

Read Philippians 2:3-5

☐ Thursday - Give it Up!

Ephesians 5:25

Twice in Ephesians 5 we are reminded that Christ "gave Himself up" for us (Eph. 5:2, 25). True love, Christ's love, gives itself away. It is used up, expended, reserves nothing. It risks getting trampled on, taken advantage of, wounded and hurt. It has no time stamp or expiration date. It is not natural, but a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). Read Jn. 15:13

☐ Friday - The Washing of the Word.

Ephesians 5:26-27

Christ is presently at work in His church, "that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with *the Word*, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless. (Eph. 5:26-27). When Christ is on the move in a local church or individually in His people, the Word of God is given first place. The result is sanctification, purification, and holiness.

Read Psalm 19:7-11, 119:9-16

☐ Saturday - One in Christ.

Ephesians 5:28-32

"No one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body" (Eph. 5:29). Jesus prayed for His church, "that they may all be *one*; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us" (Jn. 17:21). Here is our mystical union in Christ: we are *one* with His body, the church, and *one* with the head, that is Christ Himself. Read John 17:21-23; Romans 12:4-5

Ephesians 6:1-9 Bible Devotions

☐ **Monday - Children Obey Your Parents.** Ephesians 6:1-3
“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth” (Eph. 6:1-3). Here, the apostle lists four reasons a child ought to obey his parents: [1] because it is the right thing to do; [2] because God has commanded it; [3] because life will go well if a child does so; and [4] because the Lord will bless, with long life, those who honor their parents. Thus a child improves both the quality and quantity of his life, by honoring and obeying his parents. Read Proverbs 13:1

☐ **Tuesday - Hearts of Clay.** Ephesians 6:4
“And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). Children are clay on the Potter’s wheel (Isa. 64:8). God can use a parent’s hands to fashion them into vessels of mercy prepared for glory (Rom 9:23). But if, by neglect, we do not discipline or train them, their hearts will harden into “vessels of wrath prepared [by our hands] for destruction” (Rom. 9:22). Therefore, “Discipline your son while there is hope, and do not desire his death” (Prov. 19:18). Quickly parents, the clay is already starting to set!
Read Proverbs 22:6

☐ **Wednesday - The Discipline of Love.** Ephesians 6:4
“And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). Provocation is meanness, but discipline is love (Prov. 3:12; Heb. 12:6; Rev. 3:19). “All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness” (Heb. 12:11).
Read Hebrews 12:6-11

☐ **Thursday - A Sure Social Cure.** Ephesians 6:5-8
Some think it odd that Paul did not decry the social evils of slavery, but instead instructed slaves to be obedient to their earthly masters (Eph. 6:5). Paul preached, not a social gospel, but Christ crucified (1 Cor 2:2). The gospel, not politics, will change a society (Psa. 33:12; Prov. 14:34), yes, even “turn the world upside down” (Acts 17:6) .
Read 2 Chronicles 7:14

☐ **Friday - Eyeservice.** Ephesians 6:5-8
“Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.” So much of what we see today is “eyeservice” - people doing things to be noticed by others. “Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” (1 Sam. 16:7). Dear Christian, “whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men” (Col. 3:23).
Read Col. 3:22-25

☐ **Saturday - No Respector of Persons.** Ephesians 6:9
“And, masters, do the same things to [those who work for you], and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him” (Eph. 6:9). Whether a man is rich or poor, powerful or powerless, God cares not, for He is no “respector of persons” (Acts 10:34, KJV); that is, He shows no partiality, except in this one thing – He gives greater grace to the humble (James 4:6).
Read Jeremiah 9:23-24; James 2:1-9

Ephesians 6:10-12 Bible Devotions

☐ Monday - Be Strong in the Lord!

Ephesians 6:10

As Goliath mocked the armies of Israel, so Satan taunts the church today, "I defy Christianity; send me a man that we may fight together" (cf. 1 Sam. 17:10). And what is the church's response? "Send our conservative politicians! The church will rout her adversaries through politics. Radio and TV broadcasters next; we will overwhelm our enemy with mass media!" And so it goes on, the American church is active today as it has ever been in the political arena, and stronger in financial resources and mass media, but our country continues its moral decline, and the Church is losing precious ground. My dear friends, "Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses" (2 Cor. 10:3-4). "Be strong *in the Lord*, and in the strength of *His might*" (Eph. 6:10).
Read 1 Sam. 17:1-53; Jer. 9:23-24; Zech. 4:6

☐ Tuesday - In The Strength of His Might!

Ephesians 6:10

We tend to fight our battles in our own strength and with our own resources. And so, here, the apostle reminds us, "Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of *His might*" (Eph. 6:10). If you are a Christian, the battle is not yours but the Lord's (2 Chron. 20:15). He is a "victorious warrior" (Zeph. 3:17; Ex. 15:3), and a "dread champion" (Jer. 20:11). "The Lord will go forth like a warrior; He will arouse His zeal like a man of war" (Isa. 42:13). "Who is the King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle." (Psa. 24:8). We are weak but He is strong. (2 Cor. 12:9). Read Rom. 8:31; Rev. 19:11-16

☐ Wednesday - Stand Firm!

Ephesians 6:11

Seven times in Paul's epistles, including three in Ephesians 6, Paul exhorts his readers to "stand firm" (v. 11, 13, 14). Yet this is not a new command, but a very ancient one: "Do not fear! Stand firm and you will see the salvation of the Lord" (Ex. 14:13). Here is our declaration of dependence, "On Christ the solid rock I stand!" (Hymn).
Read 1 Corinthians 6:13

☐ Thursday - The Schemes of the Devil.

Ephesians 6:11

Paul exhorts the Christian church, "Stand firm against the *schemes* of the devil!" (Eph. 6:11). Yes, Satan has schemes and strategies and plans to trip you up, Christian. He may come at you as a roaring lion (1 Pet. 5:8), or pretend to be an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:4). He may come as a subtle serpent (Gen. 3:1ff), or a fearsome dragon (Rev. 12:9). But by these warnings the Bible unmasks that old serpent and his bag of tricks, so that "we are not ignorant of his schemes" (2 Cor. 2:11). Don't be afraid, but remember, that "greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).
Read Revelation 12:9-11

☐ Friday - A Spiritual Battle.

Ephesians 6:12

Paul writes, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the *spiritual forces* of wickedness in the heavenly places." (Eph. 6:12). A spiritual battle against spiritual forces requires spiritual weapons. What are the weapons of our warfare? [1] Our faith: "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world -- our *faith*" (1 John 5:4); [2] Our testimony (i.e. The Word of God, Eph. 6:17): "And they overcame [the dragon] because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their *testimony*..." (Rev. 12:11); and [3] Our prayer: See how a great heavenly battle ensued when Daniel *prayed* (Dan. chap. 9-10).
Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

Ephesians 6:13-24 Bible Devotions

☐ Monday - Girded With the Truth. Ephesians 6:14

We live in a day of subjective truth and situational ethics in which “everyone does what is right in his own eyes” (cf. Jdg. 21:25). And so, as the world ponders, “What is truth?” (Jn. 18:38), the Christian must gird himself with the objective truth of God’s Word. This truth must undergird all the other pieces of the Christian’s armor. Like clothing, armor must be put on in the proper order, and so, we must start with this: “Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth” (Eph. 6:14). O Lord, “The sum of Thy Word is truth” (Psa. 119:160).
Read Psalm 43:3, 51:6; John 8:32; 14:6; 17:17

☐ Tuesday - The Breastplate of Righteousness Ephesians 6:14

What kind of righteousness is like a breastplate? Surely not self-righteousness -- that is only a filthy rag (Isa. 64:6). Self-righteousness is holey (not holy) armor, but Christ’s righteousness, imputed to the sinner’s account on the basis of faith, is an impregnable breastplate. Here is Paul’s breastplate of righteousness: That I “may be found in [Christ], not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith” (Phil. 3:9). So then, “Stand firm ... having put on the breastplate of righteousness” (Eph. 6:14).
Read Romans 3:21-24

☐ Wednesday - Feet Shod With the Gospel of Peace. Ephesians 6:15

The Gospel is called the “Gospel of peace,” for it is the only peace treaty that can end the hostility between God and man (Rom. 8:7; Col. 1:21). All other religions are not only unacceptable to God, but inimical to the peace process; they bring man’s works, which are filthy rags, as a peace offering (Isa. 64:6). No, rather, come by faith alone in Christ alone and you shall have peace with God! “Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to the cross I cling” (Hymn).
Read Romans 5:1; John 14:27

☐ Thursday - The Shield of Faith. Ephesians 6:16

Paul exhorts, “[Take up] the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one” (Eph. 6:16). Faith extinguishes the evil one’s salvo of filthy thoughts, impure motives, wrong attitudes, and ungodly emotions. Faith is that arm which holds on to the Shield which is God Himself (Psa. 3:3, 18:30, 33:20). “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee” (Isa. 26:3)
Read Psalm 27:1-6

☐ Friday - The Helmet of Salvation. Ephesians 6:17

Is Christ your Lord and Savior? (Rom. 10:9). Have you trusted in God’s promise of eternal life? (Jn. 3:16). Are you a new creation? (2 Cor. 5:21). Then let not your heart be troubled, believe in Christ and stop doubting your salvation! (John 14:1). Put on as a helmet, the promise of eternal life, that it may guard your thoughts (Eph. 6:17).
Read John 10:27-29; Rom. 8:38-39; Heb. 7:25

☐ Saturday - The Sword of the Spirit. Ephesians 6:17

“And take ... the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph. 6:17). But what good is a sword without the arm to wield it? And what good is the Word of God without one who can handle it accurately? (2 Tim. 2:15). Dear Christian friends, we need not pray for the effectiveness of the Word -- it is sharper than any two-edged sword (Heb. 4:12). Pray instead for the effectiveness of the swordsmen! Pray for strong arms that can wield the almighty sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God!
Read 2 Timothy 4:2; 1 Corinthians 1:18

Philippians

Written by
The Apostle Paul

62 A.D.

City of Philippi

B.C.	Event	
356	The city was named “Philippi,” by Philip II of Macedon, who was the father of Alexander “the Great.”	
42	Mark Antony and Octavian (Augustus Caesar) defeated Brutus and Cassius at the battle of Philippi.	
30	Octavian made Philippi “a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia” (Acts 16:12).	



The Via Egnata (Egnatian Way) was a major Roman road that ran east and west, from Europe to Asia, directly through Philippi.

Church of Philippi

A.D.	Church Event	Biblical Reference
49	While in Troas, on his Second Missionary Journey (49-51 A.D.), Paul had a vision of a man from Macedonia standing and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." Accompanied by Silas, Timothy, and Luke, Paul set sail for Macedonia and planted the church of Philippi. They stayed in Philippi three months.	Acts 16:9-40
50	Luke seems to have been left behind in Philippi, possibly as the first pastor of the church established there. Luke's narrative of Paul's Second Missionary Journey in Acts switches from "we" to "they" after Philippi.	cf. Acts 16:11-12 and 17:1
55	Paul visited the Philippian church on his Third Missionary Journey (52-56 A.D.), on his way through Macedonia to Greece. The Philippian church became willing participants in Paul's collection for the church in Jerusalem.	Acts 20:1-2 2 Corinthians 8:1-5; 9:2
55	The Philippian church sent more than one gift of money to Paul, which enabled Paul not to take financial support from the Corinthians.	Philippians 4:15-16 2 Corinthians 11:9
56	Paul was in Philippi again a few months later, at Passover, but Luke provides no details about Paul's activities in the city at that time.	Acts 20:3
62	Epaphroditus was sent by the Philippian church to deliver gifts to Paul (in prison) and to help him; Epaphroditus became ill and nearly died.	Philippians 2:25-30
62	Paul wrote his epistle to the 13-year-old Philippian church from prison in Rome and sent it to them with Epaphroditus.	The Epistle to the Philippians

Philippians Introduction Bible Devotions

☐ Monday - Joy Born Out of Adversity.

The Philippian Church was born at midnight in a jail cell in Philippi, as Paul and Silas, in chains, were “praying and singing hymns of praise to God” (Acts 16:25). Thirteen years later, Paul penned his letter to the Philippians from yet another jail cell (Phil. 1:12-14), this time in Rome, and, of all things, his theme is *joy* in the Christian life. Can you, like Paul, consecrate your chains to the Lord, and “rejoice in the Lord always”? (Phil. 4:4). Read Isaiah 51:11

☐ Tuesday - Joy Despite Circumstances.

O what a fair-weather friend is happiness, that abandons us in our time of trial. Whereas happiness (from the Middle English root “hap”), depends on what is *happening* around us, joy is independent of circumstances, people, and material possessions. Friend, has your life been a roller coaster of emotions? “Stop buying tickets on that ride!” (Stan Queen). The Lord has something better for you: The joy of the Lord! But what is the joy *of* the Lord? It is: [1] joy that comes *from* the Lord (Gal. 5:22); and it is [2] joy *in* the Lord (Psa. 16:11). So then, the Lord is both the source and the object of the Christian’s joy. Dear child of God, here is Christ’s invitation to you today, “Enter into the *joy* of your Master” (Mt. 25:25), and “rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice” (Phil 4:4). Read Philippians 1

☐ Wednesday - Joy Despite People.

Is there a party pooper in your life spoiling your joy? Do you know someone whose personality is like a giant black hole that sucks the joy right out of you whenever they’re around? If so, your joy is not in the Lord, but your joy is hooked to that person. Friend, the joy of the Lord is not a mood or a feeling, it is a decision. By an act of your will you decide to rejoice in the Lord or let other people steal your joy away. Paul says “I will rejoice” (Phil. 1:18), note his resolve. Don’t let others steal your joy, but “rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice” (Phil 4:4).
Read Philippians 2

☐ Thursday - The Window of the Soul.

“A joyful heart makes a cheerful face,” says the Bible (Prov. 15:13). So we see that a man’s countenance is a window into his heart and a reflection of his soul. Consider carefully then, Christian, what picture of the inside of your heart the world will see by your countenance today. We cannot just tell unbelievers with our words about the joy of knowing Jesus Christ; no, they must see the joy of the Lord in our faces. For the sake of Christ’s reputation, “Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice” (Phil 4:4).
Read Philippians 3

☐ Friday - Joy Despite Anxiety.

With banners waving high, ancient armies marched into battle. For the Christian, joy is our flag -- a banner of victory over discouragement, fear and depression. Yes, “Joy is the flag flown high in the castle of my heart, when the King is in residence there” (song). With the joy of the Lord in our hearts, we effectively put our adversary, the devil, to flight (James 4:7). So, “Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice” (Phil 4:4).
Read Philippians 4

Philippians 1:1-6 Bible Devotions

☐ Monday - Bond-Servants of Christ.

Philippians 1:1

Paul begins his epistle to the Philippians, “Paul and Timothy, *bond-servants* of Christ Jesus”. Though he was a prisoner in Rome, Paul considered himself, not a slave of Caesar, but of Christ. Moreover, the theme of his letter is joy, and these two thoughts are not unrelated. We shall never know the true joy of the Lord until we become the Lord’s bond-servants. Christian, “you are not your own ... For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body” (1 Cor. 6:19-20).
Read Romans 14:7-8

☐ Tuesday - Set Apart in and for Christ Jesus.

Philippians 1:1

Paul writes, “to all the saints in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 1:1). The word translated “saints” is the Greek, *hagiois*, which not only means holy ones, but also refers to those who are set apart. It is Christ that sets us apart, and distinguishes the Christian from all others. We are set apart *in* Christ and *for* Christ. 2 Cor. 6:14-18

☐ Wednesday - Grace and Peace.

Philippians 1:1

Paul opens his letter to the Philippians with his characteristic greeting, “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:2; cf. Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:2, etc.). While I am not a big fan of today’s bumper sticker theology, I saw one the other day that rang true. It read, “Know Christ, know peace. No Christ, no peace.” The heart can never be truly at peace, unless the Prince of Peace resides there. In Christ alone is found peace *with* God (Rom. 5:1), and the peace *of* God (Phil. 4:6-7).
Read Isaiah 26:3

☐ Thursday - Daily Participation in the Gospel.

Philippians 1:3-5

The apostle Paul sharply rebuked the Corinthians, the charismatic church of Paul’s day, for their immaturity (1 Cor. 3:1-3), and immorality (1 Cor. 5:1-2). He harshly reprimanded the Galatians, the catholic church of Paul’s day, for making works necessary for salvation (Gal. 1:6-9, 3:1-3, 5:4). Yet, to the Philippians he has no rebuke, but declares, “I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now” (Phil. 1:3-5). Christian, it is your daily *participation in the Gospel* that God commends, as you dedicate your time, treasures and talents to the furtherance of the ministry of His Word.
Read 1 Peter 4:10

☐ Friday - God is Perfecting His Work in You.

Philippians 1:6

Paul writes, “For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 1:6). At times, the unbeliever’s outward actions are better than the Christian’s, much to our shame. Nevertheless, there is infinitely more hope for the Christian’s moral development, for the same God who began the work deep within the Christian’s heart is daily improving upon it. Biblical Christianity is not static, but a religion of daily repentance, transformation and change into the image of God.
Read Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Colossians 3:5-11

☐ Saturday - The Great Finisher.

Philippians 1:6

The apostle declares, “He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 1:6). God starts nothing He cannot finish. He is both the “Author and Finisher of our faith” (Heb. 12:2, KJV). “And whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified” (Rom. 8:30).
Read 1 Cor. 1:8

Philippians 1:7-18 Bible Devotions

☐ **Monday - Defense of the Gospel.** Philippians 1:7
Paul speaks of the *defense* of the Gospel (Phil. 1:7), Greek *apologia*. From this comes the branch of theology known as apologetics, concerned with defending the truth of the Gospel. But how does one defend the Gospel? You defend it the same way you would defend a lion, by simply letting it out of its cage. It can defend itself! (Spurgeon). Christian, share your testimony of God's grace today and let the lion loose! Read 1 Peter 3:15; Colossians 4:5-6

☐ **Tuesday - The Confirmation of the Gospel.** Philippians 1:7
The "confirmation of the Gospel," as Paul puts it, is its application and successful transformation of lives. Every life that is converted, every sin forsaken, every recommitment, every rededication, confirms the power of the Gospel. O Lord, confirm the Gospel in me today! Read 2 Corinthians 3:2-3

☐ **Wednesday - Abounding Love.** Philippians 1:9-10
"And this I pray, that your *love* may abound still more and more in real *knowledge* and all *discernment*, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ" (Phil. 1:9-10). The love of God is like a mighty river, bounded on one side by knowledge and on the other by discernment, lest we love the things God hates, for it is written, "Hate evil, love good" (Amos 5:15). Read Psalm 97:10; Prov. 6:16-19, 8:13

☐ **Thursday - The Fruit of Righteousness.** Philippians 1:11
Jesus said, "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much *fruit*; for apart from Me you can do nothing" (Jn. 15:5). What is this fruit of which Jesus speaks? It is the fruit of righteousness, which comes only from a life whose root and stalk is Christ. Note, it is abiding in Christ that bears such fruit and thereby overcomes evil thoughts and attitudes. So then, let us be "filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God" (Phil. 1:11). Read Hosea 10:12; Heb. 12:11

☐ **Friday - The Progress of the Gospel.** Philippians 1:12
"Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the Gospel" (Phil. 1:12, cf. v.25). The advancement of the Gospel was the apostle's all-consuming desire and it should be ours. Such a one "burns for one thing; and that one thing is to please God, and to advance God's glory. If he is consumed in the very burning, he cares not for it – he is content. He feels that, like a lamp, he is made to burn; and if consumed in burning, he has but done the work for which God appointed him" (J. C. Ryle). Let us join Paul in saying, "I do *all things* for the sake of the Gospel" (1 Cor. 9:23). Read Philippians 1:21, 3:7-14

☐ **Saturday - Light on Romans 8:28.** Philippians 1:12
In 55 A.D. Paul wrote to the church in Rome perhaps his most famous and often quoted statement, "God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His *purpose*" (Rom. 8:28). What purpose is that? It is the advancement of the Gospel. Five years later the apostle, now imprisoned in Rome, wrote, "Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the Gospel" (Phil. 1:12). Paul believed that for those called according to that purpose, any personal inconvenience, any pain or suffering, is nevertheless good, if it advances the Gospel message. Read 2 Corinthians 4:17; Romans 8:18

Philippians 1:19-30 Bible Devotions

☐ Monday - Time Enough for One Great Pursuit.

Philippians 1:21

Life is too short for trivial pursuits. The jack of all trades becomes the master of none. In an earlier age, when man's life spanned nearly a thousand years (Gen. 5), perhaps then there was time to pursue a variety of interests. Yet God, in His providence, has limited our days now to seventy or eighty years (Psa. 90:10), time enough to pursue only one great passion. For the Christian, it is this: "For to me, to live is Christ" (Phil. 1:21). This was the Apostle [Paul's] Creed. Is it ours? "One thing I do," he declares (Phil. 3:13). That is not narrow-minded, but blessedly single-minded. So, whatever your occupation, whatever your hands find to do, let this be your attitude: "For to me to live is Christ." Read Galatians 2:20

☐ Tuesday - Is Christ Enough for Me?

Philippians 1:21

This was the apostle's plea, "For to me, to live is Christ" (Phil. 1:21). Christ was enough for Paul -- is He enough for you and me? "The man who has [Christ] for his treasure has all things in One. Many ordinary treasures may be denied him, or if he is allowed to have them, the enjoyment of them will be so tempered that they will never be necessary to his happiness ... for he now has it all in One, and he has it purely, legitimately and forever." (Tozer).
Read Colossians 2:2-3

☐ Wednesday - Flames of Revival.

Philippians 1:21

Feel the apostle's heartbeat, "For to me, to live is Christ!" (Phil. 1:21). See the passion and the fire that burned within him. It is the kind of stuff revivals are made of. When Christ comes into a life, He baptizes with the Holy Spirit and with *fire* (Matt. 3:11). Dwight L. Moody use to say, "When you are on fire for the Lord, people will come from miles around to watch you burn!" In 64 A.D., that madman Nero burned nearly two-thirds of Rome to the ground and then blamed it on the Christians. In truth, when Paul was imprisoned in Rome from 60-62 A.D. he *did* start a fire which is still burning today! It was the fire of revival that swept though the praetorian guards (Phil. 1:12-13), Nero's own household, and the whole Roman Empire. But the embers of that revival are growing cold, and only when God's people stand up and say, "For to me to live is Christ," will we renew its flames.
Read Matthew 5:14-16

☐ Thursday - Death is Gain to Him Who Lives for Christ.

Philippians 1:21

"For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). To the one who lives for Christ, "death is gain because it brings more of Christ" (Hendriksen). To such a one, death has lost its sting (1 Cor. 15:55), and all that remains is a victorious homecoming (Psa. 116:15), and a heavenly reward (2 Tim. 4:7-8).
Read 1 Corinthians 15:51-55

☐ Friday - Looking Passed the Narrow Gate.

Philippians 1:21

Paul wrote, "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). For Christians in Paul's day, death might come by crucifixion, or by being burned at the stake, or being fed to the lions in Nero's arena. For Paul, it came at the edge of the sword, as he was led outside the city gates of Rome and beheaded (68 A.D.). But Paul was looking passed that narrow passage way called death to the broad land that lay beyond. If Christ could say to the penitent thief on the cross, "Today, you will be with Me in Paradise," then what glory awaits him who has lived for Christ? Read 1 Cor. 9:25; 2 Tim. 4:7-8; James 1:12

☐ Saturday - Trials Granted.

Philippians 1:29

"For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Phil. 1:29). One day we look back upon the trials of this life as a gift, not a grief.
Read Acts 5:40-41; Matthew 5:11-12; 1 Peter 4:14

Philippians 2:1-5 Bible Devotions

☐ Monday - Encouraged to Encourage. Philippians 2:1
“If therefore there is any *encouragement in Christ* ... make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose” (Phil. 2:1-2). Equipped with “strong encouragement” in Christ which is anchored in the unchangeableness of His promises (Heb. 6:18), the Christian reciprocates by being an encourager to others. This is the surest path to unity in the local church. The church consumed by Christ is encouraged and unified, but when self-interests rule there is disharmony. Today, consider what great encouragement Christ has afforded you: meditate on the glorious splendor of His majesty, and on His wonderful works (Psa. 145:5), forget none of His benefits (Psa. 103:2); then go, be a Barnabas, a “son of encouragement” (Acts 4:36) in your church. Read Romans 15:5

☐ Tuesday - Echoes of His Love. Philippians 2:1
Paul writes, “If there is any consolation of love ... maintain the same love,” and again, “if there is any fellowship of the Spirit ... be united in spirit” (Phil. 2:1). The Christian’s life echoes the work of God. “We love, because He first loved us” (1 Jn 4:19). God’s great love is shed abroad in our hearts (Rom 5:5), as in a great cavern, to be echoed in word and deed, so that in all things we are a reflection of Christ. Read Ephesians 5:1-2

☐ Wednesday - Grace to the Humble. Philippians 2:3
If we empty ourselves, God will fill us. Divine grace seeks out and fills a vacuum. Make a vacuum by humility, and God will fill that vacuum by His love. Read James 4:6,10

☐ Thursday - No Mercenary Spirit. Philippians 2:3
“Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit” (Phil. 2:3). “Selfishness,” from the Greek *eritheuo*, to work for hire, hence a kind of a mercenary spirit. The child of God is no hireling, but an heir, a son or daughter of God (Gal. 4:7). His service is not for hire, but a free-will offering. And the sacrifices he makes cost him something (2 Sam. 24:24), which he cheerfully renders (2 Cor. 9:7). Read Luke 6:34-36

☐ Friday - Do Nothing for Vain Glory. Philippians 2:3
“Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit” (Phil. 2:3): “empty conceit,” Greek *kenodoxia*, compound word from *keno*, meaning empty or vain, and *doxos*, glory; hence, *kenodoxia* is literally “vainglory”. It is right that a perfectly holy God should glory in His own eternal perfection (Ex. 34:6); but, O, that fallen man should glory in himself is truly vainglory! “Thus says the Lord, ‘Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord who exercises lovingkindness, justice, and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,’ declares the Lord.” Read Psa. 44:8; Rom. 15:17; 1 Cor. 1:31; 4:7; 1 Jn. 2:16

☐ Saturday - True Humility. Philippians 2:3-4
“Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but *with humility* of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others” (Phil. 2:3-4). Herein lies the difference between true humility and false. True humility is not self-serving, but other-serving. False humility makes a show of self-depreciation, but serves no one. Joy comes by putting Jesus first, Others second, Yourself last. Read Matt. 20:26-28

Philippians 2:5-11 Bible Devotions

☐ Monday - A Christ-Like Attitude.

Philippians 2:5

“Have this attitude [of humility] in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5). Christ is our example, not only in deed, but in attitude. And if God the Son humbled Himself before sinful men, how much more should genuine humility sweeten our every attitude toward one another.

Read James 4:10; 1 Peter 5:5-6

☐ Tuesday - The God-Man Named Jesus.

Philippians 2:6-7

When Jesus walked the dusty roads of Israel, He did not strut His stuff: “Although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped” (Phil. 2:6). There He was, Almighty God, Creator of heaven and earth, God incarnate, yet “taking the form of a bond-servant”! (Phil. 2:7). For “the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Mt. 20:28). But make no mistake, Jesus Christ is coming again, not as a suffering servant, but as a the King of kings and Lord of lord (Rev. 17:14, 19:16), with power and great glory (Matt. 24:30). And we shall see Him just as He is (1 John 3:2), in the fullness of His glory.

Read Revelation 1:7-8, 12-18

☐ Wednesday - The Heart of a Servant.

Philippians 2:7

May this be our prayer today: “Dear Savior, who humbled Yourself, ‘taking the form of a bond-servant,’ fashion me after Your own image and transform this proud heart of mine into the heart of a servant.”

Read Matthew 23:11-12

☐ Thursday - He Emptied Himself.

Philippians 2:7

Our text says Jesus “emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant” (Phil. 2:7). Of what did Christ empty Himself? Herein lies a great mystery: Having been “made in the likeness of men,” Christ’s divine attributes nevertheless remained intact. “In Him all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form” (Col. 2:9). He was, and ever shall be, 100% man yet 100% God, two natures in one Person. But *for your sake*, He traded the worship of myriads of angels (Rev. 5:11-12), for the scorn of men (Matt. 26:67; 27:39-42); He exchanged His kingly crown (Rev. 19:12), for a crown of thorns (Matt. 27:29); His throne for a cross, glory for grief, and honor for shame. Christian, Jesus emptied Himself *for you*, taking the form of a bond-servant, leaving you an example that you should follow in His steps (1 Pet. 2:21).

Read Matthew 16:24

☐ Friday - Name Above All Names.

Philippians 2:9

Here is the efficacy of Christ’s name: whoever *calls* upon the name of the Lord will be saved (Rom. 10:13); whoever *asks* in His name will be answered (Jn. 14:13-14); whoever *runs* to that name will be safe (Prov. 18:10). O what power is invested in His name! Christ’s name is above every name! (Phil. 2:9).

Read Acts 4:12

☐ Saturday - Every Knee Shall Bow.

Philippians 2:9-11

When Christ returns, “every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.” Christ’s own people will do so willingly, reverently, joyfully: They “will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, ‘Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created.’” (Rev. 4:10-11). Christ’s enemies will bow in feigned obedience (Psa. 66:3); Satan himself will be there kneeling, trembling, confessing Christ as Lord – his last words before he is thrown into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10). Our confession of Christ will break into spontaneous worship; theirs into mourning (Rev. 1:7). Dear friends, “Humble *yourselves*, therefore, under the mighty hand of God” (1 Pet. 5:6). Yes, “Come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker” (Psa. 95:6).

Read Matthew 23:12; Luke 1:52

Philippians 2:12-13 Bible Devotions

☐ Monday - Work Out Your Own Salvation. Philippians 2:12

“So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation” (Phil. 2:12, KJV). Now that the apostle Paul was imprisoned (Phil. 1:13-14), the Philippian church, which Paul himself had planted (Acts 16), was on its own. He couldn’t be with them to stir up their faith -- they must work out their own salvation. Dear friend, the faith of your pastor cannot save you. The faith of your parents cannot save you. The faith of your spouse, or your best friend, or that person you admire cannot save you. You must work out your own salvation, by grace through faith in Christ alone. Read Matt. 25:1-13

☐ Tuesday - A Labor of Love. Philippians 2:12

Paul exhorted the Philippian Christians, “Work out your own salvation” (Phil. 2:12). Notice, the apostle does not say work *for* your salvation, because he has already established that salvation is the free gift of God: “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast...” (Eph. 2:8-9). Rather, Paul says, work *out* your salvation, “...for we are [God’s] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10). Herein lies the proper place of works: only *after* salvation has been rendered certain, and not before. So then, as beloved children, let us do the works of our heavenly Father, not to stay saved, for that has been forever settled at the cross. But let our works be a labor of love, as a tangible expression of our devotion to Him (John 14:15). Read Colossians 3:23

☐ Wednesday - A Salvation Work Out Philippians 2:12

“Work out your own salvation,” Scripture declares (Phil. 2:12). Yes, Christian, your salvation needs a workout. It needs to be exercised everyday. It requires a 30-minute workout -- every 30 minutes! You are to work out what God has already worked in, and prove the authenticity of His work in you. Read Romans 12:1-2

☐ Thursday - Mining the Depths of Salvation. Philippians 2:12

When Paul says, “Work out your own salvation,” the Greek verb translated *work out* literally means “to work to full completion,” and it was used to refer to working in a mine. We are to work out our salvation, like a miner digging precious ore out of a mine. But you are not digging alone, “for it is God who is at work in you” (Phil. 2:13). Down in deepest recesses of that mine called Salvation, God is filling up ore carts with precious treasure, which is yours in Christ (Eph. 1:3). For the character of Christ, who is the treasure in you (2 Cor. 4:6-7; Col. 2:2-3), must be brought to the surface, and manifested in your daily routine (Lk. 6:45). Read Romans 13:14

☐ Friday - Fear & Trembling Philippians 2:12-13

The apostle exhorts all those who call upon the name of the Lord to “work out your own salvation with *fear and trembling*” (Phil. 2:12). There was a day when God’s people were referred to, not along denominational lines, but as “God-fearing” people? Are you such a person? Let me ask you, Christian, have you ever *trembled* before the Lord? “The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever” (Psa. 19:9). Prov. 14:26-27; Isa. 66:2

☐ Saturday - Parallel Truths. Philippians 2:12-13

“Work out your own salvation ... for it is God who is at work in you” (Phil. 2:12-13). Here human responsibility and divine sovereignty are set side-by-side. How do we reconcile the two truths? “They need no reconciliation, for they were never at odds. Why should I try to reconcile two friends? The two facts are parallel lines” (Spurgeon). Your responsibility, Christian, is to work out your own salvation, yet all the while God is sovereignly working in you. This is a great mystery, but God only hold’s you responsible to do your part, not to understand His sovereign control. Read 2 Peter 1:5-11

Philippians 2:14-16 Bible Devotions

☐ Monday - Do All Things Without Grumbling. Philippians 2:14

After all the amazing miracles that God had done to deliver Israel from bondage in Egypt, they forfeited their inheritance in the promised land, by grumbling and complaining (Num. 14:28-29). My dear Christian friends, was your own salvation and deliverance from the bondage of sin and death any less miraculous? And hasn't God made even better promises to you? (Heb. 8:6). Yes, every spiritual blessing is yours in Christ! (Eph. 1:3). Why then should we forfeit the enjoyment of God's blessing by grumbling and complaining? If praise and prayer rise before the throne of God as fragrant incense (Psa. 141:1-2), consider what your grumbling and complaining smells like in Heaven. "Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe" (Heb. 12:28). And remember, "do all things without grumbling or disputing" (Phil. 2:14). Read Psalm 103:2

☐ Tuesday - Be Blameless & Innocent. Philippians 2:15

God commands His people, "Be blameless and innocent" (Phil. 2:15). To be blameless is to be without guilt in the eyes of others. It is how we appear on the *outside*. But to be innocent is to be morally pure on the *inside*. The religions of the world are good at cleaning up the outside of a man, while the inside remains dirty and depraved. Yet God is not interested in just a veneer of religion over a selfish, self-indulgent life. He wants His people to be godly, both inside and out. Read Matthew 23:25-28

☐ Wednesday - Christ is Adequate. Philippians 2:15

Paul exhorts the church, "Prove yourselves to be *blameless* and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world" (Phil. 2:15). Only a deepening dependency on Christ can produce lives of such a quality as this, for "we are not adequate in ourselves ... but our adequacy is from God" (2 Cor. 3:5). And so the Christian's doxology is this: "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory *blameless* with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen." (Jude 1:24-25). Read Galatians 2:20

☐ Thursday - Children of God. Philippians 2:15

"Prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, *children of God* above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation" (Phil. 2:15). The name of God is blasphemed among unbelievers because of some who claim to be His people (Rom. 2:24) and the way of the truth is maligned (2 Pet. 2:2). Christianity, the Church, even God Himself, are judged by your behavior, Christian. So then, let us be blameless, innocent, above reproach – because we are "children of God". Read Mt. 5:16; Eph. 5:1; 1 Jn 3:1-3

☐ Friday - Lights in the World. Philippians 2:15

The Christian is no monk; he belongs not in a monastery where his light is hidden under a basket (Mt. 5:15), but "*in the midst* of a crooked and perverse generation, *among* whom you appear as lights in the world" (Phil. 2:15). "Our business in society at this present time is to make men and women see the kind of life they are living and the way to do that is to live a life which is the exact opposite of theirs" (D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones). Read Matthew 5:15-16; John 17:15-16

☐ Saturday - Hold Fast! Philippians 2:16

We live "in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation" (Phil. 2:15), as ones encompassed by an ocean; "holding fast the Word of life" (Phil. 2:16) as to a life preserver. Dear Christian, *hold fast* against the currents and eddies of immorality and worldliness that circle all around you. *Hold fast* against the undertow of public sentiment and popular opinion. Dear friend, hold fast the Word of life! Read 2 Thess. 2:13-15

Philippians 2:17-30 Bible Devotions

☐ Monday - The Hidden Pathway to True Joy. Philippians 2:17-18

Paul writes, "But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I *rejoice* and share my *joy* with you all. And you too, I urge you, *rejoice* in the same way and share your *joy* with me" (Phil. 2:17). The imagery Paul employs refers back to the Old Covenant drink offering which was poured out upon the burnt offering (usually a lamb or a bull) and ascended before the Lord as a fragrant aroma (cf. Num. 15:8-13; 28:6-7). Without question, the burnt offering was a greater sacrifice of resources than the drink offering. With this in mind, the apostle Paul compares the pouring out of his life, in the cause of Christ, to a drink offering; small compared to the sacrifice and service of the saints at Philippi. The Philippians, no doubt, would have seen it the other way around. Compared to Jesus' sacrifice for us, our own sacrifices for Him always seem small, and are actually the cause of great joy. Herein lies the mystery of godliness: the greater the sacrifice, in the cause of Christ, the greater the joy. And in this, Christ is our example, who lived a life of all out sacrifice and was "anointed with the oil of joy above His companions" (Heb. 1:8-9). So then, this is the hidden pathway to true joy: "present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship." Read Romans 12:1-2

☐ Tuesday - Kindred Spirit. Philippians 2:20

In the list of all-time great friendships in the Bible, alongside David and Jonathan (1 Sam. 18:1-3), and Ruth and Naomi (Ruth 1:12-17), we would have to include Paul and Timothy. Paul felt a "kindred spirit" with Timothy (Phil. 2:20), because: [1] Timothy was "genuinely concerned" for the welfare of God's people (Phil. 2:20); [2] sought not his own interests, but those of Christ Jesus (Phil. 2:21); and, [3] served "in the furtherance of the gospel" (Phil. 2:22). What type of people do you feel a kindred spirit with? How do you arrange your list of friends? Are your friendships centered around Christ or personal interests? Read 1 Corinthians 15:33; 2 Corinthians 6:14-15

☐ Wednesday - J·O·Y or Y·O·J ? Philippians 2:21

In Philippians 1:21, Paul wrote, "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain," but in Philippians 2:21 he speaks of those who "seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus." Which one best characterizes you? Do live in Philippians 1:21 or Philippians 2:21? JOY is Jesus first, Others second, and Yourself last. Read Philippians 2:1-5

☐ Thursday - Proven Worth. Philippians 2:22

Paul spoke of Timothy's "proven worth". Christian, do not despise your trials, but rather "exult in [your] tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance and perseverance, *proven character*" (Rom. 5:3-4), "that the *proof* of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:6-7). Read Isaiah 48:10

☐ Friday - Fellow Worker. Philippians 2:25

Epaphroditus was not an apostle, he was merely ministering to Paul's physical needs while Paul was in prison. Nevertheless, Paul refers to him as "my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier" (Phil. 2:25). All work done for the same Lord and with the same motive is the same. "He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward" (Mt. 10:41). Whether your ministry is great or small, "whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord ... knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward" (Col. 3:23-24). Read Matthew 25:14-30

☐ Saturday - Onward Christian Soldiers. Philippians 2:25

Paul calls Epaphroditus a "fellow soldier" (Phil. 2:25). The church is involved in a spiritual battle, against spiritual forces (Eph. 6:12), with spiritual weapons (2 Cor. 10:3-5) and spiritual armor (Eph. 6:10-18). This battle is, "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit," says the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 4:6). "For The battle is the Lord's" (1 Sam. 17:47; 2 Chron. 20:15), "who always leads us in His triumph in Christ" (2 Cor. 2:14). Read Proverbs 21:31; Revelation 12:9-11, 17:14

Philippians 3 Bible Devotions

☐ Monday - Beware!

Philippians 3:2

“Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision” (Phil. 3:2). Christian, there is a counterfeit church that wraps itself in religious trappings, but is not the bride of Christ. It is the “other woman” in Scripture, who rides upon the back of the beast, and is called the “mother of harlots” (cf. Rev. 17:3-6; 18:3-5). If the devil cannot destroy the church outright, he sets up his counterfeit next door. He works both ways, as a “roaring lion” (1 Pet. 5:8), and as an “angel of light” (2 Cor. 11:14). “Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness” (2 Cor. 11:15). Beware! Even now “many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 Jn. 4:1). “And though this world with devils filled, should threaten to undo us, we will not fear, for God hath willed, His truth to triumph through us” (*A Mighty Fortress*, Luther).
Read Jeremiah 14:14; Matthew 7:22-23

☐ Tuesday - Surpassing Value.

Philippians 3:8

The apostle writes, “I count all things to be loss in view of the *surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus* my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ” (Phil. 3:8). “The man who has God for His treasure has all things in One. Many ordinary treasures, may be denied him, or if he is allowed to have them, the enjoyment of them will be so tempered that they will never be necessary to his happiness ... for he now has it all in One, and he has it purely, legitimately and forever” (*Pursuit of God*, Tozer). “Lord, You are more precious than silver; Lord, You are more costly than gold; Lord, You are more beautiful than diamonds, and nothing I desire compares with You” (Song).
Read Jer. 9:23-24

☐ Wednesday - Alien Righteousness.

Philippians 3:9

Paul, despairing of his own [self] righteousness, hoped in this: “[that I] may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith” (Phil. 3:9). Martin Luther called imputed righteousness, “alien righteousness”, for it is not of this world. Luther prayed, “Thou, Lord Jesus, art my righteousness, and I am Thy sin. Thou hast taken on Thyself what Thou wast not and given me what I am not” (cf. 2 Cor. 5:21).
Read Romans 9:30-32

☐ Thursday - Press On!

Philippians 3:14

“One thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 3:14). The Christian does not live in the past. He neither rests upon previous successes, nor laments past failures, but presses on. Yesterday’s manna is a wormy meal today – go out and gather more (Ex. 16:18-21). There are new treasures to be discovered in Christ (Eph. 2:6-7), new mercies to receive (Lam. 3:22-23), new territory to gain (Mt. 16:18). Press on!
Read Philippians 3:7-14

☐ Friday - Reach for the Prize.

Philippians 3:14

The Christian life is a race. So then, “Let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of faith” (Heb. 12:1-2). Run, dear Christian, “Press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14). “Run in such a way that you may win” (1 Cor. 9:24).
Read Isaiah 40:31; Jeremiah 12:5

☐ Saturday - Our Citizenship.

Philippians 3:20

Christian, this world is not our home, we are only passing through. “For our citizenship is in heaven” (Phil. 3:20). Therefore, “set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth” (Col. 3:2).
Read Eph. 2:19; Hebrews 11:13-16; 1 Peter 2:11

Philippians 4:1-9 Bible Devotions

☐ Monday - Streams of Rejoicing!

Philippians 4:4

Paul asked one church, "What has happened to all your joy?" (Gal. 4:15, NIV). That's a good question to ask a Christian, especially since Jesus promised, "He who believes in Me from his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water" (Jn. 7:38). Take a long look at yourself, dear child of God. What do you see, a river of life or a dried up riverbed? "There is a river whose streams *make glad* the city of God" (Psa. 46:4). Even when outward comforts fail, there is an underground stream which gladdens the heart that is in union with Christ. "In the presence of the Lord there is fullness of joy" (Psalm 16:11). And so, the apostle says, "Rejoice in the Lord always!" Yet, this is more than a command; it is a gage to measure our closeness to Christ. Read Habakkuk 3:17-18

☐ Tuesday - Command to Rejoice.

Philippians 4:4

The Lord has so united Himself with His people as to invest us with His name and make His reputation dependent upon our countenance and behavior. And so, for His name's sake, the Lord commands His people, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!" (Phil. 4:4). We may set such a requirement alongside the Ten Commandments; it is law. Again the Scriptures say, "Rejoice always ... for this is *God's will* for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thess. 5:16,18). So then, to "rejoice always" is to be in God's will, but anything less is to be self-willed. The Christian has received "good news of a great joy" (Lk. 2:10). He should need no command to rejoice in the Lord, anymore than a stick of dynamite needs a command to explode once it is lit. And yet, the command is to us all, for sometimes our fuse becomes wet and fizzes. "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!" Read Isaiah 35:10

☐ Wednesday - Be Anxious for Nothing.

Philippians 4:6

Again the Scripture commands, "Be anxious for nothing..." (Phil. 4:6). Godly concern lays its problems before the Lord and leaves them in His Almighty hands. But Satan's counterfeit, anxiety, is self-consumed, irrational, always agitated. By these distinctions we may know that concern has mutated into anxiety. Christian, "Cast all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you" (1 Pet. 5:7). Read Mt. 6:25-34

☐ Thursday - Pray "in Everything".

Philippians 4:6

G. Campbell Morgan (1863-1945), known as "The Prince of Expositors," was once confronted by a woman who said, "I do not bother God with the little things, I only pray for big things." Morgan replied, "Madam, all things are little to God!" Dear Christian, "Be anxious for nothing, but *in everything* ... let your requests be made known to God" (Phil. 4:6). "What a privilege to carry *everything* to God in prayer (Hymn). Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

☐ Friday - Garrison of the Heart.

Philippians 4:7

"The *peace* of God shall *guard* your hearts and your minds" (Phil. 4:7). "Divine peace takes upon itself warlike functions, and garrisons the heart and mind" (Maclaren). "The man of trust and prayer has entered that impregnable citadel from which no one can dislodge him; and the name of that fortress is Christ Jesus" (Hendriksen). Read Isaiah 26:3

☐ Saturday - Every Thought Captive.

Philippians 4:8

"Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things" (Phil. 4:8). "For as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7). Christian, "take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). Read Hebrews 4:12

Philippians 4:10-23 Bible Devotions

☐ **Monday - The Ladder of Christian Growth.** Philippians 4:11
Earthly pleasures and treasures are like a meal eaten in a dream, they can never truly satisfy (Isa. 29:8). “But godliness with *contentment* is of great gain” (1 Tim. 6:6). The apostle writes, “I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need” (Phil. 4:11-12). Contentment is not the first or even the second rung on the ladder of Christian growth, but is reached only after years of trusting in God, climbing one rung at a time above the pull of earthly things, closer to heaven, and closer to Christ. Read Eccl. 5:10; Heb. 13:5; 1 Tim. 6:6-11

☐ **Tuesday - Don't Let Your Life's Work be Burned Up!** Philippians 4:13
The believer declares, “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me” (Phil. 4:13), but the unbeliever sneers, “I can do all things without Christ.” Foolish man, don't you know a divine appointment awaits you? What will you say on that day, when you stand in the presence of the Almighty? Look around, see if you can find *even one* of your best works done apart from Christ -- they will all be gone, burned up in a moment of time, a life's work reduced to ashes! “I can [and must] do all things through Him who strengthens me” (Phil. 4:13); everything else is kindling. Read 1 Corinthians 3:11-15

☐ **Wednesday - Christ, the Power of God.** Philippians 4:13
Paul declares, “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me” (Phil. 4:13); and Jesus adds, “apart from Me you can do nothing” (Jn. 15:5). What is the difference between the man who can do all things and the one who can do nothing? It is not talents, or gifts, or abilities, but Christ. Christ is the power of God (1 Cor. 1:24). Read 2 Cor. 12:7-10

☐ **Thursday - I Can Do All Things in God's Hand.** Philippians 4:13
There lies a dried-up jawbone of a donkey, what can it do? Put it into Samson's hand and it can slay a thousand Philistines (Judg. 15:15). Christian, do not say what you cannot do! Place yourself in the mighty hand of God and there proclaim with Paul, “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me” (Phil. 4:13). Read 1 Samuel 17:32-51

☐ **Friday - Supplied by the Riches of His Mercy.** Philippians 4:19
Jesus is Jehovah Jireh, our Provider. In Him all things “live and move and exist” (Acts 17:28). He sustains all things by the word of His power (Heb. 1:3). He feeds the birds of the air (Mt. 6:26). He even causes His sun to shine and rain to fall on wicked men (Mt. 5:45). But to His own people He dispenses uncommon grace, not with an eye-dropper, but “according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us” (Eph. 1:7-8, cf. 2:7). In giving us His Son, God has committed Himself to withhold no good thing from His people (Rom 8:32; Psa. 84:11). And so, the apostle writes, “And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:19). Read 2 Corinthians 9:8

☐ **Saturday - He Takes Care of the Righteous.** Philippians 4:19
The Scriptures say, “Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Mt. 6:33). “All these things” refer to the basic provisions of life (Mt. 6:25-32). They are added to those who “seek first His kingdom and His righteousness”. Again the Scripture says, “And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:19). But to whom does he make this promise? To the righteous. “The Lord will not allow the righteous to hunger, but He will thrust aside the craving of the wicked” (Prov. 10:3). Some are stockpiling earthly treasures? You'd do much better stockpiling righteousness! Read 1 Kings 17:2-16

Colossians

Written by
The Apostle Paul

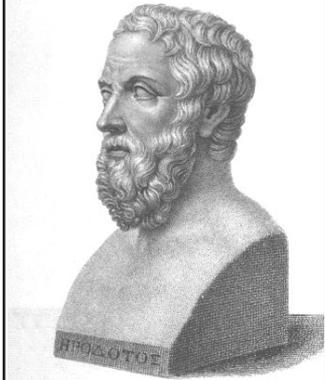
61 A.D.

City of Colossae

“a large city of Phrygia”

Herodotus
(484-425 BC)

Greek historian
Called the “Father of History”



“a well populated city,
large and wealthy”

Xenophon
(431-355 BC)

Greek historian



- Located in the Meander River Valley. Our English word “meander” comes from this river.
- 100 miles E. of Ephesus, on the main trade route from Ephesus to the Euphrates.
- Located near the junction of Anatolian Plate & Arabian Plate. Heavy earthquake activity / hot springs.
- Famous for the dark red wool cloth that carried its name, colossinum.
- Diverse population of Greeks, Jews & Phrygians.

Church of Colossae

A.D.	Church Event	Biblical Reference
52-55	Paul never visited Colossae, but taught at the school of Tyrannus, in Ephesus for two years. "All who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord." Epaphras, native of Colossae, likely received Christ from Paul during that time.	Acts 19:9-10
55	Epaphras started church in Colossae.	Colossians 1:7, 4:12
60	Great earthquake.	
61	Epaphras visited Paul in jail in Rome and delivered news about the church in Colossae.	Colossians 4:12 Philemon 1:23
61	Paul wrote the epistle to the Colossians from prison in Rome.	Colossians 4:7

Colossians - Introduction

☐ Monday - Christ First.

Here is Christianity's fundamental purpose, sanctification's ultimate aim, discipleship's final goal: that Christ "might come to have first place in everything" (Col. 1:16-18). When pressed into a corner, the Christian might admit that he or she has a problem with a certain sin, but O how pride keeps us from admitting that Christ is not first! "Revival takes place in the lives of communities when people stop seeing sin as an isolated act of disobedience and they begin to see it as an organic network of compulsive beliefs, behaviors and thoughts that issue out of their basic alienation from God" (Sonship Series).
Read Colossians 1

☐ Tuesday - One Authority.

Colossae was a crossroad between East and West – a junction for new ideas, economic exchange, and religious syncretism. Syncretism is the fusion of differing philosophies and ideas, producing a heterogeneous system of belief. The Colossians were in danger, not of *denying* Christ, but of *dethroning* Him, and *diluting* His authority with three false sources of authority, i.e. [1] The intellect – employing worldly philosophies and psychologies to reason what is right and wrong; [2] Experience – relying upon visions, impressions, feelings, and emotions to determine truth; and [3] Tradition – judging what is right by the way things have always been done. Dear Christian, "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ" (Col. 2:8). Jesus' written Word, the Bible, is "the only infallible rule of truth for life".
Read Colossians 2

☐ Wednesday - Mind Over Matter.

"If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory" (Col.3:1-4). Dear Christian, don't lose focus, you are bound for glory! Keep your eyes on the prize!
Read Colossians 3:1-4

☐ Thursday - Put Off the Old Self.

When Jesus shouted, "Lazarus, come forth," Lazarus rose from the dead and stumbled out of the tomb, bound head-to-toe in cloth wrappings. Then Jesus declared, "Unbind him, and let him go" (Jn. 11:43-44). Christ has done the same for you, Christian – having raised you from the dead, He commands, "Take off your grave-clothes and put on grace-clothes!" Yes, lay aside your old life, which wreaks of death, and "put on the new self" (Col. 3:10), that is to say, "put on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 13:14; Gal. 3:27) and be robed in His righteousness (Job 29:14; Isa. 61:10; Rev. 19:8). Read Colossians 3:5-17

☐ Friday - Christian Relationships.

Christian, your relationship with God affects your relationships with others. A man or woman in love with the Lord will even love his enemies, but the one estranged from God even struggles to get along with those dearest him – spouse, children, friends, and neighbors, etc. "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself" (Lk. 10:27).
Read Colossians 3:18-4:1

☐ Saturday - Make the Most of Every Opportunity.

Christian, make every prayer count (Col. 4:2-4,12); season every word with grace (Col. 4:6); take every circumstance to encourage (Col. 4:11), and every occasion to minister (Col. 4:17). Yes, make the most of every opportunity (Col. 4:5).
Read Colossians 4:2-18

Colossians 1:1-12 Bible Devotions

☐ Monday - Faith & Love.

Colossians 1:4

The apostle commends the Colossians for their *faith* in Christ and *love* for the saints (Col. 1:4). The sinner is saved by grace through faith alone, and yet faith that saves never alone. Faith without love is lifeless and therefore expressionless (cf. Jam. 2:26), but “faith working through love” (Gal. 5:6) is one of the clearest assurances of salvation.

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3; 2 Peter 1:5-11

☐ Tuesday - Heavenly Hope.

Colossians 1:5

The earthly-minded man sets his hopes and dreams on earthly things and lives a life of disappointment; but you, Christian, have a “hope laid up for you in heaven” (Col. 1:5). Therefore, “set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth” (Col. 3:2). “For this is contained in Scripture: ‘Behold I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious cornerstone, and he who believes in Him shall not be disappointed’” (1 Pet. 2:6).

Read Matthew 6:21, 24; Luke 12:16-21

☐ Wednesday - The Word of Truth.

Colossians 1:5

“This is the nation that did not obey the voice of the Lord their God or accept correction; truth has perished and has been cut off from their mouth” (Jer. 7:28). “Lies and not truth prevail in the land ... And everyone deceives his neighbor, and does not speak the truth, they have taught their tongue to speak lies” (Jer. 9:3,5). “Truth has stumbled in the street” (Isa. 59:14). This was ancient Israel’s epitaph, will it be ours? Satan “is a liar, and the father of lies” (Jn 8:44), but Jesus is “the way, and the truth, and the life” (Jn 14:6), and His Word is called here “the Word of truth” (Col. 1:5). The Psalmist declares, “Thy law is truth” (Psa. 119:142); “Thy commandments are truth” (Psa. 119:151); “The sum of Thy word is truth” (Psa. 119:160; cf. Jn. 17:17); Dear Christian, “Do not let kindness and truth leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart” (Prov. 3:3).

Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 3 John 1:4

☐ Thursday - A Controlling Interest.

Colossians 1:9

Paul prayed that the Christians in the church at Colossae would “be filled with the knowledge of [God’s] will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding” (Col 1:9). The key word is “filled”, which in this context means *controlled*. One who is filled with anger is controlled by that anger. Likewise, to be filled with the Holy Spirit is to relinquish control to the Spirit of God (Eph 5:18). And so, to be “filled with the knowledge of God’s will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding” is no mere intellectual attainment, but a life controlled by that knowledge. Dear friend, does the Bible have a controlling interest in your life?

Read 2 Peter 1:2-3

☐ Friday - Measure Your Stride.

Colossians 1:10-12

Here, the apostle employs four Greek participles to describe a Christian walk that is “worthy of the Lord”. It is a walk that is: [1] “bearing fruit in every good work”; [2] “increasing in a knowledge of God”; [3] being “strengthened with all power according to His glorious might”; and [4] “joyously giving thanks to the Father”. Dear Christian, measure your stride by these things, and “walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called” (Eph. 4:1).

Read 1 John 1:6-7

☐ Saturday - God Has Qualified Us.

Colossians 1:12

Are you serving in your church, Christian? “I am inadequate to serve,” says one. True enough, but our adequacy is from God (2 Cor. 3:5-6). “But I am unqualified,” another replies. Right again! But God has qualified us (Col. 1:12). “Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.” (2 Cor. 12:9).

Read 1 Peter 4:10; Galatians 5:13

Colossians 1:13-20 Bible Devotions

☐ **Monday - Does Your Doctrine Produce Worship?** Col. 1:13-18

As in most of his epistles, the apostle Paul opens his letter to the Colossians with a healthy serving of sound doctrine, and then closes his epistle with many practical applications necessary for sound living. And so here, in Colossians 1:13-18, is Paul's Christology, which sounds more like worship than doctrine. He presents Christ as King (1:13), Redeemer (1:14), God (1:15), Creator (1:16), and Head of the Church (1:18), "... so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything" (1:18). Christian, measure your doctrine by this: Does it arouse you to worship? Read Psalm 119:171

☐ **Tuesday - From Prison to Palace.** Col. 1:13

God not only delivers those held captive by the prince of darkness, but He makes them heirs to His own kingdom. "For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son" (Col. 1:13). Never was there a deliverance so great, from a darkness so grim, through a transfer so complete, to a kingdom so glorious. Read Romans 8:16-18

☐ **Wednesday - The Image of the Invisible God.** Col. 1:15, 19

Christ is "the *image* of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15), Greek *icon*. Note the definite article: Christ is *the* image of God, i.e. the *only* divinely authorized image of the living God. Any other icons and ornamental trinkets are prohibited (Ex. 20:4-5), because they limit our conception of God. But of Christ, "it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him" (Col. 1:19). Jesus said, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (Jn. 14:9), "And he who beholds Me beholds the One who sent Me." (Jn. 12:45). Read Hebrews 1:3; John 1:18, 10:30

☐ **Thursday - He is the King of All Creation.** Col. 1:16

Jesus is the King of all Creation. "For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created by Him and for Him" (Col. 1:16). The Christian understands his point of origin and his purpose for life. He knows that he has been created *by* Christ and *for* Christ. Read Psalm 24:7-10; Romans 14:7-8

☐ **Friday - Christ is the Head of the Church.** Col. 1:17

Just as Ephesians focusses on the church as the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23, 4:4, 4:12, 4:16, 5:30), Colossians focuses on Christ as the head of the body (Col. 1:18, 2:10, 2:19). A head transplant might produce a Frankenstein at best, and so, never works in the local church. For the church to survive, it must be vitally attached to Christ, who is "head of the body" (Col. 1:1). Read Col. 2:9-10

☐ **Saturday - First-Born from the Dead.** Col. 1:18

Jesus is "the firstborn from the dead" (Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:5). The firstborn is he that "openeth the womb and prepares the way for all his brethren. Thus Christ was in the womb of death, was born from death, and opened the womb of death for all His brethren" (Hoeksema). Thus He has become "the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29). As the "author of salvation" (Heb. 2:10, Greek, *archegos*, lit. pioneer or forerunner) Jesus has blazed a trail of salvation along which "many sons" could be brought to glory (F. F. Bruce). Read John 14:2-3

Colossians 1:20-29 Bible Devotions

☐ Monday - Completely Reconciled.

Colossians 1:20-22

Here in Colossians 1:20-22, Paul talks about reconciliation, yet he does not use the normal Greek word, *katallasso*, but twice uses a heightened form, *apokatallasso* (v. 20, 22), which means “completely reconciled”. Dear Christian, “you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind” (v. 21), but now, by the blood of Jesus Christ, He has *completely reconciled* you to the Father. There are no side issues left unresolved. Every reason for hostility and every cause for alienation has been removed, so that God’s people may enjoy the closest fellowship possible between creature and Creator.

Read Romans 5:8-11

☐ Tuesday - A Mark of Authentic Christianity.

Colossians 1:22-23

Friend, in the Day of the Lord, Christ will “present you before [the Father] holy and blameless and beyond reproach -- if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard” (Col. 1:22-23). An enemy spy may sneak into the camp, but he does intend to stay, because his loyalties lie elsewhere. So it is in Christ’s church: many come and go, some looking for one thing, some for another, but only those who have been reconciled to God and made true allies and friends of the King remain. No true friend of God ever left Him; no pretender ever stayed. Continuance and steadfastness are true measures of authentic Christianity.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:58, 16:13; 1 John 2:19

☐ Wednesday - You Suffer Not Alone.

Colossians 1:24

“Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body (which is the church) in filling up that which is lacking in Christ’s afflictions” (Col. 1:24). Christ’s afflictions lacked not in atoning value, but in corporate experience. As Christ suffered, so also His body, the church, must endure “the fellowship of His sufferings” (Phil. 3:10), but with this important difference: Whereas Christ suffered alone, His people never do. Christ feels the sufferings of His people as His own (Acts 9:4-5). Our afflictions are His. He feels them all acutely. He puts our tears in a bottle (Psa. 56:8), and mixes them with His own. Dear Christian, in your darkest hour, in your deepest struggles, in your most difficult trials, Christ is there.

Read Hebrews 2:18, 4:15-16

☐ Thursday - Christ in You, the Hope of Glory.

Colossians 1:27

The apostle writes that it is “Christ in you, [that is] the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27). An external acquaintance with Christ will not do. The Christian work ethic without Christ is hopeless. Mere academic knowledge about Christ is vanity. Christ held at arms length is no hope. No, it is Christ *in you*, that is the hope of glory.

Read Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 3:16-19

☐ Friday - We Proclaim Him.

Colossians 1:28

The Great Commission, as it has been called, is not good news of a great joy about a system, but a Savior; it is not so much the proclamation of a creed, but Christ; and it is not a new relationship with a set of precepts, but a Person. “And *we proclaim Him*, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ” (Col. 1:28).

Read 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

☐ Saturday - Every Man Complete in Christ.

Colossians 1:28

“And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present *every man complete in Christ*” (Col. 1:28). Christian, do you have the Shepherd’s heart? Then we cannot content ourselves with the ninety-nine Christian friends that are healthy, but we must go after the one who is struggling, wandering, confused, feeling separated, “that we may present *every man complete in Christ.*”

Read Matthew 18:12-13

Colossians 2 - Part I Bible Devotions

☐ Monday - Let No One Deceive You.

Colossians 2:4

Satan is called “a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44), so it comes as no surprise that deception is one of his primary weapons. “If you tell a lie long enough, loud enough and often enough, the people will believe it,” Adolph Hitler declared. The fact that a person is a powerful and persuasive public speaker, as Hitler was, does not make his message true. Paul, on the other hand, was an unimpressive public speaker (2 Cor. 10:10), but he spoke the Word of God (1 Cor. 1:17, 2:1, 2:4). And so, the Lord warns His people, “let no one deceive you with persuasive arguments” (Col. 2:4), or with “empty deception” (Col. 2:8, literally “foolish lies”), “for many deceivers have gone out into the world” (2 John 1:7).

Read Ephesians 6:16

☐ Tuesday - Christ Came to Set the Captive Free.

Colossians 2:8

Paul warned the Christians in Colossae, “See to it that no one *takes you captive* through philosophy or empty deception” (Col. 2:8), and the Greek word he used describes one who is captured and carried off as the spoils of a battle. Christian, there is a real war going on and the battleground is your mind. It is a spiritual battle (2 Cor. 10:3; Eph. 6:12), against a spiritual enemy (1 Pet. 5:8), fought with spiritual weapons (2 Cor. 10:4; Eph. 6:10-17). Millions of Christians live like prisoners of war, their minds held captive to greed, lust, anxiety, and pride. They are Satan’s trophies of war. But Christ came to set the captive free! (Lk. 4:18). “It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery” (Gal. 5:1). Rise up, Christian soldier, “Fight the good fight of faith!” (1 Tim. 6:12). “Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).

Read 1 John 5:4; Revelation 12:10-11

☐ Wednesday - The Wisdom of the World.

Colossians 2:8

When you hear what the Evolutionist or the Mormon or the Hindu believes, you think to yourself, “How can anyone in their right mind believe such nonsense?” Nevertheless, billions of people are held “captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ” (Col. 2:8). But the child of God cannot look down upon anyone with an air of superiority, for we were once numbered among them. Someone has said, “Christianity is one beggar telling another beggar where he found bread.”

Read Romans 1:18-25

☐ Thursday - Interpreting Experiences.

Colossians 2:18

“Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize ... taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind” (Col. 1:18). Dreams, visions, feelings, circumstances, experiences and emotions are an unclear guide. We must not interpret the Bible based on our experiences; no, we must interpret our experiences based on the Bible. “Religious feelings may and do vary so greatly from person to person, or even in the same person they may vary so widely from one time to the next, that it is never safe to trust them” (A. W. Tozer). “There is nothing so deluding as feelings. Christians cannot live by feelings” (Spurgeon).

Read Deuteronomy 13:1-3

☐ Friday - The World’s SOP.

Colossians 2:20-23

The “elementary principles of the world” that Paul refers to (Col. 2:8, 2:20; Gal. 4:9) are the world’s SOP, standard operating procedure, which is: try to be a good person and hope you go to heaven. It is not an over generalization to say that every man-made religion believes some form of that. But there is a problem: “by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in [God’s] sight” (Rom. 3:20), “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). Rather, salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, apart from works (Eph. 2:8-9).

Read Galatians 2:21

Colossians 2 - Part II Bible Devotions

☐ Monday - How Firm a Foundation?

Colossians 2:1-7

Paul's "great struggle," in Colossians 2, for the churches at Colossae and Laodicea was for their "full assurance of understanding" (v. 2), and "true knowledge" of Christ (v. 3). He was concerned for the "stability of [their] faith in Christ" (v. 5), and that they be "firmly rooted" in Him, "being built up and established in [their] faith" (v. 7). The apostle warns them, "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ" (v. 8). Elsewhere the Bible gives similar warnings: "You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness" (2 Pet. 3:17); and again, "For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it" (Heb. 2:1).

Read Matt. 7:15; Acts 20:29; 2 Cor. 11:13-15; 1 Cor. 16:1

☐ Tuesday - Sola Scriptura, Scripture Alone.

Colossians 2:4, 8, 18

The apostle was concerned that the Colossians not be *deluded* by worldly wisdom (Col. 2:4), or *deceived* by earthly philosophy and man-made traditions (Col. 2:8), or *defrauded* by visions, experiences, feelings, or impressions, etc. (Col. 2:18). These are unsure sources of authority at best, but there is one that never fails – the Bible. *Sola Scriptura* was one of the battle cries of the Reformation and it must be ours. It means, "Scripture alone" as the only infallible rule for faith and practice. On trial for his faith, Martin Luther declared, "Here I stand. My mind is held captive to the Word of God!" Christian, will you stand today on Scripture alone? Read 2 Tim. 2:15, 3:16

☐ Wednesday - First Love.

Colossians 2:6

Dear Christian, recall that honeymoon Christ took you on when you first believed. What love and joy and faith and zeal flooded your heart! But O how the years can take their toll. As a marriage grows stale without careful maintenance, so our first love for Christ will wane through similar neglect. "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him" (Col. 2:6).

Read Revelation 2:1-4

☐ Thursday - All the Fullness of Deity in Bodily Form.

Colossians 2:9

The apostle declares, "For in [Christ] all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form" (Col. 2:9). To say this is a great mystery is an understatement. If we could fit the universe on the head of a pin, or pour all the world's oceans into a thimble, then perhaps we might have some clue as to how all the fullness of Deity could dwell in bodily form in Jesus Christ. How can infinite and eternal God dwell in finite, temporal man? "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is too high, I cannot attain to it" (Psa. 139:6). Jesus, what a wonder You are!

Read 1 Timothy 1:17

☐ Friday - Your Certificate of Debt Paid in Full!

Colossians 2:14

God is a meticulous accountant. Every one of my transgressions, every trespass, every disobedience, large or small, has been recorded upon a certificate of debt, figuratively speaking. This spells *doom* to the unbeliever, but *deliverance* to the believer. How does all this work for my deliverance you ask? God has "canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross" (Col. 2:14). Because His accounting is perfect, none of my sins – past, present, or future – were left off that list, all were nailed to the cross, the debt was paid in full, the certificate cancelled. "There is therefore now *no* condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1).

Read 1 John 1:8-9

Colossians 3:1-5 Bible Devotions

☐ Monday - Raised With Christ.

Colossians 3:1

“If then you *have been raised up* with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God” (Col. 3:1). Note the past tense; the apostle speaks as if the Christian’s resurrection has already occurred. But in what sense are we already raised? The Bible describes two types of resurrection: [1] *bodily resurrection*, which has not yet taken place, but will occur upon Christ’s glorious return (1 Cor. 6:14, 15:51-53; 1 Thess. 4:16-17); and [2] *spiritual resurrection*, which occurs the moment a person is born-again (Col. 2:12; Eph. 2:5-6). Christian, once you were absolutely dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1), but now *you have been raised up* with Christ (Eph. 2:5; Col. 2:13). Furthermore, your spiritual resurrection is a *guarantee* of your bodily resurrection!

Read Ephesians 2:1-7; Romans 6:13

☐ Tuesday - Kingdom Seekers.

Colossians 3:1

“If then you have been raised up with Christ, *keep seeking* the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God” (Col. 3:1). Salvation is not the end of a journey, but the beginning -- it is our *introduction* into grace (Rom. 5:2, NASB). The Lord has announced, “And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me *with all your heart*” (Jer. 29:13), for God is the “rewarder of them that *diligently seek Him*” (Heb. 11:6, KJV). In this short life there is only time for one all-out pursuit. Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness” (Matt. 6:33).

Read Matthew 7:7-8

☐ Wednesday - Behold Thy God.

Colossians 3:2

“Set your *mind* on the things above, not on the things that are on earth” (Col. 3:2). Friend, what do you think about *most*? That is your God. “For as a man thinks in his heart, so is he” (Prov. 23:7). Selah. Pause and meditate.

Read Romans 8:5-17

☐ Thursday - Dead in Christ.

Colossians 3:3

Here are a few observations I have noted about the dead: [1] Interest in the amount of money in the Virginia State Lottery historically runs low among dead people; [2] The least number of men who purchase the *Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Edition* are dead men; and [3] Concern for keeping up with the latest fashion trends is, in general, lowest among the dead. Why? -- Because they’re dead!!! Christian, “you have *died* and your life is hidden with Christ in God ... Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as *dead* to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry” (Col. 3:3, 5).

Read Romans 6:1-13

☐ Friday - Christ, Who is Our Life.

Colossians 3:4

The apostle wrote, “When Christ, *who is our life*, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory” (Col. 3:4). Christ is not content with partial ownership of your life. No, He wants to be your life! “For the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God” (Ex. 34:14). Friend, “no one can serve two masters” (Mt. 6:24). Therefore, “choose for yourselves today whom you will serve” (Josh. 24:15).

Read 1 Kings 18:21-40

Colossians 3:5-17 Bible Devotions

☐ Monday - Cut it Out!

Colossians 3:5

Jesus said, "And if your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to go into hell" (Mt. 5:29-30). What a grotesque place the church would be if this were literally applied! In England, they use to cut off the hand of one caught stealing. One thief lost both hands and was caught picking pockets with his teeth! It is easy to see that the problem of sin is in the heart (Mk. 7:21). The point of Jesus' words is that the Christian should deal purposefully and seriously with his own sin. "Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as [cut off and therefore] dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which amounts to idolatry" (Col. 3:5).
Read Romans 6:12-13; Galatians 5:24

☐ Tuesday - Flee Idolatry.

Colossians 3:5

"Therefore, consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which amounts to *idolatry*" (Col. 3:5). Idolatry, simply stated, is desiring anything more than God. My dear friends, "What agreement has the temple of God with *idols*? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, 'I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.'" (2 Cor. 6:16).
Read 1 Corinthians 10:14

☐ Wednesday - Christian Dressing.

Colossians 3:10-14

"Put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him ... *put on* a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; ... And beyond all these things *put on* love, which is the perfect bond of unity" (Col. 3:10,12,14). Carefully consider each piece of Christian clothing listed above. Pause and review. Now remember this: We are not finished dressing until we have put on love.
Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-8

☐ Thursday - Let Peace Rule.

Colossians 3:15

"And *let* the peace of Christ rule in your hearts" (Col. 3:15) -- this is God's injunction against worry and anxiety. Notice, it is something we must *let* happen. We must "*let* the peace of Christ rule" in our hearts, by taking every anxious thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5). The human heart has the capacity for only one ruler, one life-dominating principle (Matt. 6:24): either we let the peace of Christ rule, or we let fear, worry, bitterness, and anxiety dominate our thinking. If it were not possible to let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts, then God would not command it. But with the commandment, He gives the Spirit, whose fruit is peace (Gal. 5:22), and His Son, who is the Prince of peace (Isa. 9:6).
Read John 14:27; Philippians 4:6-9

☐ Friday - Jesus Put a Song in My Heart.

Colossians 3:16

"Let the word of Christ *richly dwell* within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God" (Col. 3:16). Here is how I might know if the Word of God is richly dwelling in my heart or merely passing through (i.e. in one ear and out the other): Is there a new song in my heart?
Read Psalm 40:3, 98:1, 149:1

☐ Saturday - Worship is Not an Act, but a Lifestyle.

Colossians 3:17

"And *whatever you do* in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father" (Col. 3:17). Out with all worship that is relegated to one day a week or one hour a day! True worship is a *lifestyle*: Every mundane job and every routine task is to become an act of worship. So then, "Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31).
Read Romans 12:1-2

Colossians 3:18-4:1 Bible Devotions

☐ **Monday - The Woman of God.** Colossians 3:18
“Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord” (Col. 3:18). There is probably not a more politically incorrect concept in American culture today than the idea of a wife living in submission to her husband. Yet it is the will of God and therefore the duty of every wife who lays a claim to godliness. But it is submission, not to a tyrant or taskmaster, but to her own husband who is under God’s command to love her “as Christ loved the church” (Eph. 5:25). Dear woman of God, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is” (Rom. 12:2). Read 1 Peter 3:1-6; Proverbs 31:10-31

☐ **Tuesday - The Earth Quakes!** Colossians 3:19
“Under three things the earth quakes, and under four, it cannot bear up ... under an unloved woman who is married” (Prov. 30:21, 23 NIV). Christian husband, how would you measure your love for you wife on the Richter scale? “Husbands, *love* your wives, and do not be embittered against them” (Col. 3:19). It is generally true for both husbands and wives, when I am out of fellowship with my spouse, I am out of fellowship with the Lord. Read Malachi 2:13-15; 1 Peter 3:7

☐ **Wednesday - Children Obey Your Parents.** Colossians 3:20
“But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, *disobedient to parents*” (2 Tim. 3:1-2). The steady decline in submission to authority is one of the signs of the end of the age: [1] submission to God and His Word (James 4:7); [2] submission to governing authorities (Rom. 13:1-7; Titus 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:13-15); [3] submission to church leaders (Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:1-5); [4] submission of a wife to her husband (Eph. 5:22-24; Col. 3:18; Titus 2:5); and [5] a child to his or her parent (Eph. 6:1-3). “Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord” (Col. 3:20), by this we distinguish ourselves from this anti-Christian age. Read Ephesians 6:1-3; Luke 15:11-32

☐ **Thursday - Grumpy Old Men?** Colossians 3:21
Gentlemen, notice two commands here: “Husbands...do not be *embittered* against [your wives]” (Col. 3:19) and “Fathers, do not *exasperate* your children” (Col. 3:21). Men, if Christ is not first-place in your life (the theme of Colossians, cf. Col. 1:18), you will become an embittered husband and an exasperating father. The choice is ours: to be Christ-centered saints or grumpy old men. Read Psalm 127:1-128:4

☐ **Friday - Christian Work Ethic.** Colossians 3:22-25
“Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men; knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve” (Col. 3:22-24). Notice what kind of work receives an eternal reward: “sincere,” “fearing the Lord,” “heartily” done labor, accomplished “as for the Lord”. All other service is merely wood for the fire on that day in which God will judge the quality of each man’s work. Read 1 Corinthians 3:11-15

Colossians 4:2-18 Bible Devotions

☐ Monday - The Family Practice.

Colossians 4:2

God's house, the church, is to be a house of prayer (Mt. 21:13), and so prayer should be one of the church's chief concerns. As in every home, each family member assumes specific household duties; so also in God's house each member has a different responsibility (Rom. 12:4; 1 Peter. 4:10). In addition, in the family of God, one duty belongs to all -- the duty to pray. Prayer is the family practice. So then, Christians, "Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving" (Col. 4:2). Read Luke 11:5-13; 18:1-8

☐ Tuesday - Key to the Door.

Colossians 4:3

Paul seemed to think prayer was necessary so "that God may open up to us a door for the Word" (Col. 4:3). Christian, have your neighbors or co-workers or friends or family shut you out when it comes to sharing the Gospel? Prayer may be the key that opens the door (Mt. 7:7-8). If the gates of hell cannot not prevail against us (Mt. 16:18), then perhaps by prayer we shall open a door of opportunity to those who have shut us out? Christian, pray and do not cease to pray until the door has been opened! Read Revelation 3:7-8

☐ Wednesday - The Wise Win Souls.

Colossians 4:5

"Conduct yourselves *with wisdom* toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity" (Col. 4:5). The village idiot is never a good soul-winner; no, "he who is *wise* wins souls" (Prov. 11:30). "And those who have *insight* will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. Read Ephesians 5:15-18

☐ Thursday - Salty Speech.

Colossians 4:6

The Bible records that the multitudes that followed Jesus marvelled "at the *gracious words* which were falling from His lips" (Lk. 4:22). Christian, "Let your speech always be with *grace*, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person" (Col. 4:6). Read Ecclesiastes 10:12

☐ Friday - A Second Chance.

Colossians 4:10

John Mark had abandoned Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:13). Hence, Paul refused to take him on their second trip, causing a division between Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:39). But by the grace of God, John Mark overcame his first failure and over time became a valuable servant of God and the apostle Paul. Here, years later, Paul commends him to the church at Colossae (Col. 4:10), for he had become a "fellow-worker" (Philem. 1:24), who Paul would later say, was "useful to me for service" (2 Tim. 4:11). "John Mark is an encouragement to everyone who has failed in his first attempts to serve God. He did not sit around and sulk. He got back into ministry and proved himself faithful to the Lord and to the apostle Paul" (Wiersbe). Read Luke 22:31-32

☐ Saturday - Knowing God's Will.

Colossians 4:12

How does one become "fully assured in all the will of God"? (Col. 4:12). "I seek the will of the Spirit of God through, or in connection with, the Word of God. The Spirit and the Word must be combined. If I look to the Spirit alone without the Word I lay myself open to great delusion. If the Holy Ghost guides us at all, He will do it according to the Scriptures and never contrary to them" (George Muller). "The fundamental mode whereby our rational Creator guides His rational creatures is by understanding and application of His written Word. The true way to honor the Holy Spirit as our guide is to honor the Holy Scriptures through which He guides us. The Spirit leads within the limits which the Word sets, not beyond them. 'He guideth me in the paths of righteousness' but not anywhere else" (J. I. Packer). Read 1 Thessalonians 4:3, 5:16-18

Philemon

Written by
The Apostle Paul

61 A.D.

Captured runaway slaves had their joints or other bones broken and forehead branded with letters denoting the slave as a runaway. If the slave had stolen anything, Roman Law prescribed crucifixion as the punishment, because death did not come quickly, thus the criminal suffered significantly and this suffering was considered 'payment' for the crime.

Cast of Characters

Person	Connection to Church at Colossae	Reference
<u>Paul</u> apostle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imprisoned in Rome (60-62 AD) • Wrote the epistle to Philemon, who lived in Colossae, 	Philemon 1:1
<u>Epaphras</u> church planter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probably led to Christ by Paul, while Paul was in Ephesus. • Planted the church in Colossae. • Delivered news of the Colossian church to Paul. 	Acts 19:8-10 Colossians 1:7, 4:12 Philemon 1:23
<u>Philemon</u> home owner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeowner in whose home the church in Colossae met. • Probably led to Christ by Paul, while Paul was in Ephesus. 	Philemon 1:1 Philemon 1:19
Apphia wife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probably Philemon's wife. 	Philemon 1:2
Archippus pastor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastor of the church at Colossae. • Probably Philemon's son. 	Philemon 1:2 Colossians 4:17
Onesimus runaway slave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A runaway slave who had stolen from his master Philemon. • Paul led Onesimus to Christ and sent him back to Philemon as a new brother in Christ. 	Philemon 1: 18 Philemon 1:10
Tychicus messenger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivered Paul's epistles of Colossians & Philemon. 	Colossians 4:7

Philemon Bible Devotions

☐ Monday - Refreshing the Saints.

Philemon 1:2-7

The apostle Paul led Philemon to Lord (v. 19). Philemon and his wife Apphia lived in the city of Colossae in Asia Minor. They loved God's people (v. 5), and the church in Colossae met in their home (v. 2). Probably in their mid-fifties, they had a son named Archippus (v. 2) who pastored the church (cf. Col. 4:17). This godly family's home was an oasis for all God's people in Colossae. "The hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you," Paul commended (v. 7). And what about your home, Christian? Would the apostle say that your life and marriage and home are refreshing to the saints?

Read Romans 12:10-13; Hebrews 13:1-2

☐ Tuesday - Litmus Test: Love for God's People.

Philemon 1:5

Have you ever wondered, "Am I really a Christian?" Here is one of the proofs that your faith is authentic: real love and commitment toward God's people. "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren" (1 Jn. 3:14). And so Paul commends Philemon for his "love ... toward all the saints" (Philem. 1:5). The heart of the true child of God is revealed by this attitude: "As for the saints who are in the earth, they are the majestic ones in whom is all my delight" (Psa. 16:3). But true love toward God's people manifests itself in tangible ways: [1] a tongue that edifies (Eph. 4:29); [2] actions that match our words (1 Jn. 3:18); and [3] regular weekly assembly at our local church (Heb. 10:24-25).

Read John 13:35; 1 John 4:7-8, 11-12, 20-21

☐ Wednesday - Forgive as You Have Been Forgiven.

Philemon 1:11

Onesimus was a runaway slave who had stolen from his master, Philemon. The penalty under Roman law was death! But while Onesimus was on the run he met the apostle Paul who led him to Christ. Paul wrote the epistle to Philemon to ask him to forgive Onesimus. Receive Onesimus back "no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother ... but if he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, charge that to my account ... I will repay it," said Paul (v. 16). Like Onesimus, the death penalty once loomed over you like a dark cloud, Christian (Rom. 6:23). But the great mountain of your eternal debt was repaid at the cross (Col. 2:13-14). Therefore, "Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ has forgiven you" (Eph. 4:32).

Read Matthew 18:21-35

☐ Thursday - Usefulness in Christ.

Philemon 1:11

Paul makes a play on words when he says that Onesimus, whose name means "useful," "formerly was *useless* but now is *useful*" (Philem. 1:11). That's what Christ does; He takes useless things and makes them useful (1 Cor. 1:26-29). A granite tombstone in Olney England bears this inscription, "John Newton, clerk, once an infidel and Libertine, a servant of slavers in Africa, was, by the rich mercy of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, preserved, restored, pardoned and appointed to preach the faith he had long labored to destroy." Apart from Christ we can do nothing (Jn. 15:5); sin renders us useless. But we can do all things through Christ (Phil. 4:13), and are made to be useful tools in the Master's hand.

Read Ecclesiastes 3:11

☐ Friday - Uncompelled Goodness.

Philemon 1:14

Paul writes to Philemon, "Without your consent I did not want to do anything, that your goodness should not be as it were by compulsion, but of your own free will" (Philem. 1:14). The Law commands goodness yet is powerless to produce it (Rom. 8:3; Heb. 7:18-19), but love draws it out (Rom. 2:4). "But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter."

Read Romans 7:4-6

☐ Saturday - You Can't Outrun God.

Philemon 1:15-16

Onesimus ran away, but God used it to save him (Philem. 1:15-16). Jonah ran away and God used it to save a whole city. O what precious time we waste running. Stop and surrender!

Read Jonah 1:1-3:5

THE ROMAN



E M P I R E



Written by Pastor Stephen Hildebrandt

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“Study to show yourself
approved to God ...
handling accurately the
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- 2 Timothy 2:15

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