



## January 1

### ***Psalms 148:11-13***

*<sup>11</sup> Kings of the earth and all peoples; Princes and all judges of the earth;*

*<sup>12</sup> Both young men and virgins; Old men and children.*

*<sup>13</sup> Let them praise the name of the LORD, For His name alone is exalted; His glory is above earth and heaven.*

As the New Year begins, we look forward to the possibilities that it holds. But as you start your journey this year, remember that you can do nothing that is totally of yourself. Planning for the New Year should never be a solo activity, even if you live by yourself. It should always be done with God and what He wants simply because He is the creator. The very next breath that we take, we do so because He created us and the air that we breathe. Everything that we will use for our future is created by Him, including the days that have not yet arrived. Whatever inventions and scientific discoveries are done in the upcoming year will be done because of Him. He is indeed worthy of our praise. There are those that have made significant impacts in your life as well and you recognize them for their contributions: but no one compares to our God. The Bible tells us that He inhabits the praise of His people. There is no greater thing in all the world than giving Him praise and honor. But just saying that God is great is not enough. We need to live our lives as if He is great. Giving Him honor means putting Him first in everything that we do. God not only knows the future, but He is in the future as well. He also wants the very best for us. Knowing these two facts alone should make us want to honor Him by living for Him. After all, "It is He who has made us and not we ourselves."

Today while spending time with the Father, give Him praise for all that He is and all that He has done.



## January 2

### ***Eph 4:26-27***

*<sup>26</sup> BE ANGRY, AND YET DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger, <sup>27</sup> and do not give the devil an opportunity.*

Getting angry is not a pretty site. No one likes to watch someone who is angry. So how can one get angry and not sin: by paying attention to who or what you get angry about. Paul reminds us that we don't struggle with flesh and blood, but against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. (Eph.6:12) When Jesus got angry He did so at those who were turning His Father's house of prayer into a den of thieves. We have a right to get mad when Satan uses mankind to try and stand against God. We don't have a right to get mad when people speak ill of us or despitefully use us. Jesus tells us to love them. If we practiced loving our enemies more then maybe we wouldn't have to worry about getting mad as much. Anger is an emotion just like any other emotion we have. When we let anger get control of us, then the devil has a hold on us. What can Satan do when we love our enemies and pray for those who are trying to hurt us? What can he do when we are angry about those things that go against the word of God? What can he do when we submit ourselves totally and completely to God and His will? The answer is NOTHING. Getting angry is natural. Even little babies do it. But since we are not babies we need to learn to control our anger. The only way to do that is by allowing Jesus to live in us. When we do that, then Jesus is in charge and Satan has no opportunity.

Today while talking with the Father, ask Him to help you guard against unrighteous anger. Ask Him to help you be angry over things that you need to be angry about and to know the difference.



## January 3

### ***1 Thess 5:23***

*<sup>23</sup> Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

In the previous verses the Apostle Paul has been reminding those that he has been writing to at Thessalonica of the various and many things that they should do to be obedient to the Lord. But Paul knows mankind all too well. He knows that they will not do all those things consistently and when they sin, as we all do, then they will be guilty. So He asks God to sanctify them. That is, make them not guilty of all the things that they will do wrong. He knows that someday Jesus will be coming for them and unless He has already forgiven them of their sin they will be found guilty. When a person is arrested for a criminal charge in the United States he or she has a right to plead either guilty or not guilty. If they have obtained a lawyer they always plead not guilty. It is not because they are not guilty but so their lawyer can have time to examine the case and see what he can do to best benefit his client. The one thing a lawyer cannot do is forgive his client of what she is guilty of. He can ask for mercy from the court but he cannot her debt to society if she is guilty. Jesus doesn't just forgive us of our sins either. He pays the price for them. That is why those that Paul was writing to as well as you and I can stand without blame on Judgment Day. We know we are guilty, but we also know that as Christians when we stand before our judge, He will find us not guilty because of His great love and mercy.

Today while spending time with the Father, thank Him for that great love and mercy. Ask Him to help you live for Him today so that others may also be found not guilty when they stand before Him on their Judgment Day.



## January 4

### ***1 Peter 4:14***

*<sup>14</sup> If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.*

As you were growing up did your parents ever tell you; “you are known by the company that you keep.” In the movie “Spartacus” Spartacus was captured along with a large contingent of other slaves. When the Roman commander came asking for Spartacus, he stood up saying; “I’m Spartacus, but before anyone could do anything other slaves began to stand up and say they were Spartacus.” The Roman commander didn’t know who to take. That was a touching movie. The moviegoer would have felt proud to have stood with Spartacus at that point in the movie. The movie was fictional, but living for Jesus is not. When we live for Him, we can count on being reviled. The Christian life is not easy. It is hard to do the right thing when you don’t want to, or to love that person who has declared himself or herself your enemy. It is hard to give away what you have worked hard for to someone else who has a need as great as or greater than your own. But what is really hard is when you have been successful at doing some or all of those things and have someone else revile you for it. It just doesn’t seem fair does it? Jesus warned us. He said that if we were going to take up our cross and follow Him that we would be persecuted also. Every one of the disciples except John, according to tradition, died a martyr’s death. Many Christians today are going through extremely difficult times because of the name of Jesus. Jesus also tells us that the rewards are much greater than any of the persecutions. With that in mind, let us do the right thing and rest in His glory.

Today while spending time with the Father ask Him for strength during the tough times. Thank Him for the reward that He has promised you and the glory He gives you now.



## January 5

### James 5:10-11

*<sup>10</sup> As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. <sup>11</sup> Behold, we count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.*

It has been said; “anybody can do anything if they know it is just for a short while.” One of the hardest things that POWs in Viet Nam had to endure was not knowing how long they would be held as prisoners. When a new POW would come in they would try to find out how the war was going. They wanted to get some kind of an idea how much longer they would be held. One of the great things about being a Christian is that we know this world is not our home. As the song says; “we are just a passing through.” If you are living for Jesus, you will suffer. Here in America we don’t suffer as much as our brothers and sisters do other parts of the world, but it is impossible to live a Christ centered life without suffering. If the world doesn’t come against you Satan will. But like James says, we look at those who have suffered and endured and we call them blessed. Jesus said in His sermon on the mount; “Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me, Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great...” (Matt.5:11-12) Think about this, Jesus doesn’t say it will be great, He says “it is great.” He is already taking care of you. Anyone can stand anything for a short period of time. This world is temporal, but heaven is for eternity.

Today while spending time with the Father, thank Him that He has counted you worthy to suffer for Him. Ask Him for strength to withstand the evil one, and be called blessed.



## January 6

### ***1 Thess 5:21-22***

*<sup>21</sup> But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; <sup>22</sup> abstain from every form of evil.*

Have you ever stopped to think of just how many wonderful things there are in this world? With just a little ingenuity and hard work there is not much that cannot be obtained. There is no end to the information that the internet holds. If you want to know something just go to your favorite search engine and ask, and presto, the answer is there for you. There was a time that a young man could tell what make or model a car was by just listening to it drive down the road, but today there are way too many to keep up with unless you happen to focus all of your attention on cars. In today's economy if a person wants something he just goes and gets it. He doesn't even have to be able to pay for, credit will do. There is a reason that the Bible says to examine everything carefully; some things, no matter how enticing, simply are not good for you. You may say, well this one thing doesn't hurt me and it may not, but if it gives the appearance of evil then it hurts your witness. And your witness is to be guarded above all else. The Scriptures say; "Whatsoever you eat, drink, or do, do all to the glory of the Lord." (1 Cor. 10:13) In this day of plenty it is easy to become addicted to many things without even realizing it. We are to examine "everything" carefully. Will buying the new car keep you from doing something else with that spendable income that God has in mind for your future? Does the computer and games take up more of your time than it should? This is why the Scriptures also say; "pray without ceasing."

Today while spending time with the Father, ask Him if there is anything in your life that is not pleasing to Him. Commit everything to Him and watch Him make life much simpler.



## January 7

### ***Eph 4:22-24***

*<sup>22</sup> 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, <sup>23</sup> and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, <sup>24</sup> and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.*

A man was overheard telling a friend one day how much he would love to live back in the 1800's. But he was quick to add, "I would only want to do it with modern medicine and some of the other technological advances we have today." Too many of us want to "have our cake and to eat it too." We want to be part of this world and God's kingdom at the same time. The Bible is clear, we can't do both. We have to "lay aside the old self." The reason is that they are diametrically opposed to each other. In this case, opposites do not attract. When Paul speaks of your former manner of life, he is referring to your life before Christ. That life is a life of lies and deceptions. The Bible says that everything in that life will be burnt up and destroyed some day. But the life we have in Christ is pure and we will have eternity with Him. Scriptures tell us that Satan is the "Prince of the Power of the Air." He too is doomed to an eternity in Hell. The former manner of life has nothing good to offer. Not everyone will take off the old and put on the new. That doesn't happen just because we decide to turn over a new leaf. Only those who have surrendered their lives to Jesus can do that. That is why Paul says that the "new self" has been created in "righteousness." Jesus is our righteousness. We must put our mind on Him instead of the lusts of the flesh. God has given us the very best; a cloak of righteousness. Let's wear it.

Today while talking with the Father, ask Him to help you put your mind on things of the Spirit and not the things of flesh.



## January 8

### **1 Tim 6:8-10**

<sup>8</sup> *And if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.*  
<sup>9</sup> *But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.* <sup>10</sup> *For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang.*

This is an often misquoted verse by people saying, “Money is the root of all evil.” However, the Apostle Paul is referring to the heart of man, not a tangible object like money. A lawyer once asked Jesus what the greatest commandment was and Jesus said very quickly; “to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind and body.” (Matt. 22:37) If we find ourselves loving something else with all of our heart, mind and body, we are breaking the greatest commandment. This is not the greatest commandment for nothing. God knows what is best for us and wants that for our lives. But if we are seeking something that serves us and not Him, we will fall into Satan’s snares. All that glitters is not gold but if we have the love of money in our hearts we will be after anything that appears to be gold. Since our very nature is evil, according to the scriptures, we will find ourselves hurting others, and refusing to do good when we can in order to obtain the almighty dollar. This one of the many things wrong with the name it and claim it theology seen so often on TV. God is not concerned about making us wealthy on this earth. He has great plans for our wealth in heaven. But He is concerned about making us holy. That can only happen when we have our hearts in the right place. Remember, the “love of money” is the root of all evil.

Today while spending time with the Father, thank Him for the provision that He has given you. And ask Him to help you find others that you may bless by giving to them.



## January 9

### ***Psalm 130: 3-4***

*<sup>3</sup> If Thou, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? <sup>4</sup> But there is forgiveness with Thee, That Thou may be feared.*

There are many people today that believe that their life is like a giant scale. All the good things that they do are put on one side and all the bad things on the other. If the bad things out weigh the good things, then they are in trouble, but if the good things out weigh the bad things then they get to go to heaven. Most people without giving that much thought will say they hope their good out weighs their bad. But for most of us, the simple fact is that our bad far out weigh our good. If you just think of all the bad things that you have said, thought, and done toward God and man, that alone would be enough to sink your ship. But there is more. If you are like most people there is a lot of good that you could have done but did not, simply because you did not want to be bothered at the time. But wait, there is more. What about all those little things that you did that you knew was not right, but you didn't think anyone else would get hurt? The list just goes on and on. King David understood that. He was so glad that God didn't hold things against him. But he knew that God could if He wanted to. But due to God's mercy and grace David knew that God would forgive him if he asked. For that, David feared God. In other words he revered Him. A God whom he was sinning against could take him out at the blink of an eye, instead was saying; "I love you and I forgive you." God has said that to us as well. He told us through the pages of the Bible that if we would simply repent and surrender our lives to Jesus Christ, that Jesus would pay the price for our sins and we would be forgiven. What mercy.

Today, while talking with the Father, thank Him for His love and mercy. If you have not surrendered your life to Jesus you can do it right now. That is the only way to get rid of the bad things that you have done. He has to pay the price, you can't.



## January 10

### Rev 2:1-4

*<sup>1</sup> "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this: <sup>2</sup> 'I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot endure evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; <sup>3</sup> and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary. <sup>4</sup> 'But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.*

Most people put a lot of stock in the good things that they do, especially when it comes to religion. There are many people who think that if they show up for church once or twice a month, then they are doing pretty good, and compared to most of the world that might be the case. But if a person goes at least once a week and is active in their local church and does good to others then they must be far above whatever else is out there. Surely God would give them credit for that. The problem with that lies in the fact that God is not about so much what they do as to why they do what they do. In this case the church at Ephesus was doing a lot of things right. Their church was growing; they made sure that whoever was in the pulpit did not preach heresy. They had undergone many trials for His name sake. But God knew their hearts. They had become so interested in what they were doing; they forgot why they were doing it. They had lost their first love. God held that against them, just like He does us, if we lose our first love. If our relationship is right with Jesus, everything else will fall in place. We will still keep doing the right things and we will do them for the right reason.

Today while spending time with the Father, tell Him again how much you love Him.



**January 11**

**Matt 6:14-15**

*<sup>14</sup> "For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. <sup>15</sup> "But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions."*

Of all the qualities that a Christian should have, forgiveness should head the list. God simply does not mess around when it comes to forgiving. If we understood the holiness of God then we would understand the sinfulness of man. Do you realize that man is the only animal that has to forgive? Other animals just go along to get along. But man has to forgive. The reason is that He died to forgive men of their sins. He who is the holiest of all, died for the sinfulness of all. How dare we think even for a moment that we don't have to forgive others? Jesus said to us; "This new commandment I give to you, that you love one another." (John 13:34) The only way you can love one another is to forgive one another, because invariably someone will do something to hurt you. Pay particularly close attention to this next statement. There is nothing that can possibly be done to you that you are not required to forgive. God knows the sinfulness of man and just how evil man can be, but He also knows that He sent His own Son to die and pay the price for our sins so that He could forgive us. In that case He has every right to expect us to forgive others their transgressions. He is so emphatic about it that He says that we shouldn't bring gifts to the altar nor try to pray until we have forgiven others. He also says that He will not forgive our sins if we don't forgive others of their sins. Forgiving others does not mean ignoring the consequences of what they have done. But it does mean what it says; we are to forgive.

Today while spending time with the Father, thank Him for His forgiveness toward you. If you have anything against someone else, ask Him to help you make it right.



**January 12**

***Gal 5:1***

*<sup>1</sup> It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.*

Man is so susceptible to his own deceit that it is often times funny. When Jesus commented to the Pharisees that they were under bondage, they laughed and said He was crazy. They said that they were free and not under bondage to anyone. Well they were under Roman occupation at the time. They wouldn't have to look for to see it. Romans were everywhere. Man still thinks, even today, that they are free. They may be free to come and go and pursue their own form of happiness, but in their present state of sinfulness, they cannot pursue holiness. Most don't care about holiness; they leave that for vocational preachers and the like. But one of God's commandments to us is that we are to be holy, like He is holy. That cannot happen in our sinful state. The best that man can do without Christ is to do a few things different in his life that makes him or her more likeable to others. Jesus died to set us free from our sins. Once we have been set free from our sins our lives change. And it is not just in the things that we do. It is in who we are. We are different creatures in Christ. We have been "born again." Since we are free in Jesus, we are to stand firm on the solid rock of Jesus Christ. We should never find ourselves under the yoke of slavery that the rest of the world is under. This is why the rest of the world has such a hard time with Jesus. They do not understand that it is not how bad they are, or even how good they are; they have simply not been set free from the bondage of the slavery of sin. Until that has happened they can never have a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Today, while spending time with the Father, thank Him for setting you free. Be sure that you live as a free man and not one under the yoke of slavery.



## January 13

### **Gal 6:7-8**

*<sup>7</sup> Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. <sup>8</sup> For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life.*

Jesus used a lot of farming illustrations because it was what the people could see. This is one of those. If a man plants cotton seeds, then cotton is what comes up. If he plants kernels of corn, then corn comes up. It is a law of nature. It is also a law of nature that if a man plants fleshly things in his life, then he will reap fleshly things, but if he plants spiritual things then he will reap spiritual things. Most people know this. The problem is most people are not interested in reaping spiritual things. They are perfectly content to reap fleshly things; after all that is where most of their life is spent, in the flesh. Southern Alabama used to be known for its cotton producing farms. But the Boll Weevil came along and ruined the cotton crop. It seemed that no matter what the farmers did they could not get rid of the Boll Weevil. Finally they decided to produce another crop that the Boll Weevil could not hurt. They started growing peanuts. The farmers were delighted. They made more money with peanuts than they ever did with cotton. They decided to erect a statue of the little bug. Today if you go through Enterprise Alabama you will see in the center of the city a statue of the Boll Weevil. The farmers were content with sowing cotton until tragedy struck in the form of a little bug. Sometimes it takes things like the Boll Weevil to help man see that he doesn't really want to sow to the flesh. What he wants is to sow to the Spirit.

Today, while spending time with the Father, ask Him if there is anything in your life that is causing you to sow to the flesh. If so confess it and start sowing to the Spirit.



**January 14**

***Heb 11:6***

*<sup>6</sup> And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.*

There is so much religious garbage going around that many people are staying as far away from religion as they can. Many are growing up skeptical of church and saying things like; "I'll believe it when I see it." What they mean of course is that they will wait until judgment to see how things turn out. By then, unfortunately it will be too late. God never ask us to have blind faith, but He does ask us to have faith. God has given us His word with the rewards of the faith of other people. He gives us this world and all the miraculous things that happen within it to help with our faith. He speaks to us in that still small voice to help with our faith. He gives us other Christians who lives have been lived out in faith to help us with our faith. But He does ask us to have faith. He doesn't ask us to have much, the size of a mustard seed, but He does ask us to have faith. As a matter of fact, faith is so important in our relationship with Him that He says; there is no relationship with Him without faith. Where does that kind of faith come from? He gives it to us. Remember, God is our creator. We have nothing without Him, including faith. But just like everything else God gives us, we have to use it. If we don't use it, it doesn't do us any good. Having faith in God is easy but living for Him in this sin-ridden world is not easy. Without exercising faith in God we will not be able to live for Him. When we do so and watch those faith moments grow, we will be able to have more faith the next time. God loves us and rewards us immensely for our faith. God is always faithful.

Today, while talking with the Father, thank Him for the faith He has given you. Ask Him to help you to have faith and exercise the faith He gives you.



**January 15**

**James 4:7**

*<sup>7</sup> Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*

Many people if asked would say; “yes, you are suppose to run from the devil.” But that is not what James says. Read again, “...resist the devil and he will flee from you.” George Duffield Jr. (1818-1888) wrote a wonderful hymn of the church called “Stand up, Stand Up for Jesus.” Read the first stanza; “Stand up, stand up for Jesus, Ye soldiers of the cross; Lift high His royal banner, it must not suffer loss: From victory unto victory His army shall He lead, Till every foe is vanquished and Christ is Lord indeed.” The Apostle Paul tells us that in Christ we are “more than conquerors.” Satan is a defeated foe. You and I are the victors. According to George Duffield, James and the Apostle Paul, we are soldiers of the cross. Soldiers don’t win battles by retreating. Some may rightly ask the question, how can we, who are not near as powerful as Satan defeat him? We can’t by ourselves. But with Christ in us all things are possible. Jesus defeated Satan on the cross and by the resurrection. He now lives in us and James starts that verse by saying; “Submit therefore to God...” If we are submitted to the Lord and He lives in us then Satan doesn’t stand a chance. What can Satan do with a man or woman who is so committed to Jesus Christ that they are willing to suffer and die for Him? If they suffer for Him they feel honored. If they die for Him they go to be with Him for eternity. Satan can’t win. There is no man or woman, or boy or girl who is any taller than when they are on their knees before God. Satan is no stronger than the most committed Christian. If we submit to God and resist Satan, he will flee from us.

Today while spending time with the Father, thank Him for the victory in Jesus. Commit again to serve Him with all of your heart today and watch Satan flee from even you.



## January 16

### 1 John 5:11-12

*<sup>11</sup> And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. <sup>12</sup> He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.*

What a shame it would be if this life was all there was. Even those who had the best life would feel like something was lacking, and it would be. We can only have real life through Jesus Christ. Then no matter what the world throws at us we still have everything. Many people would struggle with that thought because they only have eyes for what the world has to offer. But there has been many a person who had everything the world could offer; money, prestige, power, popularity, and health, only to find themselves so empty and hurting that they took their own lives simply because they didn't want to live anymore. God created us and He knows what our needs are. He knows that in order to really have everything that life has to offer, we must have His Son. He said that He had come that we might not only have life, but we might have it abundantly. Eternal life with God starts the moment we repent and ask Jesus into our lives. He comes into our lives and lives with us forever. The real shame is that many Christian go around living like they don't believe that. They somehow think if the people they know are pretty good people, then chances are pretty good that they will see them again in heaven. God's word is firm, "those who do not have the Son of God do not have eternal life." That means they will spend eternity in a hell that was meant for Satan and his demons. Be sure that as you go through your day, you at least say a prayer for those around you who do not know the only begotten Son of God.

Today while spending time with the Father, thank Him for choosing you to have eternity with Him. Then ask Him to show you who you might be a witness to so they too can come to know Him as their personal Savior.



## January 17

### ***Eph 6:10-12***

*<sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might.*

*<sup>11</sup> Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. <sup>12</sup> 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.*

For several years Power Rangers and Ninja Turtles were the favorite toys of many a young boy. They would kick and jump and think they were bigger than life. But in reality they were just little boys who were very vulnerable. The Apostle Paul didn't know about Power Rangers or Ninja Turtles, but he did know about the realities of life. He knew that sometimes, people tried to fight battles that they were not equipped to fight on their own. Many times people find themselves fighting the wrong enemy. We live in a physical world that is influenced by the spiritual world around us. Many people find themselves hating the sinner as much as the sin. Paul is reminding us that God loves the sinner enough to die for him. Our battle is not against the sinner but against the sin. However, we are not equipped to battle sin on our own. We must put on the "full armor of God" if we are going to win. As we go to battle against the "wicked one" we need to know that we are going to take some hits. We need to have on the helmet of salvation, without which we are doomed to begin with. We need the shield of faith, which is the way we defend ourselves from Satan's fiery darts. Our only offensive weapon is the word of God. We are doing battle and it is not imaginary.

Today while spending time with the Father, ask Him for each of the protective garments He has for you. Then prepare to do battle, for you are a soldier in the Lord's Army.



**January 18**

***Psalms 126:6***

*<sup>6</sup> He who goes to and fro weeping, carrying his bag of seed, Shall indeed come again with a shout of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.*

Farming was hard work. In the springtime when the planting was done the days could be long and hot. But in the fall when the harvest was gathered and they brought in baskets full of produce they were ecstatic. The first Thanksgiving in America was such a time as that. The writer of this Psalm is using an agricultural illustration for that one who has been doing the work of God faithfully. Living a Christian life is not easy, no matter where you live, but it is very rewarding. There is no explaining the feeling that a Christian has when they have shared God's love with someone else and watched that person give their life to Jesus. That is a joy that cannot be explained. That mother or father or grandparent who has prayed for their child for many years has joy inexpressible the day that child gives their life to the Lord. The seed that the Psalmist is describing is the word of God. We are the farmers that carry that seed to the rest of the world. A lazy farmer produces very little produce if any. A farmer who only works when he feels like it, or doesn't do the planting when the time is right will not produce much fruit if any. God didn't save us just so we could go to heaven. He saved us so that we might serve Him on this earth. When He is through with us, He will take us to be with Him. Until then we have work to do and sometimes we weep while we do it, but we must do it if we expect to have a harvest of more souls for our Lord. What a pleasure to be a child of the King.

Today while spending time with the Father, thank Him for the task that He has given you to spread His word. Ask Him to help you do so faithfully so that you may have joy in the morning.



**January 19**

***Matt 6:33***

*<sup>33</sup> "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you."*

From birth we are taught to think of the necessities of life; to put our shoes on the right foot, to make sure our clothes are on properly, and to pick up our toys and clean our rooms. As we grow we are taught to study hard and make good grades so that we can get a good job and make a good income. When we go into the work force we are expected to work hard so that we can bring home a good paycheck. Is it any wonder that we find ourselves looking at food, clothing and lodging? But thankfully for the Christian that is not all that we are taught. We are also taught that we belong to God. He has bought us with a price. He paid the price of His Son's precious blood for us. Knowing that, we are glad to serve Him. We know that He is our I AM. We still work hard and do the things necessary to bring home a good paycheck, but now we filter everything we do through Him. As Christians we don't decide our vocation, He does. We expect Him to provide for our every need as we live our lives for Him. While the rest of the world struggles to make a living and worries about what tomorrow holds we trust God for our daily bread and as many tomorrows as He would have us have. This is called total surrender. Without it we will find ourselves with one foot in the world and one in the Kingdom of God. That is not pleasing to God. One of the reasons is that we will invariably end up complaining to God about what we don't have. He knows what is best for us.

Today while spending time with God, thank Him for what has provided for you and what He is going to provide for you. Ask Him to help you be sure you are in His will for your life.



**January 20**

***1 John 3:2-3***

*Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.<sup>3</sup> And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*

Every child has been asked what they want to be when they grow up. Most of them have some idea of what they hope to be. Some want to be cowboys, firemen, policeman or whatever their dad or granddad happens to be. We all smile knowing that everything will change as they grow older. Some people grow up thinking that they will find something that satisfies their longing for fulfillment, but usually wind up living a “settled for lifestyle.” They put their dreams on a back burner while they raise a family or just make a living. And as they get older many forget their dreams altogether. One of the greatest things about being a Christian is that we never have to put on hold, or give up on our dreams for eternity. Heaven is so grand and glorious that we have a hard time imagining what it will be like. Like a child we can look forward to what God wants us to be and know that when that time comes it will be more than we could ever have hoped for. He has something special in store for us. There is something about looking to the future that keeps a person going. If there is no hope we stop. But the writer of Hebrews assures us that we have a heavenly hope in Him and we can be assured of His faithfulness to those who believe. So if someone asks you what you want to do with your life, tell them that you are a “son of the King and you are looking forward to the royal palaces of His Kingdom.

Today while spending time with the Father, thank Him for what He has in store for you, and don't forget who you are in Christ Jesus.



## January 21

### Heb. 9:11-12

*<sup>11</sup> But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; <sup>12</sup> and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.*

Prior to Jesus dying on the cross the best that man could do to make things right between himself and God was to offer up a sacrifice of goats and calves. But Jesus came along as the perfect sacrifice. He only needed to offer Himself once, unlike man who had to make a sacrifice repeatedly year after year. When Jesus died on the cross He was shedding His own blood for mankind. It will never have to be done again. His blood was perfect and it was from the Father up above. Jesus Himself said; “no greater love has a man than he would lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13) Prior to the cross the best man could do was to offer up goats and calves, but on the cross Jesus offered up Himself. Knowing that, God Himself sent His only begotten Son, how could we possibly think that there is any other way to heaven? And if one truly believes that Jesus is the only way, why would one not want to surrender his or her life to Jesus? Surly that kind of love wants nothing but the best for us. For those who do give their lives over to Jesus, they have been, at least spiritually, sprinkled with the blood of Jesus and their sins have been forgiven. It has been said that someone will have to pay for our sins. No sin goes unpunished. Either we will pay for our sins in hell, or Jesus paid for them on the cross, but they will be paid for. Jesus is the ultimate sacrifice.

Today while talking with the Father, thank Him for His giving of His only begotten Son, and thank Jesus for His sacrifice on the cross so that we would not have to pay the price for our sins in hell.



**January 22**

***1 Tim 4:7-8***

*...On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; <sup>8</sup> for bodily discipline 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.*

Discipline: what a harsh word. It implies that we have to give up so much. We all admire that man or woman who seems to have the perfect shape with no signs of fat. We ask them how they keep their shape and they begin to tell us of the countless hours that they spend exercising. We think, it must be nice, but that is as far as it goes. We are not willing to put that much effort into having that kind of a shape. It is just not worth it to us. But Paul reminds us that there is discipline that is worth every bit of the effort that we give to it. It is godly discipline. It keeps us spiritually healthy here on earth and it gets us ready for the life to come. Many of us would not have the aches and pains that we have if we were just a little more disciplined with our physical bodies, but we certainly wouldn't have some of the problems that we have if we were more disciplined with our spiritual lives. It is not always a matter of not doing; sometimes it is a matter of doing. There are things God tells us to do and He says it is good for us. We are to read His word and apply it to our lives. We are to pray and stay in touch with the Father so that we might know to do His perfect and acceptable will. It is the discipline of this life that helps us to get ready for the next life. We have so much more to look forward to than death. We have life for all eternity with the Father. Just like everything else in life, what we do now, carries over to what we have or who we are in the future.

Today while spending time with the Father, thank Him for the discipline that He has instilled in you and ask Him to show you where you might be more disciplined to live for Him. After all, none of us are in perfect shape.



## January 23

### James 1:5-7

<sup>5</sup> *But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.* <sup>6</sup> *But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.* <sup>7</sup> *For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord,*

Many people think that they get wisdom from books. You may get knowledge from books, but wisdom comes from God. Right after Jesus came down off of the Mount of Transfiguration He met a man who was exasperated. He had heard about the healing powers of Jesus and His disciples and he brought his son to them to heal him of a terrible disease. Even though the disciples tried, nothing seemed to work. When Jesus walked up to them, the man said to Jesus, (if) you can do something...? Jesus looked at him and repeated what the man had said; "(if) you can do something?" The man was so distraught he cried out to Jesus, "Help me in my unbelief." Jesus healed the young man. Jesus wants us to have faith in Him, mainly because He doesn't want anyone else to get His glory. Wisdom comes from above, not mankind. We can't give God partial glory and someone or something else partial glory. God gets it all. If we are not sure that what we get from God comes from Him then we will never know which direction to head in life. We will be totally confused. God helps us out in our confusion. He stops blessing. When that well dries up we know it. Like the man with the sick son, we need to ask Jesus to help us in our unbelief sometimes. Keep your eye on Jesus and the rest of the world stays in its proper place.

Today while spending time with the Father, thank Him for His wisdom that He has given to you. If you are having trouble having faith in Him, ask Him to help you in your unbelief.



**January 24**

**Gal 5:14**

*<sup>14</sup> For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."*

Sometimes we are not too thrilled with ourselves. Maybe we are upset because of something we have done or haven't done, but overall we are generally pretty forgiving when it comes to justifying what we have done. If someone else does something we think is wrong we say it is deliberate, but if we do it we say it was a mistake. If we would just be as quick to forgive others as we are ourselves, what a different world this would be. Jesus knew that if we treated others like we want to be treated then all of the commandments would be taken care of. When Jesus was asked what was the greatest commandment He put the love of God first, and then said, that the second was like unto it, "that we love our neighbor as our self." If we love God like we are suppose to and then love others as we love our self, then we won't have any stealing, lying, cheating, or hurting anyone else. The world looks at the church and wonders why the church is like it is. The reason is because we don't love our neighbor as our self. What a shame. There are countless number of churches that have split over the fact that Christian brothers and sisters could not get along. Loving each other doesn't mean that we approve of everything that someone else does. We don't even approve of everything that we do. But it does mean treating each other with some respect and showing some loving kindness toward those who may not be like us. If we could only do the simple things, then there would be very few big things to worry about.

Today while spending time with the Father, ask Him to help you love your neighbor as yourself. You need His help to do it, but that is what He is there for.



**January 25**

**Matt 5:22-24**

*<sup>22</sup> "But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca ,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell. <sup>23</sup> "If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, <sup>24</sup> leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.*

One of the most dangerous types of calls that a police officer has to make is the “domestic disturbance” call. By the time the police are called emotions are running extremely high. Relationships have been broken and people are angry and hurting. Jesus knows about relationships. He came that we might have one with His Father in heaven and with each other through Him. When our relationship with others is broken, then our relationship with Him is struggling. He goes so far as to say that if we are going to make an offering to Him but we remember that we have done something wrong to someone else and they are holding it against us, we need to stop what we are doing and go and make that relationship right. Don’t think we can treat other people wrong and then come to God as if nothing has happened. God places a lot of store by relationships. When we accept Christ as our Savior, we become a part of the family of God. That family has a relationship and He is the head of that family. He wants to make sure that what we are doing is right. Remember if there is a broken relationship with our fellow man then there is also a strained relationship with our heavenly Father.

Today while spending time with the Father, ask Him to show you if there are any broken relationships in your life. If so go and make it right.



**January 26**

***Eph 5:15-16***

*<sup>15</sup> Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, <sup>16</sup> making the most of your time, because the days are evil.*

There is a commercial on TV that advertises a wireless phone system. They portray people making some very unwise decisions while they try to get them to make, at least according to them, a wise one by buying their wireless phone system. It gets your attention because the decisions they are making are very unwise. Sometimes we make decisions that we know are not wise. We just succumb to the flesh and do it anyway. We then have to pay the consequences. We live in a sin-ridden world with Satan as “the prince of the power of the air.” This is a dangerous place that we live in. We are at war with Satan and we live behind enemy lines. If we make very many unwise decisions we may not have a very healthy lifestyle, because as the scriptures says; “the days are evil.” But the great thing for the Christian is that we are never alone. Jesus tells us that “Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world.” (1John 4:4) We don’t have to make unwise decisions. That is why Paul is saying, “be careful how you walk.” We do know the difference between right and wrong. We can make wise decision by making the most of our time. It is difficult to walk away from something, but it is not nearly as difficult to walk toward something. If we are following the will of God in our life and do the things that He tells us to, then there will be fewer and fewer unwise decisions in our lives. Walk cautiously, because Satan has planted land minds all over the place. Everywhere we look there are distractions. So walk not as unwise, but as wise.

Today while you are spending time the Father, thank Him for that time. Thank Him that Jesus lives in you and guides you



**January 27**

***1 Peter 4:9***

*<sup>9</sup> Be hospitable to one another without complaint.*

Ever have someone go out of their way to do something special for you? Sure you have. How did you feel? Sometimes you were humbled, but all of the time you felt good. Being hospitable to someone else requires extra effort. There are those with the gift of mercy who just seem to naturally have hospitality traits, but even then the cost for the extra effort is substantial. We live in a culture that is centered on “me.” Almost every commercial seems to scream at us; “you deserve this or that or the other.” Growing up on a diet like that can make us self-centered. We begin to think; “I don’t have time or money or they are not worth the effort for this.” So we don’t do much of anything for someone else. When the Bible says that Jesus went about doing good, they don’t mean it was just by happen chance. He went out of his way to do good. When He went to the pool of Bethesda, He went to a place where very few upright citizens went, because there were so many sick people there. When He went to Samaria, He made a point to go where He was not wanted as a Jew and to talk to a woman when that was not the practice. He could very well have been criticized. Being hospitable means to go out of our way to not only be nice to others, but to do something extra special for them. Opening up your home to the youth group from your church could mean that some of your nice things get broken accidentally. Letting someone who has a need borrow something of yours may mean that you won’t have it when you need it. But Peter tells us that we are to be hospitable to others without complaint. It is the best way in the world to be known as a caring and loving person. It is also the best way to get a chance to witness.

Today while spending time with the Father, ask Him to show you someone you can be hospitable to today.



**January 28**

***Psalms 119:9***

*<sup>9</sup> How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Thy word.*

“Ah, go ahead, everybody else is doing it.” This is a sure fire way to become impure. It only takes one time sleeping with someone that you are not married to, to lose your virginity. It only takes one lie to become known as a liar. It only takes one time of taking something that doesn’t belong to you to become known as a thief. It only takes one time to cheat to become known as a person of low or no integrity. The world would have you believe that everyone is doing those kinds of things all of the time and it really doesn’t matter. Ask the alcoholic if he wishes he had never taken his first drink. Ask the druggie if she wishes she had never taken her first drug. Ask the young man who has lost his family if he wishes he had never flirted with that young girl that caught his eye. What a dark and ugly world we live in. One may think that it is mighty difficult to walk and live a pure life in this day and age, but that is not so my friend. “The Bible is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path.” (Ps. 119:105) We have two choices in the way we live our lives as Christians. We can either be obedient or disobedient. The Holy Spirit convicts us of right and wrong, so it is not as if we don’t know what is right or wrong. We simply have to choose what we will do. If we do as the Psalmist says and keep God’s holy word then we will keep our ways pure. It is not as difficult as some might have us think. Simply be obedient to the word of God and you will remain pure. There are plenty of examples in your church family. Look for them and follow them.

Today while spending time with the Father, ask Him to help you remain pure. Ask Him for His protection on your life so that you will not fail Him. Then get passionate about serving Him.



## January 29

### ***Eph 5:11***

*<sup>11</sup> And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them;*

We may be smart enough not to fall into some of the traps set by Satan, but there are many others that are not. That is why Paul tells us to expose the unfruitful deeds of darkness. We might not believe the heresy that is being taught by someone but someone else may. We must expose those teachings as they come up. The only way that we can know the difference is to know the Bible. The only way that we can know the Bible is to study it. Otherwise we will find ourselves falling into those traps as well. Many Christians, when they see something that is not right, just think, well I'll just stay away from that and everything will be alright. What if it is your son or daughter that falls into one of Satan's traps? This is why throughout the Scriptures we are reminded that we are in the Lord's army. Can you imagine what would happen to a soldier that was scouting ahead and saw a trap but didn't do anything about it? He would be executed. We may not like confrontations, but there are some things that we have to get involved with. The Bible teaches us that we are the light of the world. Light overcomes darkness and exposes what is in the darkness. That is why no one who goes to a lounge or bar likes the light. It exposes what is going on there. Those in darkness do not like the light and they will not like the light in you. This is why Jesus said if we follow Him we too will be persecuted. He is the light of the world and He lives in us. We don't need to always be on a search and destroy mission, but as we go through life, the light of Jesus in our lives will expose more than enough of the deeds done in darkness.

Today while you are talking with the Father, ask Him to show you any darkness that may be in your own life. Then ask Him to help you stand firm in the light of His life in you.



**January 30**

***1 John 3:14***

*<sup>14</sup> We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.*

The carnal nature of man is naturally selfish. He thinks first of himself and others last. When we come to know the Lord as our personal savior and are “born again,” there will be a difference in our lives. We will find as one man said, “the sky is bluer and the grass greener, and the birds prettier.” We will find that we no longer harbor ill will toward others. What a wonderful release that is. We no longer have to worry about how we are going to protect what we have from someone else. Instead we will look for ways to give away what we have so that others may have something as well. No one likes being around someone who is grouchy all of the time. They are called “joy stealers.” If we are not careful they will steal the joy right out of you. You may have been one of those people until you gave your life to Jesus. Once we find ourselves loving others, we are more careful of what we say and how we say it. It doesn’t matter anymore that the Preacher went a little long, or the choir didn’t sound as good as you would have like for them to. It is even okay if it is too hot or too cold. We find ourselves looking forward to spending time with the brethren because we really do love them. Some may question if this isn’t being a bit to utopia. This is what is called “heaven on earth.” If this is not the way we are, it certainly should be. If we don’t have love for our brethren and the things of God, then we are abiding in death. Remember Jesus has set us free from the bondage of slavery and of death. There is no reason for the Christian to ever go back there. Instead we just need to love the brethren.

Today while you are spending time with the Father, ask Him to help you love others. Not everyone is loveable.



## January 31

### ***Psalms 78: 1-4***

*Listen, O my people, to my instruction; Incline your ears to the words of my mouth. <sup>2</sup> I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old, <sup>3</sup> Which we have heard and known, And our fathers have told us. <sup>4</sup> We will not conceal them from their children, But tell to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, And His strength and His wondrous works that He has done.*

One of the delights of grandmothers is to teach their grandchildren how to cook. But in teaching the little ones how to cook, the grandmothers are strict about teaching them to follow instructions. If they get the instructions wrong then the food doesn't taste right. There are so many things that one teaches their children over the years but none of them can possibly be any more important than teaching what you have learned about the Lord. One of the delights of the mature Christian is to teach the younger Christians the word of the Lord. You have learned it and you want to pass it on. Those Bible stories that you learned in Sunday school are so important to teach to your little ones. The danger in not knowing the word of the Lord is much greater than the danger of getting the recipes wrong while cooking. But telling our children about the Bible is not enough if we are not living it as well. They must see that these are not just stories for the young, but they are stories that teach us how to live for our Lord. After all if we don't teach them of God's faithfulness how will they ever know?

Today while spending time with the Father, thank Him for the generations before you that have taught those that have come after them the word of God. Ask Him to show you opportunities for you to do the same with others that come after you.