



JANUARY



And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.

Colossians 1:9-10



INFERIOR WISDOM

Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, with integrity and godly sincerity. We have done so, relying not on worldly wisdom but on God's grace.

2 Corinthians 1:12

Worldly wisdom has a way of reducing heaven's wisdom to an afterthought. It's usually after first using our worldly wisdom—and finding that our ways don't work—that we pray and seek to discern the Lord's ways. It's tempting to rely on what seems to work instead of asking what are the principles we should live by based on God's economy. Worldly wisdom is not only inferior, it is also a competitor with God's grace.

The Lord sees the world's wisdom as foolishness, and the world sees His wisdom as foolishness. Some who embrace the wisdom of the world say there is no personal God, but God says in His wisdom that this thinking flows from a fool. The fool says in his heart, "There is no God" (Psalm 14:1). Sadly, the world's wisdom has no room for Jesus.

"For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe" (1 Corinthians 1:21).

Related Readings: Job 5:13; Jeremiah 8:9; Isaiah 29:14; 1 Corinthians 1:17; 2:1-16; 3:19

SUPERIOR WISDOM

Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law?
Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made
foolish the wisdom of the world? 1 Corinthians 1:20

Do not try to outsmart your Savior Jesus Christ with intelligence void of humility and the fear of God. Academics, without an infusion of faith in almighty God, lead down a reckless path of disconnection from Deity. However, wise is the man or woman who is full of the grace of God, and who studies truth long and hard for the glory of God.

Faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God is not a leap into the dark; rather, it is a step into the light. Christian belief is based on the historical fact of His death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead. For some the Lord's wisdom wins out over theirs, and they begin to seek out those people and places that possess His knowledge.

"I saw that wisdom is better than folly, just as light is better than darkness" (Ecclesiastes 2:13).

Related Readings: Matthew 7:24; Luke 2:52; 2 Peter 3:15;
James 1:5, 3:13-18

CHRIST IS WISDOM

We preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 1 Corinthians 1:23-24

Christ is the wisdom of God, so to know Him is to know and understand godly wisdom. The life of Jesus illustrates for us wisdom while His teaching educates us in wisdom. It's in relationship with God the Son that Christians are able to grow in godly wisdom. The source of wise counsel is found in Christ—like pure water bubbles from the crevice of a remote mountain rock, so God's living water of truth flows from the heart of Jesus.

Because wisdom starts with Jesus, it's necessary to first enter into a personal relationship with Christ. The Holy Scriptures declare a Savior who is looking to love all those who come to Him in faith and repentance. Salvation in Jesus Christ is the first step to qualification for His wisdom. Fear of God leads to faith in God—that faith can access the wisdom of God. So, have you placed your faith in Jesus Christ? If so, you are very wise.

“Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:15b).

Related Readings: Romans 16:27; 1 Corinthians 1:30; Ephesians 1:17; Colossians 1:28

WISDOM IS CHARACTER

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom... But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.

James 3:13, 17

Wisdom is much more than knowledge—it is character. In fact, someone can be smart, clever, and insightful, but without character there is an absence of authentic wisdom. This heavenly wisdom is marked with the residue of righteousness. Thus, a wise person prays that their character keeps up with their growing wisdom. Integrity validates godly insight.

A wise person of character is pure in motive and peace loving in relationships. The wise defer to the needs of others, submit to authority, initiate empathy, bear the fruit of the Spirit, gather all the facts before making a decision, and are genuine in their concerns. Wisdom and character are prayer partners in their faith journey. Leave only your fingerprints of faith on wise advice, and trust God to conform others into the image of His Son Jesus.

“Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, with integrity and godly sincerity. We have done so, relying not on worldly wisdom but on God’s grace”
(2 Corinthians 1:12).

Related Readings: Daniel 12:3; 10; Hosea 14:9; Matthew 24:45; 1 Corinthians 3:18

WISDOM IS LEARNED

The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel: for gaining wisdom and instruction; for understanding words of insight; for receiving instruction in prudent behavior, doing what is right and just and fair. Proverbs 1:1-3



There is a definite educational element to wisdom. It does not happen in a spiritual vacuum or without intellectual effort. Those who excel in becoming wise learn how to educate themselves in the ways of wisdom. They read the Bible and other writings that define wisdom with a filter of faith in God. There are wise sayings outside of Holy Writ, but beyond the context of Christ, worldly wisdom drifts into a cheap imitation of godly wisdom.

Therefore, for wisdom to be the most meaningful, it must incubate and grow in a teachable and humble heart. A seed of corn does not germinate on the surface of dry, hard soil. In a similar ecosystem, seeds of wisdom bring life and insight to a cultivated heart moistened by heaven's righteous rain. Lifetime learners understand the need to always gain wisdom. Moses, upon a foundation of faith, was educated in wisdom in preparation to be God's leader.

"Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action" (Acts 7:22).

Related Readings: Proverbs 11:2; Jeremiah 49:7; Luke 2:52; Ephesians 1:8

JANUARY 6

COMFORT IN LOSS

And many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. John 11:19

Have you lost someone or something close to your heart—a baby, a spouse, a friend, a job, or an opportunity? A great loss requires great grace or the pain is unbearable. Why do some expectant mothers have a stillborn child and others don't? We can't truly understand these puzzling matters until we get to heaven and are able to ask, "Why, Lord, why?"

Where is God when emotions run raw and a great hole of hurt pierces the heart? We don't always understand the ways of God, but we can always count on Christ's comfort. The Lord lingers long close to those caught in the pain of great loss. What others cannot totally understand, your heavenly Father fully comprehends. Grace soothes aching hearts. Christ's comfort nurses like cool water flowing down a dry, thirsty throat.

"For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ" (2 Corinthians 1:5). The Lord's comfort is limitless in its capacity to cure.

Related Readings: Job 42:11; Psalm 86:17, 119:76; John 14:1; 2 Corinthians 7:6-7

WISE DATING

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

2 Corinthians 6:14 NKJV

What relational path honors the Lord and honors my dating? Ask objectively; is there agreement in faith, family, and values? Dating relationships that honestly ask heartfelt questions flush out communication and prepare a couple for success, as God defines success. Wise dating waits for God's best and is not suddenly smitten by surface feelings. If, for example, an older teenager, college student, or single adult is "in love" with someone who does not practice faith in Jesus Christ, then the probability of a successful long-term relationship is very low.

It's hard enough to work through personality differences, diverse family backgrounds and character development without adding disagreement in the foundational issue of faith in God and obedience to Him. Start with belief in Jesus Christ and love for Him as your beginning point for being together in a dating relationship; only then do you have a good base to build upon. Like a beautiful house with a cracked concrete foundation are two pretty people who aren't both disciples of Jesus. Committed Christian relationships are not perfect, but they persevere.

"Jesus is 'the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.' Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:11-12).

Related Readings: Genesis 24: 3-4; Psalm 24:3-5; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; Ephesians 6:1-3

TRUTH OR LIES

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life." John 14:6a; When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. John 8:44b

Truth flows from the "Truth"—Jesus—and lies from the "father" of lies—the devil. So, truth tellers side with the Lord and liars side with Satan. With whom do we align? Lying is so short-term focused. We are afraid we will lose something if we don't lie. We may lose someone's respect, but when we are found to be a liar, it compounds into humiliation. We may lose money, but when indiscretions are exposed over time, we lose more in compromised credibility. Better to lose a little with honesty than a lot with lies.

The devil is an expert in luring us away from the Lord's desires by offering a short-term solution—lying, which leads to long-term, destructive consequences. Liars are unable to remember their inconsistencies, so when confronted they sheepishly say, "I don't remember," or "I can't recall what I said." Children who chronically lie seem oblivious—they continue to fib until the painful consequences of not telling the truth causes them to change.

"If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth" (1 John 1:6).

Related Readings: Proverbs 12:17, Jeremiah 9:3; Romans 1:25; 1 John 2:21

THE LORD PROVIDES

But the Lord provided a great fish to swallow Jonah, and
Jonah was inside the fish three days and three nights.

Jonah 1:17, NIV84

The Lord provides. He provides because this is His heart's desire. By His very nature He is a provider. It is impossible for Him not to provide. It gives Him great pleasure to provide. Just as an earthly father delights in providing for his children, so does your heavenly Father. "If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:13).

When you fear, He provides peace. When you feel lonely, He provides companionship. When you suffer loss, He provides comfort. When you become proud, He provides humility. When you lack the necessities of life, He provides your needs. When you struggle with insecurity, He gives you little victories to gain back much needed confidence. Your confidence grows out of your trust in Him. He gives you strength.

"If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen" (1 Peter 4:11b).

Related Readings: Job 36:26-31; Psalm 111:5;
Matthew 6:25-34; Acts 14:16-17

JANUARY 10

THE LORD'S REQUIREMENTS

He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8, NIV84

God has expectations for His children: Justice, mercy, and humility are three of His requirements. These are not electives for the student of God's Word, but three virtuous attributes that are required. Furthermore, the Lord does not ask His followers to behave in any fashion that He has not already modeled before them. He acts justly, He loves mercy, and He walks humbly. He does not expect any behavior from His followers that He has not already exhibited. His justice is sure, right, and fair. His mercy is fresh, deep, and everlasting. His humility is authentic, tranquil, and service oriented. Jesus came to earth from heaven to give us a picture of God's glory.

For Christ followers, He is your life, and as you walk with Him that realization becomes more apparent. You cannot walk with God and not change—you become like the one with whom you walk. When you walk with the Lord you begin to grow in justice, mercy, and humility. When you walk with God, you are transformed into the image of His Son Jesus.

“For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters” (Romans 8:29).

Related Readings: Genesis 5:22-24; Joshua 22:5; Luke 24:1-35; 1 John 1:7

RAISING DAUGHTERS

Love is patient, love is kind. 1 Corinthians 13:4a

Raising daughters requires God's grace, loving patience and wisdom. Indeed, wise are parents of daughters who regularly partner in prayer for their special gifts from the Lord.

Daughters who love Jesus desire moms who set the example of being adorned with inner beauty and are not obsessed by outward beauty, which eventually fades away. Daughters need moms they can proudly emulate. Indeed, a discerning mom is a listening friend to her little girl—and a loving, but firm disciplinarian when necessary.

Raising daughters is not a passive role for fathers. On the contrary, dads are available to provide, protect, and care for their sensitive girls. Some daughters won't demand attention, but inside they still crave compassion and conversation. Wise is the father who takes the time to regularly date his daughter with acceptance and for understanding.

Furthermore, help your daughter find her identity in Christ and not in the culture. Society tells her she must look and act a certain way to be accepted, but a godly parent teaches her that acceptance comes from being a daughter of King Jesus. He loves her unconditionally, just as He made her. True identity comes from trusting Christ and His plan for her life.

"The king is enthralled by your beauty; honor him, for he is your lord" (Psalms 45:11, NIV84).

Related Readings: Ruth 2:22-23; Esther 2:15-18; Luke 8:41-42; Ephesians 6:1-4

JANUARY 12

RAISING SONS

Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching. Proverbs 1:8

Raising sons requires intentionality from a parent or parents. Wise are the father and mother who have a plan to teach their son how to make God-honoring choices and to lead like Jesus. Yes, being an excellent example is fundamental, but it takes more than modeling—sons need to understand why, what, and how.

For example, they need life preparation in how to: become a Christian, pray, and study the Bible. Take them through the book of John to love Jesus, the book of Ephesians to grasp grace, and the book of Proverbs to embrace wisdom. Boys and young men who grow up fearing God are prepared to persevere through adversity, success, marriage, and parenting.

“Listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old. Buy the truth and do not sell it—wisdom, instruction and insight as well” (Proverbs 23:22-23).

Related Readings: Proverbs 23:15-16; 31:2; Philippians 2:22; James 2:21

SIBLING RIVALRY

Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate robe for him. When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him. Genesis 37:3-4

Do you outwardly favor one of your children over another? Have you used a phrase like, “I wish you were more like your sister; she always gets an A on her tests”? If so, you are in danger of creating an environment that fosters rivalry between your children. Sad is a child who thinks they have to live up to a sister’s or brother’s unreachable standard.

Jealousy jabs at the heart and causes a child to react angrily toward the other object of their parent’s affection. Since they don’t feel like they measure up, they try to discredit the favored sibling, or they create chaos to draw attention to themselves. It is disheartening to see even grown children remain in a state of fierce competition. Cruelty needs to be replaced with calmness and anger with forgiveness.

“Anger is cruel and fury overwhelming, but who can stand before jealousy? Better is open rebuke than hidden love” (Proverbs 27:4-5).

Related Readings: Job 42:11; Luke 14:26; Acts 13:45;
2 Corinthians 12:20

JANUARY 14

GOD IS GOOD

The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him. Nahum 1:7

God is good. He is good when times are bad. He is good all the time. Do not relegate God to the bad side of the ledger just because you are experiencing bad times. Focus on the goodness of God, for He is good. His goodness is a refuge for you in times of trouble. Your security is in the safe environment His goodness provides. God's goodness is the standard by which people measure goodness. No person's goodness exceeds God's goodness. Your goodness is but a reflection of His, because apart from the Lord there resides in us no good thing. His goodness is foundational for all goodness.

Thus, Christ dwelling in you by faith allows the goodness of God to flourish. It is one of the wonders of grace. Indeed, faith in Jesus unleashes the goodness of God in your life. Good works without the goodness of God are just good works for the temporal. But good works, motivated by the goodness of God, reap eternal benefits. The Lord is good.

"I say to the LORD, 'You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing.'" (Psalm 16:2).

Related Readings: Luke 16:25; Hebrews 6:4-6;
2 Thessalonians 1:11; Titus 1:15

STAY IN PROCESS

I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.

1 Corinthians 3:6-7



Are you struggling to stay in the process? It may be the engagement process—he or she cannot make up their mind on a date, time and location for the wedding. Perhaps you feel trapped in the process of a job search—a promising door opens and then closes just as quickly. The process at work is a challenge, because the project never seems to be completed on time and is not up to standard.

Or, for years you have prayed for the salvation of a loved one and they seem further away from the Lord than when you first started petitioning for their soul. It's in the process that God purifies our heart and gets our attention to go deeper with Him. The process may not seem perfect, but it is necessary to draw us near to Jesus in utter dependence.

“For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord” (Colossians 1:9-10a).

Related Readings: Jeremiah 29:4-6; Proverbs 25:4-5; Matthew 13:23; James 1:2-4

AVAILABLE GRANDPARENTS

After this, Job lived a hundred and forty years; he saw his children and their children to the fourth generation. And so Job died, an old man and full of years. Job 42:16-17

God gives grandparents the opportunity to be available for their grandchildren. It can be the most fulfilling season of life, because of the joy that comes from seeing the third generation follow the Lord with wholehearted commitment. Grandchildren need their grandparents for fun, support, encouragement, wisdom, security, and a loving legacy. Do you have a plan to be intentional in your grandchildren's lives?

Grandparents who take the time to be with their grandchildren invest in the next godly generation. Do you want to be remembered for being available to those who desire you the most, or for being busy doing good things for people who probably won't attend your funeral? Bless your grandchildren with your faithfulness to them and the Lord—pray for His will in their lives. Grandchildren need their grandparents' blessing.

“When Israel saw the sons of Joseph, he asked, ‘Who are these?’ ‘They are the sons God has given me here,’ Joseph said to his father. Then Israel said, ‘Bring them to me so I may bless them’” (Genesis 48:8-9).

Related Readings: Proverbs 16:31; Isaiah 46:4; Titus 2:1-5

UNHOLY ACCOLADES

Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you, for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets. Luke 6:26

Authentic teachers and preachers of the Bible will have some who disagree with, even dismiss, their proclamations of truth. If a spokesperson for the Lord is not criticized by some, there is need to worry that they are watering down God's Word. Churches are not created to make everyone feel good but to lead them to faith in Christ and holy living.

Furthermore, it is important how the messenger delivers the message—not with a holier-than-thou disposition but in a spirit of compassion and humble boldness. Followers of Jesus are not out to intentionally offend and attack those who embrace untruth or a worldly way of living. However, we are to speak the truth in love and trust God with how people will respond. Has a vocal minority unfairly criticized your stand on marriage? Do some of your family members think you are strange because of the way you raise your children in Christ? If so, do not be ashamed that some do not speak well of you; sometimes we are best known by our enemies.

“So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God” (2 Timothy 1:8).

Related Readings: 2 Chronicles 6:34-35; Jeremiah 14:14; Matthew 7:15; 1 Peter 4:2-4

RACIAL HEALING

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:26-28, NIV84

Christianity is color blind. The foot of the cross is level and provides acceptance for all who embrace faith in Jesus Christ. Man erects barriers, but belief in Christ tears them down. Man makes himself superior and treats others as inferiors. However, our superior savior, Jesus, makes humble followers of the Lord significant.

Your devotion to Christ is meant to dissolve distrust toward those who differ from you. In fact, it is out of the beauty of diversity that your beliefs are made real. Faith untested by inclusiveness is indeed inferior. Belief in God equalizes egos and checks pride. Our Christian "brand promise" is love for one another because He first loved us.

"From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. 'For in him we live and move and have our being'" (Acts 17:26-28a).

Related Readings: Exodus 12:48-49; Ezekiel 17:23; Matthew 23:8; Acts 10:28-47

PEACEFUL PROTEST

The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes. Every man's way is right in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the hearts. To do righteousness and justice is desired by the LORD more than sacrifice. Proverbs 21:1-3 NASB

There is a reaction associated with conflicting opinions—it can be a peaceful protest, or it can become a violent outburst. Mental illness can drive a man mad with murderous intent, but those of sound mind must not be driven by vicious rage. The most productive process in expressing disagreement initiates civil discourse and is redemptive in its motive.

As followers of Jesus we are wise not to take matters into our own hands but to leave them in the hands of our Lord. We appeal to a higher power—almighty God, to intervene in injustice. Like the king who gave Nehemiah everything he requested and more, so the Lord can direct the heart of authorities to change laws and resource righteous causes.

“The king said to me, ‘What is it you want?’ Then I prayed to the God of heaven, and I answered the king, ‘If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my ancestors are buried so that I can rebuild it’” (Nehemiah 2:4-5).

Related Readings: Isaiah 32:17; Psalm 35:20; Luke 6:29;
1 Timothy 2:2

LIFE IS PRECIOUS

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. Psalm 139:13-14

Why does a mom—even a dad—travel hundreds of miles to be at the bedside of their daughter or daughter-in-law as they deliver their grandbaby? When an infant enters the room in their mother's arms, why do people stop, stare, and adore the little one? Because life means something—it is a gift from God that reminds humans of His glory and goodness.

When we look at a newborn's feet, we see the faithfulness of our heavenly Father. When we hold his hand and count her fingers, we feel the comfort of the Holy Spirit. And when we look deep into their innocent eyes, we see the love of our Lord Jesus Christ reminding us of His infinite existence. God's glory glows through His divine handiwork. Almighty God's creation begins at conception, where He instructs in wisdom and desires faithfulness.

“Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb; you taught me wisdom in that secret place” (Psalm 51:5-6).

Related Readings: Psalm 71:6; Isaiah 49:4-6; Jeremiah 1:5; Galatians 1:14-16

FRIEND OF GOD

And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called God’s friend. James 2:23

What does it mean to be a friend of God? It’s like a child who becomes an adult and begins to relate to their dad or mom as a friend but still treats them with honor and respect. So it is with your heavenly Father—in the infant stages of faith you cannot fathom friendship until you mature through the elementary application of submission to God, trust in God, obedience to God, fear of God, and love of God and people.

Once we relate to our heavenly Father in holy surrender, dependence, and belief, we are in a position to appreciate engaging Him as a friend. But this friend relationship cannot bypass His Lordship in our lives. Candidates for friendship with God first have to first travel down the path of perseverance, brokenness, and character development. Friendship comes with a history of faithful service to Jesus, not with a flippant attitude but with one of awe. Jesus extends friendship to His faithful disciples.

“I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you” (John 15:15).

Related Readings: Exodus 33:11; 2 Chronicles 20:7;
Luke 5:20, 34; 12:4-5

SHARE GOD STORIES

When they [Paul and Barnabas] came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them.

Acts 15:4

Can a follower of Jesus contain the great works God does in and through them? Or, are they compelled to communicate Christ's faithfulness, forgiveness, healing, answered prayers, and salvation stories? Joy and gratitude to God cannot be contained in a life surrendered to the Lord. God waits for His works to be openly shared for His glory.

The grace of God causes a man or woman to glow under its influence. Discerning Christians look at a soul captivated by Christ and they know they have been with Jesus. So, we humbly tell of how the Lord is meeting financial needs, delivering a friend from addiction, growing disciples, and how He healed a fractured family relationship. A soul might explode unless it shares God's faithfulness.

"Since my youth, God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds" (Psalm 71:17).

Related Readings: Job 37:5; Psalm 86:10; Matthew 21:42;
Acts 15:12

JANUARY 23

FAITH LIVING

For we live by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

Faith living is focused on God living. It is the road less traveled. Even for believers in Jesus Christ, faith living is not always predominant. Why settle for anything less? If we limit ourselves to our efforts, our logic and what we can see, then we only tip God with our faith. He is calling us beyond the honeymoon stage of our faith to mature faith. A faith that only thinks of the past is anemic and stunted. Faith alive is focused on God's vision for the future. It is caught up in the possibilities of today with no fear of tomorrow.

Faith living enjoys God's ability to create. For example, He can create resourceful relational opportunities, as He is the connector par excellence. By faith He can be trusted to lead you to just the right people, people you can serve and people who can join you to accomplish God's will. Determine ways to bring value to the other person. It is not about what you can get from them. It is all about how you can serve them.

“By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going” (Hebrews 11:8).

Related Readings: Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; Galatians 2:20; 3:11; Hebrews 10:38

DISCONNECT TO RECONNECT

After leaving them, he [Jesus] went up on a mountainside to pray. Mark 6:46

Is your life hurried and full of busyness? If so, consider coming away with Christ in quiet communion. A neglected soul needs the nurturing of a still spot. Like the body needs food, water, and sleep, so the soul needs Scripture, prayer, and rest. Disconnection from distractions allows for connection with Christ. Be still and know God in deep intimacy.

“He says, ‘Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth’” (Psalm 46:10).

Stillness positions us to see the Lord with eyes of faith. He longs to love His children with unlimited and unconditional love. A heart loved by heaven cannot help but love others on earth. When your heavenly Father holds you in His warm embrace, you are able to serve others with care and compassion. God’s grace infuses a hungry heart for Him. Indeed, loving relationships happen in the margin of life. It requires trust to disconnect from important activities and meaningfully connect with Christ and people. Faith facilitates intimacy. For example, let go of uncertainties at work and let God and others bear that burden. You avoid burnout and have the emotional energy to give at home. Your family needs your full attention in order to feel like you understand their needs. You disconnect to reconnect.

Related Readings: Psalm 28:7; 37:4-6; Matthew 4:1-17; Acts 14:23

DIRECTIONS FROM GOD

When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country, though that was shorter. For God said, "If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt." So God led the people around by the desert road toward the Red Sea. Exodus 13:17-18a



The Lord's path for His people is not always a straight line from point A to point B. In His wisdom He may allow us to go through the wilderness before we arrive at the Promised Land. He knows preparation precedes the blessing of the destination. He desires that we learn to trust in Him along the way to where He wants us to go. It's when the Lord's will is a nonlinear route that we begin to doubt and wonder why He has led us through a desert experience.

However, if life were that easy we could easily take credit for our successes and grow demanding and proud, rather than grateful and humble. Thank the Lord that He has you in a process that requires intense prayer and faith. He knows what's best to grow your faith so you are able to handle His blessings.

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Related Readings: Proverbs 12:28; Isaiah 55:8-9, 64:5; Jeremiah 32:19; Hebrews 3:8

FAMOUS FATHER

LORD I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, O LORD. Renew them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy. Habakkuk 3:2, NIV84

Most are not famous, but God is the most famous—His fame is from everlasting to everlasting. He is famous now—He was famous in the past—He will be famous in the future. No one person or event is more famous than God. He is the famous One. God's name is inscribed on the heavenly walk of His stars.

His fame stretches from universe to universe. Its expanse is from galaxy to galaxy. No amount of light years can capture the fame of God. His fame is beyond time. The fame of the Lord God Almighty covers the earth. It races from sea to shining sea. God is famous. He is on center stage as Creator, Savior, and Lord. God is our heavenly hero.

“I will set a sign among them, and I will send some of those who survive to the nations—to Tarshish, to the Libyans and Lydians (famous as archers), to Tubal and Greece, and to the distant islands that have not heard of my fame or seen my glory. They will proclaim my glory among the nations” (Isaiah 66:19).

Related Readings: Joshua 9:9; 1 Kings 10:1; Ruth 4:14

GOD'S FAVOR

When his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD gave him success in everything he did, Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned. Genesis 39:3-4

The Lord's favor rests on His followers who remain faithful to Him. It is humbling to know that God extends wisdom and grace to those who go hard after Him. Though someone is separated from loved ones by a long distance, the Lord is nearby to impart His calming presence. Rest assured, Jesus brings success to souls who submit to His will.

Moreover, favor with God leads to favor with man. A heart connection on earth takes place when there has been a heart connection in heaven. People of influence are on the lookout for those they can trust. It is not a small thing to delegate management and leadership responsibilities—hence those with character are entrusted with more. Therefore, stay faithful in your responsibilities as a servant leader at work and home.

“Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much” (Luke 16:10).

Related Readings: 1 Chronicles 28:19; Isaiah 62:3; Luke 1:66; 1 John 2:8-10

SOURCE OF PRESIDENTIAL POWER

“Do you refuse to speak to me?” Pilate said. “Don’t you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?” Jesus answered, “You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above.” John 19:10-11a

A God-blessed nation is built around leaders who understand their roles as wise stewards. Our country rose in global influence because of this and will decline without it. Leadership cannot dismiss its responsibility to lead by the rule of law and its accountability to almighty God. The Lord gives leaders power to fulfill His agenda.

Leadership is a stewardship given by God. This is true on a micro level in the home, and on the macro level in government. A councilman, mayor, state legislator, governor, congressman, Supreme Court justice, and president all eventually answer to almighty God. It is the fear of the Lord and respect for His commands that lead leaders to become great. Humility, honesty, and submission to holy God allow governments to govern well.

“I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness” (1 Timothy 2:1-2, NIV84).

Related Readings: Exodus 3:19-20; Psalm 21:1-7; Acts 13:21-22; 1 Peter 2:13-17

SUPPORT WEARY SERVANTS

When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other—so that his hands remained steady till sunset. Exodus 17:12

When people grow tired they need the support of sensitive friends. Their fatigue may flow from trials and tribulations out of their control. They may be worn down by ongoing financial challenges. A rebellious child finds them spent emotionally or a newborn keeps them in a chronic state of physical exhaustion. Do you know someone who is overwhelmingly tired? Who needs your hands-on support?

Indeed, fatigue weakens faith. When we extend a little bit of encouragement, it may be a lifeline that leads someone to the Lord. Well-timed encouragement is eternal medicine for a suffering soul. Each day, life extracts courage from a hurting heart, so we come alongside to give courage with a kind word, a little cash or a faith-filled prayer. Few complain of too much loving support.

“He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing”
(1 Thessalonians 5:10-11).

Related Readings: Romans 11:18; 2 Corinthians 13:11;
1 Thessalonians 4:18; Hebrews 3:13

INSPECT WHAT'S EXPECTED

Moses inspected the work and saw that they had done it just as the LORD had commanded. So Moses blessed them.

Exodus 39:43

Excellent work requires regular inspection. We all do better when others are watching, especially when it's the Lord and those we respect. Work is an expression of the worker, so it's imperative the work is intentional and completed with integrity. If we resist someone looking over our shoulder to verify our efforts then we miss out on much needed accountability.

Do you have clarity in what's expected of you in your role at work? If not, seek out your supervisor and confirm his or her expectations and make sure they align with your understanding. Like a team sport, you want to make sure you are both playing the same game and executing the same plays. Excellent execution requires alignment of expectations. Be grateful you have a boss who cares to look closely at what you do.

“Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds” (Proverbs 27:23).

Related Readings: Genesis 43:16; Luke 16: 1-14; Hebrews 2:1; 1 Peter 4:10

PRIORITY LIVING

Now this is what the LORD Almighty says: "Give careful thought to your ways." Haggai 1:5

Priority living is based on what God deems necessary and important. He deserves our very best. Followers of Christ are honored to not give the Lord the first fruits, not the leftovers. First fruits giving and living means Jesus receives the best of everything about us. We give Him the best of our time and money. Priority living is defining priorities as God defines them, then planning our actions, goals and living around these priorities.

Without intentionally living out God's priorities, we default to reactionary living. Whatever comes our way becomes our default for living. This may take less thinking and praying, but it is no way to honor the Lord. Priority living asks the question, "Am I defining priorities as God defines priorities, and am I living these out for His glory?" Once His priorities are defined, the goal is to execute His priorities for His glory. Priority living is prayerful living. It is aligning with God's heart the best you know how and then trusting Him with your time and money. Priority living is giving God first and foremost what He deserves and expects from His children.

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:33).

Related Readings: Psalm 86:12; Matthew 7:12;
Philippians 4:8; 1 Peter 2:12