

## **Bible study for this week** 4/20/09~4/26/09

\***April 20 (Monday), 2009** { [Ecclesiastes 3:1-13](#) } Key: Every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor—it is the gift of God. (Ecclesiastes 3:13) “Relevant Routine” Bible In One Year: [2 Samuel 19-20; Luke 18:1-23](#)

Here we are at the beginning of a new week. For many people, Monday represents the start of another monotonous cycle of work. Maybe it’s a mountain of washing and ironing, an endless quota of parts from a machine, the same dull routine on the assembly line, or the tedium of sitting at a computer.

Monotony can be a breeding ground for envy and discontent, or it can be the training ground for the development of character and a life of service. It all depends on whether we can see God in the ordinary duties of life.

There was a woman in Boston who for 40 years did the same cleaning tasks in the same office building. She was interviewed by a reporter who asked her how she could stand the monotony of doing the same thing day in and day out. The woman said, “I don’t get bored. I use cleaning materials that God made. I clean objects that belong to people God made, and I make life more comfortable for them. My mop is the hand of God!”

Are you looking for the Creator in your occupation? He’s there. He uses the hands, bodies, and minds of people who accept their tasks and do their work for Him. Any routine task is relevant to God’s work in and through us—for time and for eternity.

*Meditate.* For Further Study Are you wondering what God’s call on your life should look like?

*Aphorism.* If you want to leave footprints in the sands of time, wear work shoes.

\***April 21 (Tuesday), 2009** { [Ecclesiastes 2:1-16](#) } Key: What profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? (Luke 9:25) “Not Enough” Bible In One Year: [2 Samuel 12-13; Luke 16](#)

The writer of Ecclesiastes said that pleasure, material possessions, and even great knowledge do not bring lasting satisfaction. Jesus went even further. He said that a person who possesses everything this world has to offer but doesn’t prepare for eternity is spiritually destitute. We all need more than fun, finances, and fame to be fulfilled.

Thinking about this made me consider some prominent people who had committed suicide. One was a baseball star, several were entertainers, and two had inherited great wealth. I also recalled a highly esteemed scholar and his wife who both took a lethal overdose of drugs when they learned that she had terminal cancer. These people had failed to find meaning in their existence.

Because we were created in God’s image, our lives do have meaning for both time and eternity. God made us for His glory and placed us on earth to honor Him. We have the remarkable ability to reflect on Him and on eternity.

Believing that Jesus died for our sins and rose from the grave meets our need for meaning. Salvation brings assurance that we’re forgiven. We have an eternal purpose and the hope of heaven. This is enough to bring deep peace and joy to our lives. Have you found this to be so?

*Meditate.* For Further Study Perhaps you’re looking for that elusive sense of satisfaction.

*Aphorism.* Hold loosely the things of earth.

\***April 22 (Wednesday), 2009** { [Psalm 40:1-8](#) } Key: Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the fish’s belly. (Jonah 2:1) “Strange Places” Bible In One Year: [2 Samuel 14-15; Luke](#)

## [17:1-19](#)

Walking past my barn one day, I heard a frantic chirping inside, and upon investigation I found a bluejay beating its wings against the glass pane of the window. Had it not cried and squawked, I would not have heard it. But its plaintive note prompted me to open the door wide and the jay flew out to liberty.

That bluejay was in a strange place for a bird; and Jonah found himself in a strange place for a human being. Because of his disobedience, Jonah was cast into the sea, swallowed by a sea monster and trapped in its belly. Although it was Jonah's own fault that he was there, God was also there to hear his prayer. And when he confessed, God delivered him.

God's children sometimes get themselves into some strange places and unhappy circumstances because of their folly. Are you in a strange place today? Are you out of fellowship with the Lord, defeated, unhappy? Then cry out to God, confess your sin, and be restored by His abundant mercy (1 John 1:9). God is waiting to hear your faintest cry and accept your repentance.

Maybe through your own foolish choices you're in a strange place today—but He is with you and waiting to hear your cry. Don't wait another day.

*Meditate:* When I ceased my vain endeavor  
And to Jesus yielded all,  
Then He came, the Overcomer,  
Conquering foes both great and small.

*Aphorism:* When you're in the wrong place, God always has the right answer.

**\*April 23 (Thursday), 2009** { [Galatians 4:13-20](#) } Key: My little children, . . . I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you. (Galatians 4:19) "Soiled-Rag Masterpiece" Bible In One Year: [2 Samuel 16-18; Luke 17:20-37](#)

An artist was once falsely accused of a crime and thrown into prison. Although allowed to take his brushes and paints with him, he had no way of obtaining a canvas. One day in desperation he asked a guard for something upon which he might paint. Indifferently, the man picked up a dirty old handkerchief and tossed it to him, saying, "There, see what you can do with that soiled rag!"

The artist, being a Christian, painted on it his concept of the face of Jesus. Having labored long and diligently on the painting, he thought he would show it first of all to the man who had given him the dirty piece of cloth for a canvas. When the guard looked at the beautiful image, his heart was moved, and tears welled up in his eyes. The painting later became famous.

If one man could take an old, soiled rag and make it glow with such loveliness that a thoughtless, indifferent prison guard was moved to tears by it, just think what the Master Artist could do with our lives if we would let Him have His way with us. In our sinfulness, we are just old "soiled rags," devoid of spiritual beauty. Yet the power of God's Holy Spirit can change us into a masterpiece of divine grace!

*Meditate:* I am the Lord's—yet, teach me all it meaneth,  
All it involves of love and loyalty,  
Of holy service, full and glad surrender,  
And unreserved obedience unto Thee!

*Aphorism:* The best commentary on the Bible is a Christ-filled life.

**\*April 24 (Friday), 2009** [1 John 4:1-8](#) { } Key: He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. (1 John 4:8) "Winds Of Love" Bible In One Year: [2 Samuel 9-11; Luke 15:11-32](#)

A farmer had a weather vane on his barn, on which was written "God is love." When friends asked why, the farmer said, "This is to remind me that no matter which way the wind blows, God is love."

When the warm "south wind" with its soothing and balmy breezes brings showers of blessing, God is love. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above" (James 1:17).

When the cold "north wind" of trial and testing sweeps down upon you, God is love. "All things work together for good to those who love God" (Romans 8:28).

When the "west wind" blows hard upon you with its punishing intent, God is love. "Whom the Lord loves He chastens" (Hebrews 12:6).

When the "east wind" threatens to sweep away all that you have, God is love. "God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory" (Philippians 4:19).

Perhaps you are discouraged and downhearted. If so, remember, God still cares for you. What you are experiencing has either been sent or it has been allowed by Him for your good.

Yes, no matter which way the wind is blowing, God is love.

*Meditate:* God is love: His mercy brightens All the path in which we rove; Bliss He wakes and woe He lightens—God is wisdom, God is love.

*Aphorism:* No affliction would trouble us if we knew God's reason for permitting it.

\***April 25 (Saturday), 2009** { [Psalm 56](#) } Key: Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You. (Psalm 56:3) "Life Is Real" Bible In One Year: [2 Samuel 21-22; Luke 18:24-43](#)

In the comic strip *Peanuts*, Lucy had just broken the news to Linus that children cannot live at home forever. Eventually they grow up and move away. Then she said that when he left she would get his room. But Linus quickly reminded her that at some time she too would have to leave home. When this realization hit Lucy, she was shocked, but she quickly came up with a solution. She turned the TV up loud, crawled into her beanbag chair with a bowl of ice cream, and refused to think about it.

Avoiding unpleasant circumstances is not as easy as Lucy thinks. Life's realities cannot be avoided. We may try to run and hide, but struggles and trials have a way of dogging our footsteps and eventually catching up with us.

Instead, we should face up to our problems. The psalmist David did this when beset by persistent foes and false friends. He didn't try to minimize his danger; he acknowledged the storm that was raging around him and looked to the Lord. He wrote, "In God I have put my trust" (Psalm 56:4).

Let's follow David's example—not Lucy's. Facing up to life's difficulties may be a frightening experience. But when we trust God and draw close to Him, we'll experience real deliverance.

*Meditate:* Whatever life may bring your way Each hour of every passing day, Throughout the months and long years too, The Lord in heaven will care for you.

*Aphorism:* When troubles call on you, call on God.

\***April 26 (Sunday), 2009** { [Matthew 5:33-37](#) } Key: Let your "Yes" be "Yes," and your "No," "No." (Matthew 5:37) "Be True To Your Word" Bible In One Year: [2 Samuel 23-24; Luke 19:1-27](#)

Shortly before his death, the Duke of Burgundy was presiding over the Cabinet Council of France. A proposal was made by the ministers that would violate a treaty but would secure important advantages for the country. Many reasons were offered to justify the

deed. The Duke listened in silence, and when all had spoken he closed the conference without giving approval. Placing his hand on a copy of the original agreement, he said with firmness in his voice, "Gentlemen, we have a treaty!"

It's important that Christians act and speak so that the Savior is glorified. When you give your word, keep it. If you make a commitment, honor it. If you take on an obligation, fulfill it. As Jesus said in Matthew 5:37, "Let your 'Yes' be 'Yes.'"

Our honesty and reliability should be so evident that we can be trusted for any contract we make. What better testimony could be said of a believer than this: "He gave his word; that's good enough for me." And if non-Christians can trust us in business matters, they are more likely to believe us when we speak about the gospel.

If you are tempted to go back on a promise, think again of the words of the Duke of Burgundy: "Gentlemen, we have a treaty!"

*Meditate:* Uphold me in the common strife; Give me the grace to work and plan; And in the marketplace of life, O keep me, Lord, an honest man.

*Aphorism:* Never give your word unless you intend to keep it.