

Bible study for this week 6/01/09~6/07/09

***June01(Monday),2009**{ [Numbers 15:37-41](#) }Key: Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments . . . and to put a blue thread in the tassels.(Numbers 15:38)“The Color Of Blue”Bible In One Year: [2 Chronicles 15-16; John 12:27-50](#)

The children of Israel were to make tassels on the corners of their garments with “a blue thread in the tassels” (Numbers 15:38). The tassels reminded them to “do all My commandments, and be holy for your God” (v.40). The blue thread—the color of the heavens above—spoke of His immeasurable power and saving grace.

We still need reminders today. In the fuss and frenzy of our busy lives, we easily forget God and His passion for us. We forget that He lives within and around us and loves us with eternal affection. It helps to have something to signify His presence. Blue can be one of those signs.

“The first step is to remember,” says Aslan in C. S. Lewis’ *The Silver Chair*. Aslan, a figure of Christ, tells Jill to “remember the signs” he has given her.

If you learn God’s signs—like the significance of the color blue—it will be easier to remember God’s love. Blue can remind you of the invisible realm above and all around, unseen and yet as real as anything you can see. A mountain lake, a glacial crevasse, an alpine forget-me-not, a cerulean sky—all remind us of heaven and God’s unfathomable love.

When you see blue, think of God’s love, and especially His love for you.

Meditate: This is my Father’s world! He shines in all that’s fair; In the rustling grass I hear Him pass—He speaks to me everywhere.

Aphorism: Daily blessings are daily reminders of God.

***June02(Tuesday),2009**{ [Romans 12:6-13](#) }Key: Be kindly affectionate to one another . . . , given to hospitality.(Romans 12:10,13)“**A Congress On Hospitality**” Bible In One Year: [2 Chronicles 17-18; John 13:1-20](#)

Let me be the first to summon the church to a National Congress on Hospitality. We could hold it in Minneapolis near the Betty Crocker Kitchens, and perhaps we could borrow the Pillsbury Doughboy as our symbol. After all, there’s some truth to the slogan, “Nothin’ says lovin’ like somethin’ from the oven.”

The biblical word for hospitality means “a love of strangers.” Sometimes people who visit our churches feel unwelcome. No one greets them or notices them. Hospitality, however, can break down barriers and build bridges. It can make strangers feel more welcome than just a word in the church bulletin.

For those tempted to shrug off my call for a Congress on Hospitality because they are planning another evangelistic outreach, let me insist that hospitality doesn’t conflict with outreach; it complements it! Inviting someone in for coffee, offering to babysit, taking a meal to a sick mother—all these show that we care. And people listen to someone who cares.

On second thought, I withdraw my call for a National Congress on Hospitality. Instead, let’s invite a few lonely folks to our homes and show them genuine Christian hospitality.

Meditate: The good we do is never lost, Each kindly act takes root; And every bit of love we sow In time will bear its fruit.

Aphorism: Christian hospitality is the bridge between an open heart and an open home.

***June03(Wednesday),2009**{ [Ephesians 2:1-10](#) }Key: Now is the day of salvation. (2

Corinthians 6:2)“**The Transaction**”Bible In One Year: [2 Chronicles 19-20; John 13:21-38](#)

Can more than half of the US adult population be wrong? A survey by the Barna Research Group recently revealed that 54 percent say that people who are generally good and do enough good things for others will earn a place in heaven. That is just one of many methods people suggest as ways to merit entrance into God’s eternal kingdom.

Let’s think about what has to happen for a person to get to heaven, and why the “good works” idea falls short.

First, we must recognize that we are all born spiritually dead. In Ephesians 2:1, we are taught that we “were dead in trespasses and sins.” The spiritual aspect of our existence was dead on arrival when we were physically born into this world. That soul, however, can be made alive. Paul described it like this: “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22).

To be made alive, a transaction must take place. Something specific has to happen to turn what was dead into something alive. It is not triggered by good works but happens only when, by faith, you accept God’s gift of salvation (2 Corinthians 6:2; Ephesians 2:8).

Is your soul alive today? If not, make the transaction and accept God’s wonderful gift.

Meditate: Choose now, just now; your soul’s at stake; What will your answer be? ’Tis life or death; the choice you make Is for eternity.

*Aphorism:*Life’s biggest decision is what you do with Jesus.

***June04(Thursday),2009**{ [Philippians 1:19-30](#) }Key: To you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake. (Philippians 1:29)“**An Expensive Gospel**”Bible In One Year: [2 Chronicles 21-22; John 14](#)

On a teaching trip at a Bible institute in another country, my colleague and I were saddened to hear of legislation before the parliament that sought to outlaw the evangelical church. We shared our fears with our students that though we had come to train a generation of pastors, we might instead witness a new wave of persecution. We then joined with the students in prayer and worship to God about the matter.

After we concluded, one of the students said to me, “Thanks for being concerned for us, but don’t worry. We’ve learned that it’s not enough for us to preach the gospel or live for the gospel. It is necessary that we suffer for the gospel.” His words were not flippant but honest. Living for Christ often exacts a price.

Paul, writing from prison, said, “To you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake” (Philippians 1:29). His statement is daily lived out by believers around the world who experience hardship and persecution for no greater crime than living openly for the name of Jesus.

Let’s pray for God’s blessing and provision for our brothers and sisters in Christ who are paying an expensive price for embracing a salvation that is free.

*Meditate:*O for a faith that will not shrink Though pressed by many a foe, That will not tremble on the brink Of any earthly woe.

*Aphorism:*Those who live for God can expect trouble in the world.

***June05(Friday),2009**{ [1 Kings 13:7-22](#) }Key: It was commanded me by the word of the Lord.(1 Kings 13:9)“**It’s What God Says**”Bible In One Year: [2 Chronicles 23-24; John](#)

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An experiment with teenagers showed how they handle peer pressure. Groups of 10 adolescents were brought into a room and instructed to raise their hands when the teacher pointed to the longest line on three charts. Nine of the people had been told ahead of time to vote for the second-longest line. But one person in the group had not been told.

The experiment began with nine teenagers voting for the wrong line. The tenth person would typically glance around, frown in confusion, and slip his hand up with the group because he lacked the courage to challenge them.

In 1 Kings 13, an unidentified man of God performed miraculous signs at the altar in Bethel (vv.1-6). But then, after this great victory, he took the word of another prophet to be the truth even though he knew it was contrary to what God had told him (vv.15-19). Because of his disobedience, he was killed by a lion (vv.20-24).

The story teaches us that God's Word is superior to anyone else's word and therefore should be obeyed. When we're tempted to buckle under pressure, it's then that we must stand firm. God's Word—the truth—can always be relied on.

Meditate: O help us, Lord, to heed Your Word, Its precepts to obey; And may we fight the tendency To walk in our own way.

Aphorism: God's Word is the compass that keeps us on course.

***June06(Saturday),2009**{ [Luke 15:11-32](#) }Key: God . . . has given us the ministry of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:18)“**Family Stories**”Bible In One Year: [2 Chronicles 25-27; John 16](#)

Everybody loves a family story, and today's Bible reading contains one of the most well-known stories in all of Scripture—the Parable of the Lost Son.

Author Henri Nouwen, in his book *The Return Of The Prodigal Son*, suggests that all Christians, at some point in their walk of faith, are represented by each of the three main characters. At times we are the wayward child in need of repentance and forgiveness. At other times we are the big brother who wants to hold on to resentment and withhold forgiveness. But as we mature, we become like the father, whose highest desire is to have all his children reconciled.

Nouwen ends the book with these words: “As I look at my own aging hands, I know that they have been given to me to stretch out to all who suffer, to rest upon the shoulders of all who come, and to offer the blessing that emerges from the immensity of God's love.”

What role are you playing in your family story? Do you need the courage to repent and seek forgiveness? Or do you need the compassion to extend forgiveness?

God has given His children the “ministry of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:18-19). Now would be a good time to start.

Meditate: Lord, grant me the courage to confess my faults to those I've offended, and the grace to accept the confessions of those who have offended me. May I become a minister of reconciliation to bless my family on Your behalf. Amen.

Aphorism: A right attitude with your family begins with a right attitude toward God.

***June07(Sunday),2009**{ [Acts 6:9-15](#) }Key: All who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel.(Acts 6:15)“**A Daily Beauty**”Bible In One Year: [2 Chronicles 28-29; John 17](#)

When you look in a mirror, what do you see? Do you see a lovely reflection? A handsome face? Or do you see a plain or unattractive countenance?

We want to give those who behold us what my friend called an aesthetic blessing. But what about the beauty of holiness? Are others blessed by the beauty that flows through us from Christ?

A distinguished Bible scholar of the 19th century, J. B. Lightfoot, was described by one of his devoted students as “startlingly ugly: a stout little man with a grotesque figure and a squint.” But that same student also said that Lightfoot was “the best man I have ever encountered, and I say this deliberately after the experience of many years. In a day or two . . . his face appeared the most beautiful and lovable thing imaginable.”

When Stephen was brought before the Jewish council for interrogation, “they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke” (Acts 6:10). As he was being accused, they “saw his face as the face of an angel” (v.15).

By God’s transforming grace, we too can have a daily beauty in our lives. As we walk prayerfully in the Spirit, our faces increasingly reflect the beauty of Jesus.

Meditate. Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me, All His wonderful passion and purity; O Thou Spirit divine, all my nature refine Till the beauty of Jesus is seen in me.

Aphorism. Nothing can dim the beauty that shines from within.