

Bible study for this week 7/13/09~7/19/09

***July 13 (Monday), 2009** { [Acts 1:1~8](#) } Key: You shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. (Acts 1:8) “He Wanted To” Bible In One Year: [Psalms 7~9; Acts 18](#)

In his book *Love Is Now*, Peter Gilquist mentioned that he and several other friends were invited to speak to a group of UCLA students. After the meeting, a young man expressed a desire to discuss the matter of salvation. So Gilquist arranged to meet with him the next morning.

The student said that he really wanted what he saw in the lives of believers. But he hesitated to make a commitment because he thought he would have to tell others about Jesus. Gilquist, however, assured him that to become a Christian he was not required to do anything but place his trust in Christ.

Realizing that salvation is by God’s grace through faith, the student gladly received the Lord Jesus as his Savior. But a strange thing happened as he went back to his fraternity house. He met a friend and told him of his newfound faith in Christ. Before the day was over, he had testified to every one of his fraternity brothers about Jesus.

Our witness for Christ should reflect a grateful heart—a sincere desire to share salvation’s blessings with others. If we shrink from giving a word of testimony, let’s ask God to give us the desire to speak out for Him. Then we’ll witness because we want to.

Meditate: Lead me to some soul today; O teach me, Lord, just what to say. Friends of mine are lost in sin And cannot find their way.

Aphorism: If you know Christ, you’ll want others to know Him too.

***July 14 (Tuesday), 2009** { [2 Timothy 4:16~18](#) } Key: No one stood with me, but all forsook me. . . . But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me. (2 Timothy 4:16~17) “Realistic Expectations” Bible In One Year: [Psalms 10~12; Acts 19:1~20](#)

One of the things I’ve learned as I’ve grown older is not to expect too much from people. It’s possible to pour a good deal of energy and love into a friend or family member and see no growth or receive no gratitude for our efforts. It’s even possible that others may receive credit for the work we’ve done.

If we expect everyone to recognize and appreciate what we have done for them, we will certainly be deeply hurt. We’ll start asking ourselves: “Is this all the thanks I get?”

It’s good in those times of disappointment to look at our motives. Do we have an unholy sense of entitlement, or a passion to be seen and applauded for our efforts? Can we give freely and allow others to take responsibility for their own responses? The apostle Paul went through times in his service for the Lord when everyone forsook him. Yet his focus was on the strength that God gave him “so that the message might be preached fully” through him (2 Timothy 4:16~17).

We should never expect to gain from others what only Jesus can give. To do so is to be utterly unrealistic. Our task is simply to give and leave the results to our Master, knowing that in time we will receive His reward: “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:21).

Meditate: The service that we do for God May go unpraised by men; But when we stand before the Lord, He will reward us then.

Aphorism: Work done well for Christ will receive a “well done” from Christ.

***July 15 (Wednesday), 2009** { [Psalm 8](#) } Key: When I consider Your heavens, the work of

Your fingers, the moon and the stars, . . . what is man that You are mindful of him?
(Psalm 8:3~4)“Rocks And Robots”Bible In One Year: [Psalms 13~15; Acts 19:21~41](#)

A friend remembers so:During a walk through the picturesque Garden of the Gods in Colorado Springs, our attention was diverted from the huge, majestic, sandstone rocks toward two people wearing homemade robot suits. The park was thronged with summer tourists who immediately began taking pictures of the robots while their children gathered round to touch and talk to them. Folks who had come to admire the silent beauty of God’s creation were now watching people in cardboard costumes sprayed with silver paint.

It reminded me of my quiet time. How often I sit down to seek the Lord through Bible reading and prayer, only to be drawn away by the newspaper, an unpaid bill, or a list of things to be done. The psalmist had better focus when he wrote: “O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth, who have set Your glory above the heavens! . . . When I consider Your heavens, . . . what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?” (Psalm 8:1,3~4).

While contemplating the Lord and meditating on His creation, the psalmist’s self-important attitude shifted to one of humble appreciation for God’s goodness. It can be true of us too, if we can keep the robots and the rocks in proper perspective.

Meditate: The unwearied sun, from day to day, Does his Creator’s power display, And publishes to every land The work of an Almighty hand.

*Aphorism:*It’s good to worship God in nature if it leads us to worship the God of nature.
***July16(Thursday),2009**{ [1 Peter 2:1~10](#) }Key: [We] are now the people of God. (1 Peter 2:10)“My People”Bible In One Year: [Psalms 16~17; Acts 20:1~16](#)

A little girl was being punished for bad behavior, and her parents were making her eat dinner by herself in the corner of the room. They paid no attention to her until they heard her pray part of Psalm 23: “I thank You, Lord, for preparing a table before me in the presence of my enemies.”

A cute story, but our families can sometimes feel like our enemies when they aren’t exactly what we want them to be. Even our spiritual family at church lets us down occasionally. But by changing our focus we can learn to give up the naïve idea that others will always meet our lofty expectations.

Instead of focusing on others, we can find hope in the truth that we are one of God’s very own children through faith in Jesus (1 Peter 2:10). He has chosen us and “made us His own special people” (v.9). The Lord has brought us into His family, and we can be sure that our relationship with Him will never be severed. He’ll never treat us as an enemy.

When others let us down, instead of giving in to discouragement let’s change our focus and remind ourselves that we who have put our faith in Jesus are God’s children—cherished and cared for by Him.

Meditate: Christian, are you disappointed With the world and all around? Turn your eyes from earth to heaven, Where true joys may all be found.

*Aphorism:*When others let you down, look up.

***July17(Friday),2009**{ [Acts 8:26~38](#) }Key: As we have opportunity, let us do good to all. (Galatians 6:10)“Seize The Opportunity”Bible In One Year: [Psalms 18~19; Acts 20:17~38](#)

Heavy rain was falling outside as Marcia, the director of the Jamaican Christian School for the Deaf, spoke to our group. Thirty-four teenagers and several adults were visiting the school. But one of our students was not distracted by the rain or the children running around the room.

That teenager heard Marcia say, “My dream for these kids is to have a playground.” She took that sentence, and through the prompting of the Lord turned it into an idea. Later that day she told me, “We should come back and build them a playground.” An opportunity for service was born.

A little over 4 months later, on another rainy day in Jamaica, we held a celebration in that same room. We had just assembled a wooden playground—complete with slides, a ladder, climbing bars, swings, forts, and a trapeze. One student seized an opportunity, and a dream was fulfilled.

How often does God prompt us to take action to meet the needs of others and we let the opportunity go? How many times does the Spirit nudge us to say or do something in Jesus’ name and we shake off the nudging? Like Philip in Acts 8, let’s honor the Lord by responding with action. Let’s seize each opportunity God gives us to serve others in His name.

Meditate: Jesus said to one and all: “Take your cross and follow Me.” When you sense the Spirit’s call, Seize the opportunity!

Aphorism: When the Spirit prompts, take action.

***July 18 (Saturday), 2009** { [Luke 23:26~34](#) } Key: Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.” (Luke 23:34) “A Time For Compassion” Bible In One Year: [Psalms 20~22; Acts 21:1~17](#)

A friend remembers so: In 2002, I was in Jakarta, Indonesia, to teach a 2~night Bible conference. The first night, I went early to the host church, and the pastor asked if he could show me around the building. It was impressive in its beauty.

Then the pastor took me to the lower assembly hall. At the front of the hall was a pulpit and a communion table. Behind it was a plain concrete wall on which hung a wooden cross. Below it were some words in the national language of Indonesia. I asked him what the inscription said, and he surprised me by quoting Christ’s words from the cross: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.”

I asked if it was there for a particular reason, and he said that several years earlier there had been serious rioting in the city, and 21 churches were burned to the ground in one day. That wall was all that remained of their former facility—the first of the churches to be torched.

The wall and the verse formed a reminder of the compassion of Christ which He showed on the cross, and that became the church’s message to their city. Revenge and bitterness will never be healing responses to the hatred and rage of a lost world. But the compassion of Christ is, just as it was 2,000 years ago.

Meditate: Give me a heart sympathetic and tender; Jesus, like Thine, Jesus, like Thine, Touched by the needs that are surging around me, And filled with compassion divine.

Aphorism: Compassion is needed to heal the hurts and hearts of others.

***July 19 (Sunday), 2009** { [1 Samuel 16:1~13](#) } Key: Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart. (1 Samuel 16:7) “Looks And Life” Bible In One Year: [Psalms 23~25; Acts 21:18~40](#)

A friend remembers so: During the first few hours of their 30th college reunion, Mary Schmich and her friends talked mostly about how old their classmates looked. But as the event progressed, their focus began to change. Later, in her *Chicago Tribune* column, Mary wrote: "Once you get used to the fact that time has robbed every single one of you of something—or added it in the wrong places . . . you stop thinking about looks [and] start talking about life."

So much of our time and attention are devoted to physical appearance that it's easy to consider it the most important aspect of our lives. But the Bible reminds us that God wants us to see ourselves and others differently.

When the Lord sent Samuel to anoint a new king over Israel (1 Samuel 16:1), God reminded him to look deeper than physical characteristics: "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature . . . For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (v.7).

God's Word has some harsh condemnation for those who show favoritism based on appearances (James 2:1~2). When we begin to see people through God's eyes, our focus will change from looks to life.

Meditate: God looks not at the outward form But what is in the heart; The beauty He is pleased to see, His Spirit can impart.

Aphorism: Our mirrors reflect the outward appearance; God's mirror reveals the inward condition.