

Bible study for this week 8/24/09~8/30/09

***August 24(Monday),2009**{ [Hebrews 11:32-40](#)} Key: All these . . . obtained a good testimony through faith. (Hebrews 11:39)“**Remembered**”Bible In One Year: [Psalms 116-118; 1 Corinthians 7:1-19](#)

After the South lost the US Civil War, John Wilkes Booth wanted to be remembered as its avenger against the North. Some scholars speculate that because he was an actor, Booth’s planned assassination of President Lincoln was, in his mind, his greatest “performance.”

Ironically, John Wilkes Booth’s place in history is that of a villain. He is remembered for taking the life of an unarmed Lincoln with a gunshot to the back of the head. In contrast, Abraham Lincoln is remembered as the president who preserved the Union, freed the slaves, and exhibited “malice toward none and charity for all” (Second Inaugural Address).

The redeemed sinners listed in Hebrews 11 are all remembered for one common virtue: “All these . . . obtained a good testimony through faith” (v.39). Long after their deaths, the record of their lives of faith and obedience still inspire us today.

Few of us will be recorded in history books after we leave this world. But all of us will leave behind memories with our families and friends. Those closest to us are watching our response to God through times of testing and blessing.

Are you living in faith and obedience to Him? What will be the legacy of your life?

Meditate: Even after we have left. This earthly scene below, The witness of our life can speak. Of Christ, whom all can know.

Aphorism: The memory of a godly life speaks more eloquently than words.

***August 25(Tuesday),2009**{ [Ephesians 5:22-33](#)} Key: Let each one of you . . . so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. (Ephesians 5:33)“**Avoiding The Greener Grass**”Bible In One Year: [Psalms 119:1-88; 1 Corinthians 7:20-40](#)

Nancy Anderson says she grew lukewarm in her faith and thus believed the world’s lie: “I deserve to be happy.” This led to an extramarital affair that nearly ended her marriage. She wrote her book *Avoiding The Greener Grass Syndrome* to help keep her painful story of infidelity from “becoming someone else’s story.”

In her book, Nancy offers six action suggestions on how to build “hedgies” to protect your marriage and to help make “a good marriage great”:

Hear—give a listening ear to your spouse.

Encourage—build up your spouse by focusing on positive qualities.

Date—celebrate your marriage by playing and laughing together.

Guard—establish safeguards by setting clear boundaries.

Educate—study your mate to truly understand him or her.

Satisfy—meet each other’s needs.

The grass on the other side of the fence may look greener, but faithfulness to God and commitment to your spouse alone bring peace of mind and satisfaction.

When you avoid the greener-grass syndrome by loving and respecting your spouse, your marriage will be a picture of Christ and His church to those around you (Ephesians 5:31-32).

Meditate: When you look at someone else's life, thinking that it's better than your own, just remember what God's given you. Was designed for you alone.

Aphorism: Jesus Christ is the only third party in a marriage who can make it work.

***August 26 (Wednesday), 2009** { [Psalm 51](#) } Key: The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise. (Psalm 51:17) “**Sacrifice**” Bible In One Year: [Psalms 119:89-176; 1 Corinthians 8](#)

In the agony of Psalm 51, David seems to contradict himself. He exclaims, “You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering” (v.16). Then, two verses later, he says, “You shall be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering” (v.19). Does God want our sacrifices or not?

Sacrifices resemble the flowers a husband gives to his wife after a heated argument. The wife doesn't need the flowers. They are valuable to her only if they accurately represent her husband's feelings. If she thinks they are merely a ritual and do not symbolize his regret, the flowers make the divide between them worse.

God didn't need the animals offered to Him in sacrifice. Hebrews says, “It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins” (10:4). These sacrifices pointed to the once-for-all payment Jesus would make with His own blood when He died for our sins.

What mattered was the attitude of those making the sacrifices. If the offerings were without repentance, the ritual was a mockery. That's why David wrote, “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise” (Psalm 51:17).

Meditate: For Further Study. Learn more about David's sin and his return to God.

Aphorism: Repentance is sorrow for the deed, not for getting caught.

***August 27 (Thursday), 2009** { [Matthew 26:39-42; 27:45-46](#) } Key: My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? (Matthew 27:46) “**Is He Listening?**” Bible In One Year: [Psalms 120-122; 1 Corinthians 9](#)

Sometimes it feels as if God isn't listening to me.” Those words, from a woman who tried to stay strong in her walk with God while coping with an alcoholic husband, echo the heartcry of many believers. For 18 years, she asked God to change her husband. Yet it never happened.

What are we to think when we repeatedly ask God for something good—something that could easily glorify Him—but the answer doesn't come? Is He listening or not?

Let's look at the life of the Savior. In the Garden of Gethsemane, He agonized for hours in prayer, pouring out His heart and pleading, “Let this cup pass from Me” (Matthew 26:39). But the Father's answer was clearly “No.” To provide salvation, God had to send Jesus to die on the cross. Even though Jesus felt as if His Father had forsaken Him, He prayed intensely and passionately because He trusted that God was listening.

When we pray, we may not see how God is working or understand how He will bring good through it all. So we have to trust Him. We relinquish our rights and let God do what is best.

We must leave the unknowable to the all-knowing One. He is listening and working things out His way.

Meditate: Not ours to know the reason why. Unanswered is our prayer, But ours to wait for God's own time. To lift the cross we bear.

Aphorism: When we bend our knees to pray, God bends His ear to listen.

***August 28(Friday),2009** { [Isaiah 61:10-11](#) } Key: As the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth, so the Lord God will cause righteousness . . . to spring forth. (Isaiah 61:11) "**Frog And Toad**" Bible In One Year: [Psalms 123-125; 1 Corinthians 10:1-18](#)

One of my favorite children's books is *Frog And Toad Together* by Arnold Lobel. Frog had a garden that Toad admired, and he wanted one too. So Frog told him: "It is very nice, but it was hard work." When he gave Toad some flower seeds, Toad quickly ran home and planted them.

"Now seeds," said Toad, "start growing." He tried very hard to make his garden grow. He shouted at the seeds, read them long stories, and sang songs to them—but they didn't grow.

"What shall I do?" cried Toad. "Leave them alone," Frog said. "Let the sun shine on them, let the rain fall on them. Soon your seeds will start to grow." Then one day, little green plants appeared. "At last," shouted Toad, "my seeds have stopped being afraid to grow! But you were right, Frog. It was very hard work."

So many people think it's very hard work to grow in righteousness. We must spend time reading the Word, praying, and cultivating our faith by being with other believers. But our progress in holiness is still dependent on God. As He shines His face upon us and rains His love into our lives, we will grow. Then righteousness will begin to "spring forth" (Isaiah 61:11). Don't be discouraged if growth comes slowly. Soon you will have a garden.

Meditate: Within the seed lies God's creative power—He's given us the joy to see it grow; And when He puts new life within our heart, His wonder-working power we can know.

Aphorism: Spiritual growth depends on the water of God's Word and the sunshine of His love.

***August 29(Saturday),2009** { [Psalm 17:1-9](#) } Key: Keep me as the apple of Your eye; hide me under the shadow of Your wings. (Psalm 17:8) "**Refuge Needed**" Bible In One Year: [Psalms 126-128; 1 Corinthians 10:19-33](#)

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina's devastation of the southern United States, displaced families and individuals were often referred to in the media as "refugees." For some, this term was viewed as insulting, so it prompted reporters to scramble for another word that would not be perceived as negative. They decided on the word *evacuees*.

In actuality, the word *refugee* is filled with hope. One dictionary defines it as "one who flees in search of refuge, as in times of war, political oppression, or religious persecution." *Refugee* comes from the word *refuge*, which speaks of safety, protection, and care for the hurting. It speaks of a safe haven in a storm-filled world.

For those who have been battered by the storms, tragedies, and disasters of life, refuge is what they long for most. They may seek shelter in the arms of God, who alone can give us refuge and who longs to cover us and protect us and preserve us.

Jesus said to the broken people of His day, “How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings” (Matthew 23:37). He continues to offer refuge to the hurting hearts of our day if we will but seek His care and trust His heart.

Meditate: O Rock divine, O Refuge dear—A shelter in the time of storm; Be Thou our helper ever near—A shelter in the time of storm.

Aphorism: We need not fear life’s dark shadows when we rest under the shadow of God’s wings.

***August 30(Sunday),2009**{ [1 Peter 2:18-25](#) }Key: Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps. (1 Peter 2:21)“**Persecution That Backfired**”Bible In One Year: [Psalms 129-131](#); [1 Corinthians 11:1-16](#)

In AD 64, someone set fire to Rome. A few days later, two-thirds of the city lay in smoldering ruins. A rumor spread that the emperor Nero had set the fire because he wanted to rebuild the city and name it after himself. Needing a scapegoat to get himself off the proverbial hot-seat, he chose to blame a defenseless and unpopular minority—Christians. He then initiated such intense persecution that he’s been referred to as the first Antichrist. It’s believed that both Peter and Paul were martyred during this time.

Because Christianity was new and its followers still relatively few, the sadistic treatment that Nero leveled against believers, which included using them as human torches to light his palace garden, continued with little opposition.

His persecution eventually backfired, however. Instead of weakening the new faith, it strengthened it. History tells us that within a few hundred years Christianity became so influential that Emperor Constantine made it the official religion of the Roman Empire.

God always has a purpose in persecution. He will use it for good if we follow the example of Christ, who, “when He suffered, He . . . committed Himself to Him who judges righteously” (1 Peter 2:23).

Meditate: The purposes of God are right, Although we may not see. Just how He works all things for good. And transforms tragedy.

Aphorism: It is better to suffer for the cause of Christ than for the cause of Christ to suffer.