

Bible study for this week 9/07/09~9/13/09

***September 07(Monday),2009**{ [Acts 17:22-31](#) }Key: That I might win those who are without law. (1 Corinthians 9:21)“**Common Ground**”Bible In One Year: [Proverbs 1-2;](#)
[1 Corinthians 16](#)

Roman emperors are not generally remembered for their wisdom, but there are a few exceptions. One great thinker was Marcus Aurelius, emperor of Rome from AD 161 to 180. Gifted with a brilliant mind, he was one of the great intellectual rulers in Western civilization.

Although he never became a convert to the new faith that would be called Christianity, he displayed remarkable insight. His wisdom reflects the law of God written in the heart of someone who did not have God’s Word (Rom. 2:14-15). For example:

- The happiness of your life depends on the quality of your thoughts.
- You have power over your mind—not outside events.
- Your life is what your thoughts make it.

These words sound similar to Proverbs 23:7, “As [a person] thinks in his heart, so is he.” We can learn helpful principles from non-Christians and use their beliefs as common ground for sharing the gospel. When Paul stood on Mars Hill addressing some of the leading intellectuals of his day, he did not belittle their beliefs but established common ground with them and then gave the gospel (Acts 17:26-28).

Let’s look for common ground with our neighbors, so that we may lead them to Christ.

Meditate:What common ground do you share with your friends?Books read Hobbies TravelChildren Sports UpbringingWork A grief experience Military service °

Aphorism:A faith worth having is a faith worth sharing.

***September 08(Tuesday),2009**{ [Hosea 11:1-4](#) }Key: I taught Ephraim to walk, taking them by their arms. (Hosea 11:3)“**Learning To Walk**”Bible In One Year: [Proverbs 3-5;](#)
[2 Corinthians 1](#)

I remember those days long ago when our children were learning to walk. First they showed their readiness by pulling themselves up and taking a tentative step or two. My wife and I would reach out our hands and encourage them to walk toward us. We held them up by their hands or by the suspenders on their overalls. We praised every effort and encouraged every attempt. We never grew discouraged, nor did we give up until they learned to walk.

So it is with our heavenly Father: He “taught [Israel] to walk” (Hos. 11:3). He took His children “by their arms” and “drew them with gentle cords, with bands of love” (vv.3-4).

Our heavenly Father stands before us with outstretched arms, encouraging us toward holiness, eager to catch us when we stumble. He picks us up when we fall. He is never discouraged with our progress, nor will He ever give up. The more difficult we find the process, the more care and kindness He expends.

George MacDonald put it this way: “God will help us when we cannot walk, and He will help us when we find it hard to walk, but He cannot help us if we will not walk.” Even though you fall, you must try again. Your Father holds you by the hand.

Meditate: Savior, let me walk beside Thee, Let me feel my hand in Thine, Let me know the joy of walking. In Thy strength and not in mine.

Aphorism: We can't run the Christian race until we learn to walk.

***September 09 (Wednesday), 2009** { [James 4:13-17](#) } Key: To him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin. (James 4:17) "**Failing To Do Right**" Bible In One Year: [Proverbs 6-7; 2 Corinthians 2](#)

In his book *Eight Men Out*, Eliot Asinof records the events surrounding the notorious "Black Sox" scandal of 1919. Eight members of the Chicago White Sox baseball club were accused of taking bribes from gamblers in exchange for intentionally losing the World Series. Although they were never convicted in a court of law, all eight were banned from baseball for life.

But one of those players, Buck Weaver, claimed that he had played to win despite knowing about the conspiracy. Though Weaver's performance on the field supported his contention, baseball commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis ruled that any player who had knowledge of the scandal, yet chose not to stop it, would still be banned. Weaver was not punished for doing wrong, but for failing to do right.

In his letter to the first-century church, James wrote, "To him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin" (4:17). In a world filled with evil and darkness, followers of Christ have the opportunity to shine their light. That often means we must resist the urge to do nothing.

When faced with the choice between doing good and failing to do anything at all, we must always choose to do what's right.

Meditate: Heavenly Father, help me to honor You throughout my life by being a light in this dark world. May it never be said of me that I failed to do what I knew to be good, just, and right. Amen.

Aphorism: The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.

***September 10 (Thursday), 2009** { [Matthew 23:23-31](#) } Key: You also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy. (Matthew 23:28) "**Housekeeping Of The Heart**" Bible In One Year: [Proverbs 8-9; 2 Corinthians 3](#)

As a young homemaker, I enjoyed cleaning our house from top to bottom. The trouble was, it never stayed clean for long. Eventually I discovered that if I kept our house reasonably tidy, it appeared to be clean even when it wasn't. Gradually I concentrated more on the appearance of a clean house and neglected thorough cleaning. This compromise was not only convenient, it was convincing. Sometimes even I was fooled. But on sunny days my clean-looking house was revealed for what it was—dusty and dirty.

In Jesus' day, the scribes and Pharisees were hypocrites who concentrated on the appearance of holiness while neglecting their heart-holiness (Matt. 23:25). When the light of Jesus shined on them, He revealed the truth about their outwardly religious life. He didn't say these external acts were necessarily wrong, but they were wrongfully used as a coverup for wickedness. For them, inner housecleaning was long overdue.

Keeping up appearances in our housework isn't wrong, but pretending our hearts are clean is. Only those who are clean on the inside will welcome Jesus with confidence when

He returns. Is your heart ready? Or is heart-cleaning needed? Now is the time to take care of it!

Meditate: Thinking It Over--What is the only way to get a clean heart? (Titus 3:3-6). After we have put our faith in Jesus Christ (John 3:16), how do we keep our heart clean? (1 John 1:9).

Aphorism: At the heart of holiness is holiness of the heart.

***September 11(Friday),2009**{ [Psalm 139:7-16](#)}Key: I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. (Psalm 139:14)“**Flying Backwards**”Bible In One

Year: [Proverbs 10-12; 2 Corinthians 4](#)

I had read that hummingbirds can fly backwards, but the cynic in me doubted it. So when my wife mounted a hummingbird feeder by the kitchen window and filled it with sugar water, I sat down with a cup of coffee to see if it was true.

Before long, hummingbirds began to appear—a ruby-throated male and several females. I soon gave up trying to watch their wings as they flew. All I could see was a blur. I was captivated by the feisty little creatures as they darted up and down, away and back, vying for an open spot at the feeder and chasing one another away.

After a while, only one bird was left—her long, thin beak sucking up the liquid. Then, when she was finished, she flew straight backwards, then up, and finally darted out of sight among the trees.

How did she do it? God knows. Sometime on the fifth day of creation, while He was forming whales, sharks, orioles, and loons, God created the hummingbird with its amazing ability to fly backwards—a miracle of His power.

I didn't need that awesome illustration to prove the existence and brilliance of God. But it did remind me once again that I have every reason to worship God, for I too am “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Ps. 139:14).

Meditate: This is my Father's world—The birds their carols raise;The morning light, the lily white,Declare their Maker's praise.

Aphorism: All creation points to the almighty Creator.

***September 12(Saturday),2009**{ [2 Corinthians 5:1-10](#)}Key: I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. (Philippians 1:23)“**Change Of Address**”Bible In One Year: [Proverbs 13-15; 2 Corinthians 5](#)

A friend remembers :Every 26 years or so, we move to a different house. Actually, Sue and I moved into our first home when our first child was a baby. We had no idea we would live there for 26 years. When we finally did change our residence, it was an emotional time.

On the day we moved, after everything was out of the house, we did one final walk-through to relive the memories. The toughest moment came when we entered Melissa's bedroom. We had said goodbye to her 2 years earlier after a car accident took her earthly life. Now we were bidding adieu to the sunflower-decorated room she loved so much.

As I think of that emotional time when we moved, I am reminded of what a great change of address Melissa enjoyed on the day she was ushered into God's presence. Our move to a different house pales in comparison to the glories our daughter now enjoys in heaven. What

a grand comfort to know that our departed loved ones who have trusted in Jesus are now living in God's majestic kingdom! (2 Cor. 5:1).

Are you ready for that ultimate change of address? No matter where you live on this earth, make sure your final home will be heaven.

Meditate: Someday my Redeemer shall call me to come. And leave all these earth-scenes below; And take me to be with my loved ones at home—I want to be ready to go!

Aphorism: Our heavenly home is our *real* estate.

***September 13(Sunday),2009**{[Psalm 46](#)}Key: God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. (Psalm 46:1)“**Coping While Caring**”Bible In One

Year: [Proverbs 16-18; 2 Corinthians 6](#)

A survey titled “Caregiving in the US” estimates that more than 44 million Americans are unpaid caregivers, and a majority of them currently work or have worked while providing care. The survey also found that God, family, and friends were most often cited as sources of strength by people who are caring for others.

Three-fourths of the respondents said they relied on prayer to deal with the demands of caregiving. “Prayer is the best way to refresh yourself,” said one person. “I find a quiet place and pray and cry and get relief. Then I can go back into the room calm.”

“God is our refuge and strength,” wrote the psalmist, “a very present help in trouble” (Ps. 46:1). Eugene Peterson’s vivid paraphrase says: “God is a safe place to hide, ready to help when we need Him.”

Through prayer, we can step into the calming presence of the Lord and find strength to go on. As we bring our heartaches and needs to God, He meets us where we are and gives us His peace. He is an ever-present help who cares for us in every situation.

Caregiving is a high calling and a difficult task. But there is strength from the Lord to help us as we care for those who need us.

Meditate: I must tell Jesus all of my trials, I cannot bear these burdens alone; In my distress He kindly will help me, He ever loves and cares for His own.

Aphorism: Prayer puts us in touch with God—our greatest caregiver.