

Bible study for this week 9/14/09~9/20/09

***September 14(Monday),2009**{ : [Matthew 6:1-8,16-18](#)}Key: Your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. (Matthew 6:18)“**For His Eyes Only**”Bible In One Year: [Proverbs 19-21; 2 Corinthians 7](#)

Typically, as we age we lose our prominence and our positions of influence. Even those of us who have never sought the limelight seem increasingly to fade into the shadows.

Obscurity and anonymity are good, however, for it is difficult to perform in public without wondering what impression we’re making on others. We fret over the extent that our reputations are being enhanced or damaged. And therein lies our peril: To the degree that we seek human recognition, we forfeit God’s approval. On the other hand, to lose the admiration of men and women may turn us to seek God’s approval only.

Here is a test for our gifts, our prayers, our fasts: Are they done for God’s eyes only? If so, though overlooked and unnoticed by others, we have our Father’s acknowledgment and reward.

Three times Jesus repeated to His disciples: “Your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly” (Matt. 6:4,6,18). This is our assurance as well. Every unobserved gift of time, energy, and love; every petition we whisper in our Father’s ears; every secret, inward struggle against sin and self-indulgence will be fully rewarded in due time. In the end, His “Well done, good and faithful servant” is all that will matter (Matt. 25:21).

Meditate:All service rendered to the Lord.Is sure to gain His rich reward;And if we work with motives pure,Our weakest efforts will endure.

Aphorism:There is no reward from God to those who seek it from men.

***September 15(Tuesday),2009**{ [Acts 12:5-17](#)}Key: Constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church. (Acts 12:5)“**Garden Of Prayer**”Bible In One Year: [Proverbs 22-24; 2 Corinthians 8](#)

When I was a pastor, I often visited residents in rest homes. I’ll never forget one dear elderly lady I met. She was blind and had been bedridden for 7 years, yet she remained sweet and radiant. One day she told me about a dream she had. She was in a beautiful garden, where the grass was a luxuriant carpet beneath her and the fragrance of flowers filled the air.

She dropped to her knees, entranced by the scene. As her thoughts were drawn heavenward, she felt the need to pray for her own pastor, for me, and for others. When she awakened, however, she discovered that she was still in her hospital bed. With a smile she said to me, “You know, Pastor, at first I was a bit disappointed. But in a sense the dream was true. This old bed has been a garden of prayer these 7 years!” Prayer had made her room a holy place of meditation and blessing.

Prayer also made a difference when Peter was in prison (Acts 12). It isn’t always easy to pray, for real intercession takes self-discipline. Many of us lapse into saying fine-sounding words without truly praying. God often drives us to our knees through the press of circumstances, where we are to “seek the Lord and His strength; seek His face evermore” (1 Chron. 16:11).

Meditate: There's a beautiful garden of fellowship sweet, Where our prayers plant the seeds of reward; And if there we will frequently make our retreat, We shall gather rich store from the Lord!

Aphorism: God and prayer go together; to neglect one is to neglect the other.

***September 16 (Wednesday), 2009** { [Genesis 17:4-7,15-19](#) } Key: I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants . . . to be God to you. (Genesis 17:7) **"They"** Bible In One Year: [Proverbs 25-26; 2 Corinthians 9](#)

A self-employed inventor from Branson, Missouri, decided to change his name to "They." He said he did it for fun to address the common reference that people make to "they." He remarked, "People say, 'They do this,' or 'They're to blame for that.' 'They' accomplish such great things. Somebody had to be responsible." When his friends call his home, they ask, "Is They there?" His new name must drive grammarians crazy.

Abram's name was changed, but not on a whim. The Lord changed it. In biblical times, God often changed a person's name to indicate what He was going to do through that person.

Abram's name ("exalted father") was changed to Abraham ("father of many") because God had promised to make him a father of many nations (Gen. 17:5) through whom "all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (12:3).

In fulfillment of God's promise, Jesus came from the line of Abraham and blessed the nations by giving His life for our sins. When we believe in Him, we are blessed and are promised eternal life with Him. God now calls us by new names: "My people" and "sons of the living God" (Rom. 9:25-26). As His people, we can be used by Him to bless others.

Meditate: Bless me, Lord, and make me a blessing; I'll gladly your message convey; Use me to help some poor needy soul, And make me a blessing today.

Aphorism: God gives blessings to us so that we can give blessings to others.

***September 17 (Thursday), 2009** { [Acts 8:1-8](#) } Key: Those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the Word. (Acts 8:4) **"Scattered!"** Bible In One Year: [Proverbs 27-29; 2 Corinthians 10](#)

In August 2005, Hurricane Katrina struck the US Gulf Coast and displaced an estimated 1.3 million households. With cities and towns evacuated, homes destroyed, and jobs gone, people relocated to communities in every state including Alaska and Hawaii. Because Christians are not immune to the storms of life, it's likely that thousands of people who love the Lord found themselves in places they never expected to live.

Yet many of those same people whose hopes and plans were shattered by Katrina would also bring God's love to others across the US. Like the early Christians who were forced out of Jerusalem by persecution, it could be said of them: "Those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the Word" (Acts 8:4).

While none of us would choose this kind of financial loss and disruption, would we see it as an opportunity to share the hope Jesus Christ has given us?

The apostle Peter's letter reminded Christians who had been scattered among the nations to "be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15).

If we are uprooted, we can scatter the seeds of the gospel wherever we go.

Meditate: We're always sowing seeds in life. By everything we do and say, So let's make sure we sow God's Word. Among the ones we meet each day.

Aphorism: There's no wrong place to share the gospel.

***September 18(Friday),2009**{ [Matthew 6:19-21](#) }Key: Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:21)“**Treasure In Heaven**”Bible In One Year: [Proverbs 30-31; 2 Corinthians 11:1-15](#)

On a teaching trip to Togo, West Africa, I noticed hundreds of abandoned buildings that were only partially built. I asked my missionary host why so many structures were incomplete. His response was striking.

Apparently, Togolese law allows an injured party to demand payment from the available cash of family members of the person who injured them. Even distant relatives are not exempt. To prevent their cash savings from being attached to a legal action, people will purchase land instead. Slowly, sometimes over decades, they will build a house on it with any extra cash. The hundreds of unfinished buildings were testimony to how easy it is to lose one's material possessions.

This was certainly part of the reason our Lord taught, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal” (Matt. 6:19). Treasure that is of this world is vulnerable to being lost, stolen, destroyed, or devalued. If that is our focus, we will only experience frustration.

If our hearts are drawn instead to the value of the eternal—godly character, relationships, souls—we won't be disappointed. We will become rich in the things of Christ. And treasure in heaven can never be taken away!

Meditate: I do not ask for treasures here. To hoard, decay, and rust, But for the better things of life—Humility and trust.

Aphorism: Treasures in heaven are laid up as treasures on earth are laid down.

***September 19(Saturday),2009**{ [Psalm 90](#) }Key: I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. (John 14:3)“**Immortality Breakthrough**”Bible In One Year: [Ecclesiastes 1-3; 2 Corinthians 11:16-33](#)

Ray Kurzweil is a remarkable scientist and inventor. In a book he coauthored, titled *Fantastic Voyage: Live Long Enough To Live Forever*, he contends that science and technology hold the key to immortality. Kurzweil lives on a strict diet enhanced with a regimen of supplements, fully convinced that he will be alive when the immortality breakthrough happens. He is not a crackpot but a respected member of the business community.

In contrast to this optimism about what science can do stands the realism of Moses. “The days of our lives are seventy years; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years, yet their boast is only labor and sorrow” (Ps. 90:10). At best we live a few decades, and then we are gone like grass in the park.

Far better to trust ourselves to Jesus, who promises to join us to the timeless life of God. He told His disciples, “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:3).

Christ's followers live in the assurance that when the sun has burned its last and the stars have tumbled from the sky, we shall be alive. We anticipate a life greater than

anything we could imagine in our wildest dreams.

Meditate: For Further Study. Are you unsure about God's promise of heaven to those whose sins are forgiven?

Aphorism: This life is but the childhood of our immortality.

***September 20(Sunday),2009**{[2 Corinthians 1:7-11](#)}Key: As you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation. (2 Corinthians 1:7)“**Turning Pain Into Praise**”Bible In One Year: [Ecclesiastes 4-6; 2 Corinthians 12](#)

After years of a remarkable and fruitful ministry in India, Amy Carmichael became a bedridden sufferer. As the courageous founder and dynamic heart of the Dohnavur Fellowship, she had been instrumental in rescuing hundreds of girls and boys from a terrible life of sexual servitude.

While she carried on her rescue operation of bringing young people into spiritual freedom through faith in Jesus Christ, she wrote books and poems that are still blessing readers around the world.

Then arthritis made Amy a pain-wracked invalid. Did she bemoan her affliction or question God? No. Amy was still the guiding inspiration of Dohnavur, and she still kept on writing. Her meditations, letters, and poems are filled with praise to God and encouragement to her fellow pilgrims.

When affliction strikes us, how do we react? Are we embittered, or do we trustfully appropriate God's sustaining grace? (2 Cor. 12:9). And do we prayerfully encourage those around us by our Spirit-enabled cheerfulness, our courage, and our confidence in God?

When we rely on the Lord, He will help us turn pain into praise.

Meditate: Can God trust you with sorrow, With anguish, and with pain, Or would your faith soon falter. And faint beneath the strain?

Aphorism: Praise is the song of a soul set free.