

Bible study for this week 9/28/09~10/04/09

***September 28(Monday),2009**{ [Romans 7:14-25](#) }Key: Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us. (Hebrews 12:1)“**The Power Of Sin**”Bible In One Year: [Isaiah 5-6; Ephesians 1](#)

I was having lunch with a pastor-friend when the discussion sadly turned to a mutual friend in ministry who had failed morally. As we grieved together over this fallen comrade, now out of ministry, I wondered aloud, “I know anyone can be tempted and anyone can stumble, but he’s a smart guy. How could he think he could get away with it?” Without blinking, my friend responded, “Sin makes us stupid.” It was an abrupt statement intended to get my attention, and it worked.

I have often thought of that statement in the ensuing years, and I continue to affirm the wisdom of those words. How else can you explain the actions of King David, the man after God’s own heart turned adulterer and murderer? Or the reckless choices of Samson? Or the public denials of Christ by Peter, the most public of Jesus’ disciples? We are flawed people who are vulnerable to temptation and to the foolishness of mind that can rationalize and justify almost any course of action if we try hard enough.

If we are to have a measure of victory over the power of sin, it will come only as we lean on the strength and wisdom of Christ (Rom. 7:24-25). As His grace strengthens our hearts and minds, we can overcome our own worst inclination to make foolish choices.

Meditate:The price of sin is very high.Though now it may seem low;And if we let it go unchecked,Its crippling power will grow.

Aphorism:God’s Spirit is your power source—don’t let sin break the connection.

***September 29(Tuesday),2009**{ [Ephesians 2:11-18](#) }Key: [Christ] has broken down the middle wall of separation. (Ephesians 2:14)“**Hadrian’s Wall**”Bible In One Year: [Isaiah 7-8; Ephesians 2](#)

When Julius Caesar invaded the south coast of Britain in 55 BC, he met resistance from warring Celtic tribes. But a century later, Roman control had extended all the way north into what is now Scotland.

The conquest took 30,000 Celtic lives, but the Roman victory was short-lived. Surviving clansmen soon began a fierce guerrilla campaign against their occupiers. So in AD 122, Emperor Hadrian ordered a wall constructed to separate the Romans from the barbarians to the north. Hadrian’s Wall stands to this day.

In Jesus’ day, a barrier stronger than Hadrian’s Wall stood between God’s people and the Gentiles who were outside their spiritual community. It was the barrier of ethnic prejudice. God’s design was to bless all the families of the earth through Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3; Isa. 51:2). But instead of being a witness to the nations, Israel nurtured prejudice against the Gentiles.

Prejudice and racism remain with us today, even in the church. Such attitudes do damage to our witness of Christ’s love for all people. Jesus laid down His life to redeem people from every tribe and nation. We must not only accept them, we must love them as our brothers and sisters in Christ (Gal. 3:28-29; Rev. 5:9).

Meditate: Are you willing to take the first step to understand fellow believers who are different from you? How can you befriend believers from other cultures?

Aphorism: Christ's love creates unity out of diversity.

***September 30 (Wednesday), 2009** { [1 Thessalonians 4:13-18](#) } Key: We shall always be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4:17) "**From Here To Eternity**" Bible In One Year: [Isaiah 9-10; Ephesians 3](#)

According to a report in an online journal (disputed by other studies), if one 45-year-old man exercises regularly through the rest of his life and another guy the same age exists as a couch potato, the exercising man will live only 10 months longer.

It's good to take care of our bodies and it makes sense to exercise if we're able. But the idea of working hard to extend our lives looks futile when compared with "the ultimate life-extension plan." According to the Bible, you can extend your life from here to eternity.

Look at what the apostle Paul told the people at Thessalonica. Trying to encourage them about Jesus' return, he wrote, "We who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:17). Astounding! Those who make that quick exit will never die. And even if Jesus does not return while you are alive, if you know Him as Savior you will never die spiritually. You have "everlasting life."

Are you interested in extending your life? Go ahead and exercise. But don't forget that the ultimate life-extension plan is salvation through Jesus—your guarantee of living forever.

Meditate: Do you have questions about what it means to trust in Jesus for eternal life?

Aphorism: Give your life to Christ and you'll keep it forever.

***October 01 (Thursday), 2009** { [Ephesians 4:11~16](#) } Key: Jesus increased in wisdom and stature. (Luke 2:52) "Measure Me" Bible In One Year: [Isaiah 11~13; Ephesians 4](#)

"Can you measure me today?" Caleb, our paperboy, asked.

It was not the first time he had made that request. A few years ago I had mentioned to him how tall he was getting. Since then, we've often measured his height on the siding of our house. After all this time, he still wants me to measure him.

Measurements can be indicators of growth. And it's a good idea to measure our spiritual growth. For instance: Do I spend time reading God's Word and talking with Him each day? Do I look forward to fellowshiping with the Lord? What "fruit of the Spirit" is apparent in my life? Do I talk about Jesus with people who don't know Him? How am I using my spiritual gift or gifts? Do I have a generous and giving spirit? How much better do I know God today than I did a year ago? These questions are good indicators of spiritual growth.

A child seems to grow up all of a sudden, but it's actually a continual process. Just as Jesus grew in both wisdom and stature, we as believers are to continue to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). We are no longer to be children, but to "grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ" (Eph. 4:14~15). Have you measured yourself lately?

Meditate: The child of God who reads the Word and heeds the messages he's heard will grow in grace from day to day and share with others on life's way.

Aphorism: Salvation is the miracle of a moment; growth is the labor of a lifetime.
*October02(Friday),2009{[John 16:1~14](#)}Key: When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth.(John 16:13)“Guided Tour”Bible In One Year: [Isaiah 14~16; Ephesians 5:1~16](#)

A person who says shares :While in London, I took my first sightseeing tour in an open-top double-deck bus. During the fascinating 2~hour ride, the commentary pointed out famous landmarks and the city’s history. I was amazed to see things I had walked past without noticing before, and to hear stories that shed new light on people from Lord Horatio Nelson to William Shakespeare. The chosen route and clear view gave me a new perspective of the city.

The experience reminded me that there is something new to learn in every setting, especially when we have a guide. Years ago a friend encouraged me to read the entire Bible through every year. Each time I’ve done it, the Spirit has shown me new things in familiar passages.

Jesus said of the Spirit of truth: “He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you” (John 16:13~14).

It’s exciting to anticipate what we will learn from the Bible every day. As we read each page, the Holy Spirit longs to show us something new to meet our needs. Expect an enlightening guided tour.

Meditate: For Further Study If you’re wanting to learn more about the work of the Holy Spirit in your life, read “The Promise Of The Spirit”.

Aphorism:With God’s Word as your map and His Spirit as your compass, you’re sure to stay on course.

*October03(Saturday),2009{[Ephesians 4:1~3](#)}Key: [Walk] with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love.(Ephesians 4:2)“Sports & Humility”Bible In One Year: [Isaiah 17~19; Ephesians 5:17~33](#)

A person who says shares :On May 2, 2003, my daughter Melissa’s high school paid her a great honor by dedicating its new athletic field in her memory. At the ceremony to mark the opening of the Melissa Branon Memorial Softball Field, the school unveiled a stone marker to remind future generations of the girl who wore number 11.

On that marker is etched: “Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love” (Eph. 4:2 NIV)—a verse Melissa had marked in her Bible.

So often in life, the words *humble* and *gentle* don’t seem to belong. Instead, the words *pride* and *harshness* mark the way success is measured. Yet Melissa and her friends were able to compete successfully in high school athletics without displaying either of those characteristics.

One of Melissa’s teammates wrote of her: “The way you never backed down, always kept going, and never gave up totally inspired me.” That’s how she and her teammates played for God’s glory—without arrogance.

Competition, handled properly, can have its place in our lives. But we should always remember to be humble and gentle in everything we do. We must reflect the characteristics of a Christlike life.

Meditate: True greatness does not come to those Who strive for worldly fame; It lies instead with those who choose To serve in Jesus’ name.

Aphorism: Be humble and you will not stumble.

***October04(Sunday),2009**{[Luke 19:37~44](#)}Key: Oh, that . . . my eyes [were] a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!

(Jeremiah 9:1) “The Heart Of Christ” Bible In One Year: [Isaiah 20~22; Ephesians 6](#)

I was filling out an online survey when I came to this question: “What is something that is true about you that most people would not guess?” The answer is that I am very sentimental. I get choked up at the movies when the violins start to swell, eyes fill with tears, and the boy finds his long-lost dog—or something comparable. I’m just a softie when it comes to those things.

It’s easy and safe to get emotional over fictional characters and events. But it’s a different matter to feel deep sadness and grief over real people and their needs. Heartache for the wayward, the suffering, the lost, and the broken tends to mirror the heart and compassion of Jesus, who wept over wayward Jerusalem (Luke 19:41).

When Jeremiah’s people were drifting far from God and His love, he also felt the need to weep. He sensed the burden of God’s heart and the brokenness of his people. Weeping seemed the only appropriate response (Jer. 9:1).

As we see the condition of the fallen world and the lostness of the people who surround us, let’s ask God to give us a heart that mirrors the heart of Christ—a heart that weeps with Him for a lost world and then reaches out to them in love.

Meditate: Teach me to love, this is my prayer— May the compassion of Thy heart I share; Ready a cup of water to give, May I unselfishly for others live.

Aphorism: True compassion is love in action.