

Bible study for this week 10/19/09~10/25/09

***October 19 (Monday), 2009** {[Romans 16:1~16](#)} Key: I commend to you Phoebe, . . . for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also. (Romans 16:1~2) "A Gratitude Visit" Bible In One Year: [Isaiah 56~58; 2 Thessalonians 2](#)

Counting your blessings promotes good physical health, according to a study by some US doctors. Volunteers who kept weekly gratitude journals reported fewer aches and pains than those who recorded daily hassles or neutral events.

A "gratitude visit" was developed by Dr. Martin E. P. Seligman to promote strong emotional health. He tells people to think of someone who has made an important difference in their lives. He asks them to write the story of how that person has helped them, and then to visit that person and read the story aloud. Tests show that a year later the people who had done so were happier and reported fewer episodes of depression. Even more important, think of what it must have done for those who were thanked!

The apostle Paul had a long list of people who had helped him and for whom he was grateful (Rom. 16:1~16). He wrote that Phoebe had "been a helper," Priscilla and Aquila had "risked their own necks" for his life, and Mary had "labored much" for him. And he took time to write his thanks in a letter to the church at Rome.

Who has helped to shape your life? Could you make a gratitude visit—for their sake, and for yours?

Meditate: Consider what the Lord has done Through those who've shown you love; Then thank them for their faithful deeds, For blessings from above.

Aphorism: Gratitude should not be an occasional incident but a continuous attitude.

***October 20 (Tuesday), 2009** {[Isaiah 26:1~4](#)} Key: You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. (Isaiah 26:3) "Peace In The Storm" Bible In One Year: [Isaiah 59~61; 2 Thessalonians 3](#)

Life can seem unbearable at times. Physical pain, difficult decisions, financial hardships, the death of a loved one, or shattered dreams threaten to engulf us. We become fearful and perplexed. Plagued by doubts, we may even find it difficult to pray.

Those of us who know the Lord through personal faith in Christ have in Him a calm retreat in the storms of life, even while the howling winds of trial are sweeping over us. We can experience peace of mind and calmness of spirit.

Richard Fuller, a 19th-century minister, told of an old seaman who said, "In fierce storms, we must put the ship in a certain position and keep her there." Said Fuller, "This, Christian, is what you must do. . . . You must put your soul in one position and keep it there. You must stay upon the Lord; and, come what may—winds, waves, cross seas, thunder, lightning, frowning rocks, roaring breakers—no matter what, you must hold fast your confidence in God's faithfulness and His everlasting love in Christ Jesus."

Do you feel overwhelmed by your troubles? Learn a lesson from that old sailor. Fix your mind on the Lord. Ask for His help. Then trust Him to give you peace in your storm (Phil. 4:6~7).

Meditate: Stayed upon Jehovah, Hearts are fully blest— Finding, as He promised, Perfect peace and rest.

Aphorism: The secret of peace is to give every anxious care to God.

***October 21 (Wednesday), 2009** {[Acts 24:10~16](#)} Key: I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men. (Acts 24:16) "Adjust Your Conscience" Bible In One Year: [Isaiah 62~64; 1 Timothy 1](#)

Built into our nature is an internal judicial system, the conscience, that commends us when we do right and condemns us when we do wrong. But this vital monitor of morality does not say the same thing to everyone. In some cultures vengeful killing is seen as honorable. In others, a person is still considered good even when he betrays a friend.

A story from *The Philadelphia Inquirer* illustrates this problem. A 12-year-old boy was caught stealing a watch. He told police that previously he had shoplifted a gift for his mother, and he felt he had to do the same for his dad. Although troubled about slighting his father, he had no qualms about stealing.

Because of sin, conscience is unreliable and needs a continual adjustment. This begins with a right relationship to God through faith in Jesus Christ. He paid sin's penalty, and now our hearts are "sprinkled from an evil conscience" (Heb. 10:22). But this does not make conscience obsolete. As we study the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit puts our inner monitor on a frequency that brings us in tune with the words, deeds, and attitudes of the Lord Jesus.

"Let your conscience be your guide" is valid only if God's Word is guiding your conscience.

Meditate: There is a treasure you can own That's greater than a crown or throne: A conscience good with which to live, That only God Himself can give.

Aphorism: Conscience is like a sundial: when the truth of God shines on it, it points in the right direction.

***October 22 (Thursday), 2009** { [John 19:25~30](#) } Key: When Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" (John 19:30) "Done!" Bible In One Year: [Isaiah 65~66; 1 Timothy 2](#)

So many of our hopes and dreams remain unfulfilled. Composer Franz Schubert departed this world leaving behind his "Unfinished Symphony." Similarly, prolific author Charles Dickens was unable to fully develop the plot of his novel *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*.

We too undoubtedly have aspirations that we will be unable to fulfill. But what a blessing to know that the work of our redemption was totally and perfectly accomplished by Jesus on the cross.

The last words of Jesus, "It is finished," are actually a single word in the original language (John 19:30). But that word holds oceans of meaning. What Jesus gasped was "Completed!" or "Ended!" That cry from the cross announced that not only had His suffering come to an end but also His redemptive work was eternally accomplished. All that He had come to achieve in His human life was finished. Done!

We can do nothing to add to His sacrifice. Christ's self-giving death was all-sufficient. We stretch out the empty hand of faith, and God in grace puts into it the gift of eternal life.

Have you stretched out your hand of faith to receive this gift?

Meditate: "It is finished," Jesus cried, Then on Calvary's cross He died; Christ the Lord atonement made, And sin's debt was fully paid.

Aphorism: Christ's sacrifice was what God desired and what our sin required.

***October 23 (Friday), 2009** { [1 Peter 1:3~9](#) } Key: In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials. (1 Peter 1:6) "Temporary" Bible In One Year: [Jeremiah 1~2; 1 Timothy 3](#) . . .

Some things we accomplish in life require intense commitment for a short time—and the result has lifelong value.

Think, for instance, of people who earn a doctorate in their chosen field. Those diligent people set aside other goals and dedicate their time, money, skills, and hard work for a period of time so they can achieve something that in 50 years will still be attached to their names. Temporary intense effort results in a lifetime of honor.

In 1 Peter, the apostle described an exchange of tough times for good results. In this case, Peter was not talking about formal education, though we could call it the school of hard knocks. He was writing about the temporary tough times that come into our lives even though we haven't chosen them, and he indicated that they can have lasting benefit. We rejoice during our trials, not for the trial itself but for the coming glory and honor, which is permanent.

Tough times can bring pain and sadness—and they don't seem to promise any good news at all. But Peter told us to “greatly rejoice” in them (1:6~7). He wanted us to look ahead to the forever joy that is promised—a joy that will help us understand the temporary tough times.

Meditate: Be this the purpose of my soul, My solemn, my determined choice: To yield to God's supreme control, And in my every trial rejoice.

Aphorism: We can endure this life's trials because of the next life's joys.

***October 24 (Saturday), 2009** { [1 Timothy 4:12~16](#) } Key: Be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. (1 Timothy 4:12) “Be An Example” Bible In One Year: [Jeremiah 3~5; 1 Timothy 4](#)

A high school senior honored as one of the “Best & Brightest” in our community has provided a forceful demonstration of integrity. When his school team was given the word *auditorium* in a regional spelling bee, Brady Davis glanced down to ponder his response and noticed that the word was printed on the microphone stand. He called this to the attention of the judges who responded with a more difficult word. Brady did what he knew was right whether others noticed or not.

We don't know when our actions might become an example to others. But if we live each day to honor Jesus, our behavior will model His righteousness, no matter who is watching.

Idealism and enthusiasm are often best expressed by the young. But uprightness and honor should be goals for Christians of every age. Paul told his young protégé Timothy: “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12).

Brady Davis says his goal in life is to change the world around him while never compromising himself. We would do well to join him in that pursuit of life, integrity, and exemplary behavior.

Meditate: I would be true, for there are those who trust me; I would be pure, for there are those who care. I would be strong, for there is much to suffer; I would be brave, for there is much to dare.

Aphorism: A good example always makes a good sermon.

***October 25 (Sunday), 2009** { [Philippians 3:7~16](#) } Key: Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on. (Philippians 3:12) “Hurry Sickness” Bible In One Year: [Jeremiah 6~8; 1 Timothy 5](#)

Hurry up!” “We're late!” “You're too slow!” How often do impatient words crop up in our speech, revealing our fast-paced life? If we're not careful, we become people living in the fast lane, demanding quick arrivals and instant results. Stress experts call this “hurry sickness.”

In Philippians 3, the apostle Paul's testimony of lifelong growth reminds us that Christian maturity can be encouraged but not hurried. In his book *Overcomers Through the Cross*, Paul Billheimer says that just as God takes time to make an oak tree, He takes time to make a saint. Christian growth is a life-long process.

Billheimer writes, "An unripe apple is not fit to eat, but we should not therefore condemn it. It is not yet ready for eating because God is not done making it. It is a phase of its career and good in its place."

Are you feeling impatient over your spiritual growth? Remember, God is not finished with you—nor does He expect to be until He calls you home. Make sure that your goal is to know Christ and to become more like Him. Then slowly but surely, under blue skies and stormy, He will bring you to maturity. It's His sure cure for "hurry sickness."

Meditate: O God, make me one of those rarest souls Who willingly wait for Thy time;
My impatient will must be lost in Thine own, And Thy will forever be mine.

Aphorism: There are no shortcuts to spiritual maturity.