

Devotional Cover Page

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“With joy shall I draw water from the well of salvation.” Isaiah 12:3

I heard John Maxwell say, *“The greatest day in a man’s life is the day he was born. The second greatest day in a man’s life is the day he finds out why.”* You are no accident my friend. God created you on purpose, with purpose and for a purpose. A God-designed destiny to impact the world in which we live. The greatest adventure we will ever live is the journey of following Jesus and discovering why He put us here. It is that great adventure that has brought us here to The Well.

The first step on this grand adventure happens when a person makes a decision to become a “follower of Christ.” For example, in Mark 1:17 Jesus is walking by the side of a sea and sees Peter in a boat and says to him - “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” There are 2 parts to this powerful statement - the first is simple “follow Me,” Jesus said. Every person alive at some point will have that same opportunity. To follow Jesus is to first decide that He alone is Lord of every facet of our life. It is to put our full faith and trust that what the Bible says about Jesus and the way in which I should live is absolute truth. It is a great journey into a personal relationship with this amazing God who created the world, everything and everyone in it. When I commit myself to this process I discover the latter half of the statement where Jesus said - “follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Following Him is the key to discovering purpose and fulfilling our God-given destiny.

Anyone who sets out on a grand adventure, must take stock of the necessary supplies and tools we need in order to succeed in our endeavor. According to the Bible, there are really about 5 things we need:

1. Make a quality decision, to be a life-long follower of Jesus Christ.
2. Develop a daily study of the Word of God.
3. Discover and develop a solid prayer life.
4. Become an active part of the Body of Christ.
5. Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit

The Well is simply a structure, a set of plans, to assist people who are hungry to grow in their personal relationship with Jesus and successfully fulfill this grand adventure. Each month we will look at a different theme and take us deeper into our understanding of the Scripture and how to apply Biblical principles to our daily lives. Thank you for joining us on this adventure of learning to draw the water of life, from the well of salvation.

Drawing water from - The Well

Different parts of this discipleship tool.

Exercising my Faith this month

- Each month I encourage you to have a faith goal. What are you believing God to do in your life? As you work through this early in the month. Learn to grab a hold of the promises of God by faith and join together with God to see His will fully accomplished in every area of your life. *(Example on p. 6)*

Weekly: Each Week there are 4 sections:

- **The Well - Daily Devotional thought written by multiple authors from The Father's House.**
 - Each day we will be looking at a small passage of Scripture and drawing truths up from the Word of God that will inspire the manner in which we live. Each month will have a theme we will be pursuing. Each day ends with a prompting for each reader to "put the Word to work." Remember it's not about how much we simply read, but how much of the Word we apply to our daily life that really matters.
- **Weekly Bible Reading Guide** (4 different options to choose from) *(See Page 9)*
 - Daily reading and study of the Scripture is essential for spiritual health. Here we provide 4 possible reading guides.
 - Option 1 - Follow this plan to read the entire Bible once in three years.
 - Option 2 - Follow this plan to read the entire Bible once per year.
 - Option 3 - Follow this plan to read the entire Bible once per 3 months.
 - Option 4 - Follow this plan to read the New Testament once per month.
- **Weekly Prayer notes**
 - Recording prayer notes is essential both for remembering what the Holy Spirit is speaking and evaluating what we hear based upon the Word of God. It is also encouraging to look back and see how God has been moving in the areas of life we have been praying about. We encourage you to bring this with you to your prayer time and prayer meetings. Regularly visit and revisit your prayer notes sections and write down what God is doing in and through prayer in your life. *(example, see page 7)*
- **Sermon Notes**
 - Often in services there are many great things said that I want to remember. I have discovered what science has already proven to be correct - if I listen and write down thoughts my retention doubles. Included are pages for sermon notes available to be used for each Wednesday and Sunday of the month. *(Example see page 8)*

In addition, we encourage you to join one of our Growth Groups. Inside these groups of up to 5, people will connect and share insights we are learning and growing in. I highly encourage you to get connected and join one of these groups.

(Example) Exercising my Faith this Month

Hebrews 11:1-2, 6 - Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.... 6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Q: What are 1 or 2 things you are believing God to do in your life this month?

1. I am believing God that He will surround me with His peace in the middle of a troubling time in the world.

2. I am believing God will heal my mother and renew her strength and vitality.

Q: Are there any Scriptures that directly deal with these?

Isaiah 26:3 ~ You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. John 14:27 ~ Peace I leave

with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

Colossians 3:15 ~ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.

Philippians 4:6-7 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ

Jesus.

Peter 2:24 that 'By Your stripes, I was healed.' Psalm 103:3 - You have 'healed me from every disease.' In Matthew 15:26 that 'healing is the children's bread'

Everyday, we take the Word of God that deals directly with situations we face, and lift up the promises in His Word that deal directly with these situations. We both remind ourselves that God has spoken and secondly, we take that promise and lift it up in prayer.

Part of my daily prayer: *God You said, You will keep me in perfect peace when I bind You to my mind. I choose today to intentionally think about You and trust that You will keep me in perfect peace. You promised your peace you would give me, that it would remain with me. I choose to let your peace rule in my heart, I refuse to be anxious, but come to You with my prayers and needs with thanksgiving present my requests unto You, and in return I today receive Your supernatural peace.*

"God You said in Your Word - I Peter 2:24 that 'By Your stripes, we were healed.' That according to Psalm 103 - You have 'healed us from every disease.' In Matthew 15:26 that 'healing is the children's bread' and since my mother is a child of God, I thank you that healing is hers, I ask you to heal, and renew her strength this day and exercise my faith believing that you will in Jesus' name."

Specific things I am praying about for my family. - <i>Daily for God's protection over my wife and children - (Psalm 91 and Isaiah 54:17)</i> - <i>Daily to hear and know God's voice, to be led by His Spirit in all that I say and do. (John 10 and Romans 8)</i> - <i>To walk in His supernatural provision and wisdom, to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge (Philippians 4, Ephesians 1 and 3).</i>	Specific things I am praying about for people in my church. - <i>That God would grant wisdom, protection and provision to our leaders.</i> - <i>Every week, I ask for people to come know and follow Christ, to encounter God's presence and to experience His goodness in every service.</i> - <i>That God would bring every person He has called to be a part of The Father's House here.</i> - <i>That God would heal and deliver those who are in need.</i> - <i>_____, the person who was in my row that told me of his desire to see his son come back to the Lord, I am praying for his son by name all week, that God would send someone across His path to lead Him back to Jesus.</i>
Things I sensed from the Holy Spirit while I was praying this week: - <i>When I asked God if there was anything He wanted to say to me today, I heard Him simply say - "You are my son, and I love you."</i> - <i>I was talking to the Lord, and felt like He reminded me this morning of the story in the gospels when He came walking on the water, and said to Peter, "come out here with me." I felt like He was letting me know, sometimes when He leads it will be in areas I have never gone before, and didn't know I could - such as walking on water.</i>	People I am praying for their salvation. - <i>Benjamin</i> - <i>Paul</i> - <i>Keith</i> - <i>Joel</i> - <i>Jordan</i>

Series (if applicable):

Scripture(s)	Things I want to remember	Things I want to study further
Genesis 17:21	- God has more in store for me than I have yet discovered - If Abraham laughed when he first heard the promise of God, and could still find God's favor and believe, then I realize I'm not alone, when sometimes I find it almost "too good to be true."	
2 Peter 1:5 - 11	- If I "add" these 7 areas to my faith in God - there is unstoppable fruit that will come in my life. - I can lead someone to Jesus - I can bear the fruit of the Spirit - I can discover and develop the call of God on my life - I can be fully assured of my salvation - I can live without stumbling	- What is Virtue? - What is knowledge referring to? - I think I understand self-control - Are perseverance and patience the same word here? - What is meant here by Godliness - What's the difference between brotherly love and love in 2 Peter 1:7

Versions of the Bible

There have been many arguments over the centuries about which version of the Bible is the best. Truth be told, I have many versions of the Bible and enjoy reading and studying most. The default version for this study will be the New King James Version (NKJV) of the Bible. If a contributing author uses a different version it will be labeled as such. Other common versions of the Bible quoted from in The Well include, but are not limited to:

The Amplified Bible (AMP)
New International Version (NIV)
The Passion Translation (TPT)
Young's Literal Translation (YLT)

King James Version (KJV)
The Message Translation (MSG)
The New Living Translation (NLT)

Often people will ask, why is the language so much different from one version of the Bible to the next. Very important question. There are two basic distinctions to pay attention to as you are reading the Bible - is the version you are reading a "paraphrase" or is it a literal translation from original language into our language? The goal of a literal translation approach is to have a word-for-word literal translation from the original manuscripts into our modern day language. The goal of a paraphrase is to capture the idea as communicated in the original language and attempt to use modern language to communicate that same idea. For example when we look at the famous John 3:16

(NKJV) - ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

(AMP) - ¹⁶ "For God so [greatly] loved and dearly prized the world, that He [even] gave His [One and] only begotten Son, so that whoever believes and trusts in Him [as Savior] shall not perish, but have eternal life.

(YLT) - ¹⁶ for God did so love the world, that His Son -- the only begotten -- He gave, that every one who is believing in him may not perish, but may have life age-

(MSG) - ¹⁶ This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life.

You can quickly see the different approaches in these versions of Bible translation. Some are focused on a direct word for word translation regardless of the difficulty in reading in current language. On the other end of the spectrum authors focus on taking the concept and making it easy to read in our current language.

I am not one that will mandate a single-specific version of the Bible. However, three things I would look to avoid in study of the Bible: 1) Any translation that eliminates the deity of Christ. 2) Some "woke" versions of the Bible being made, for example the "gender neutral" Bible. 3) If an author has attempted to "water" down absolute truths included in Scripture I pay no attention to those versions.

There are many websites that provide access to these translations and more such as biblegateway.com providing free easy access to those who want to compare various translations and paraphrases of the Bible.

Bible Reading Plan September

	3 year (2)	Once/year	Once Quarterly	New Testament in a month
1	Ezekiel 1	Daniel 9-10	Ezekiel 35 - 45	Matt. 1-3; Rom. 1-4; Act 1; Rev. 1
2	Ezekiel 2	Daniel 11-12	Ezekiel 46 - Daniel 7	Matt. 4-6; Rom. 5-8; Acts 2; Rev. 2
3	Ezekiel 3	Ezra 1-3	Daniel 8 - Hosea	Matt 7-9; Rom. 9-12; Acts 3; Rev. 3
4	Ezekiel 4	Ezra 4-7	Joel, Amos, Obadiah	Matt. 10-12; Rom. 13-16; Acts 4; Rev. 5
5	Ezekiel 5	Ezra 8-10	Jonah, Micah, Nahum	Mat. 13-15; I Cor. 1-4; Acts 5; Rev. 5
6	Ezekiel 6	Nehemiah 1-3	Habakkuk & Zephaniah	Matt. 16-18; I Cor. 5-8; Acts 6; Rev. 6
7	Ezekiel 7	Nehemiah 4-6	Haggai, Zechariah	Matt. 19-21; I Cor. 9-12; Acts 7; Rev. 7
8	Ezekiel 8	Nehemiah 7	Malachi - Matt 4	Mat. 22-24; 1 Cor. 13-16; Acts 8; Rev. 8
9	Ezekiel 9	Nehemiah 8-9	Matthew 5 - 13	Matt. 25-28; 2 Cor. 1-4; Acts 9; Rev. 9
10	Ezekiel 10	Nehemiah 10-11	Matthew 14 - 22	Luke 1-2; 2 Cor. 5-8; Acts 10; Rev. 10
11	Ezekiel 11	Nehemiah 12-13	Matthew 23 - Mark 5	Luke 3-4; 2 Cor. 9-13; Acts 11; Rev. 11
12	Ezekiel 12	I Chron. 1-2	Mark 6 - 16	Luke 5-7; Gal. 1-3; Acts 12; Rev. 12
13	Ezekiel 13	I Chron. 3-5	Luke 1 - 9	Luke 8-10; Gal. 4-6; Acts 13; Rev. 13
14	Ezekiel 14	I Chron. 6	Luke 10 - John 4	Luke 11-13; Eph. 1-3; Acts 14; Rev. 14
15	Ezekiel 15	I Chron. 7-8	John 5 - 14	Luke 14-16; Eph. 4-6; Acts 15; Rev. 15
16	Ezekiel 16	I Chron. 9-10	John 15 - Acts 5	Luke 17-19; Phil. 1-4; Acts 16; Rev. 16
17	Ezekiel 17	I Chron. 11-12	Acts 6 - 16	Luke 20-22; Col. 1-4; Acts 17; Rev. 17
18	Ezekiel 18	I Chron. 13-15	Acts 17 - Acts 28	Luke 23-24; I Thess. 1-5; Acts 18; Rev. 18
19	Ezekiel 19	I Chron. 16-17	Romans 1-14	Mark. 1-3; 2 Thess. 1-3; Acts 19; Rev. 19
20	Ezekiel 20	I Chron. 18-20	Rom.15 - 1st Corinthians 10	Mark 4-6; I Tim. 1-6; Acts 20; Rev. 20
21	Ezekiel 21	I Chron. 21-23	1 Cor 11 - 2 Corinthians 8	Mark 7-9; 2 Tim. 1-4; Acts 21; Rev. 21
22	Ezekiel 22	I Chron. 24-25	2 Corinthians 9-13 & Galatians	Mark 10-12; Titus. 1-3; Philemon 1; Acts 22; Rev. 22
23	Ezekiel 23	I Chron. 26-27	Ephesians & Philippians	Mark 13-16; Hebrews 1-4; Acts 23
24	Ezekiel 24	I Chron. 28-29	Colossians, 1st & 2nd Thess.	John 1-3; Hebrews 5-8; Acts 24
25	Ezekiel 25	2 Chron. 1-4	Books of 1st & 2nd Tim, Titus	John 4-5; Hebrews 9-13; Acts 25
26	Ezekiel 26	2 Chron. 5-7	Books Philemon - Hebrews 8	John 6-7; James 1-5; Acts 26
27	Ezekiel 27	2 Chron. 8-10	Heb. 8 - 13 & Book of James	John 8-9; I Peter 1-5; Acts 27
28	Ezekiel 28	2 Chron. 11-14	1st & 2nd Peter; 1st John	John 10-12; 2 Peter 1-3; Acts 28
29	Ezekiel 29	2 Chron. 15-18	2nd, 3rd John, Jude & Rev. 1-5	John 13-16; I John 1-5
30	Ezekiel 30	2 Chron. 19-21	Revelation 6-22	John 17-21; Books of 2nd & 3rd John & Jude

Exercising my Faith this Month

Hebrews 11:1-2, 6 - **Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.... 6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.**

Q: What are 1 or 2 things you are believing in God to do in your life this month?

Q: Are there any Scriptures that directly deal with these things you are believing in God for?

Everyday, we take the Word of God that deals directly with situations we face, and lift up the promises in His Word that deal directly with these situations. We both remind ourselves that God has spoken and secondly, we take that promise and lift it up in prayer.

Example: "God You said in Your Word - I Peter 2:24 that 'By Your stripes, I was healed.' That in Psalm 103 - You have 'healed me from every disease.' In Matthew 15:26 that 'healing is the children's bread' and since I am a child of God, I thank you and receive healing in Jesus' name."

Week One

Week One Prayer Notes

Specific things I am praying about for my family.

Specific things I am praying about for people in my church.

Things I sense from the Holy Spirit while I pray.

People I am praying for their salvation.

September 1

When it's time to pray.

Today's Bible Reading: - Daniel 9 - 10 and amplified

Daniel 9:18b-19, "...for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies. ¹⁹ O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name."

Daniel is one of my favorite books in the Bible. In it we have a description of the final plan that God has for this earth. We find out what will happen to Israel, and even some of the information about the Church and how it fits into the final scheme of things. However, I would like to talk about a small, but very important aspect of this book that is often overlooked by many scholars and eschatologists.

Daniel received his revelation of the end times as well as the coming events in the lives of those that were a part of the captivity in Babylon. He was told how the ruling class of Babylon would change from the Caldeans to the Medes and Persians. Why did this man, who was a slave in a country that was often known for their cruelty to those that they captured, privileged enough for God to reveal to him what would happen in the future?

Daniel was a man of prayer. In previous chapters, we have the story of the lion's den, where Daniel was essentially given a sentence of death for praying to God rather than the statue of Nebuchadnezzar. What made him different?

First, he was unswerving in his devotion to the one true God. He would not bow his knee, even if he had to face death. Second, Daniel had a very special way of praying. He began his prayers with a time of praising God and reminding God of the wonders that he had performed in the past. He came before the Lord with a thankful heart even though he was a prisoner in a strange land. After a time of praise and thanksgiving, he would present his case before God. Verse 15, "...we have sinned, we have done wickedly!" He took the sins of the nation before the Lord as if they were his and his alone. He did not pray, "Oh Lord, help me." He prayed for the entire nation of Israel as if he had personally committed the sins.

Perhaps, it is time for us to do the same. What results would we see if we were to approach the Lord and confess the sins of our nation as if they were our own. Daniel goes on to ask the Lord to look upon—not the captives in Babylon—but the city of Jerusalem and the sanctuary that is broken down. We might consider taking a larger look at the dilemma that we are facing in this nation and pray that God would restore the basis of what this nation was originally founded on.

Putting the Word to Work:

During your next time of prayer start with worship, praise and thanksgiving. Then try praying for the nation from the standpoint of personally accepting the responsibility for the sins of this nation.

September 2

Take heed and watch

Today's Bible Reading – Daniel 11-12

Daniel 12:8-9, "Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, 'My Lord, what shall be the end of these things?' And he said, 'Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.'"

Many today believe that we, in this time, are approaching or beginning to enter "end times." We can see parallels to current events in the world, and we say, "Hmmmmm". Don't expect God to take out a billboard to announce events. Remember the Words of Jesus in Mark 13:32-33, *"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is."*

Chapter 11 describes battles between kingdoms of the north and south, which is non-specific. It describes great battles and turmoil for the nations. Perhaps, it is more of a prelude to other developments.

Chapter 12 is titled *"Prophecy of the End Time"*. It appears to describe what many Christians call "The Rapture." Verses 1-3 describes the future events stated in 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 in the New Testament. Read it for yourself. Verse 2 states, *"For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night."*

Over the centuries, many times of severe persecution have taken place. Some who have lived through such a time may have believed that it already fulfilled Daniel 12, except the fullness of verse 2 has not been fulfilled yet: *"And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt."*

Chapter 12:4 gives instructions to Daniel: *"But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."* Human flight, the computer and information age, atomic bombs, space stations, or AI (artificial intelligence)? What more is to come?

Does the idea of "End Times" cause you to fear? Remember this Scripture, 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11, *"For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. Therefore, comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing."*

Just stay faithful, stay in the Word, and trust in Jesus.

Putting the Word to Work

When fear strikes, get out your Scripture list of promises from God. He is faithful... always.

September 3

Promises Kept

Today's Bible Reading - Ezra 1-3

"Now in the first year of Cyrus, King of Persia, that the Word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, King of Persia, so that he made a proclamation...." Ezra 1:1

Our first thought is: "What were the words of God that Jeremiah brought to the Israelites before they went into captivity?" Let's look at the book of Jeremiah, chapter 29, verse 10: *"For thus says the Lord; after 70 years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good Word toward you, and cause you to return to this place."*

That was God's beautiful promise to His people who went into captivity in Babylon.

Now let's look at what happened to Cyrus that caused him to see his captives in a favorable light. *"The Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus."* That word *"stirred"* in Hebrew means "to awaken, to raise up, to excite, to incite, to open one's eyes and to arouse to action!"

Not only were God's people free to return to their homeland, but in the words of Cyrus, *"He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem...."* The cry in the hearts of God's people was that their temple, destroyed by their captors, would be rebuilt.

Has God given you a promise that a loved one now in captivity would be totally set free? He gave us such a promise for our youngest daughter who has struggled some years with an addiction to alcohol. We recently learned she is regularly attending a church with a "Freedom Night" such as we have here at the Father's House on Fridays. She is also in touch daily with a sister who has long been delivered, i.e. such as one keeps in touch with a sponsor in AA. The promise we received years ago is that she will one day lead many captives out into freedom herself. We believe that promise!

Putting the Word to Work

Are you contending for a friend or family member who struggles with addiction? Ask the Holy Spirit for a promise of freedom, *"Then Stand!"* (Ephesians 6:13) believing until you see it come to pass.

September 4

Perseverance in the Presence of Opposition

Today's Bible Reading - Ezra 4-7

Ezra 4:23-24, “²³ Now when the copy of King Artaxerxes’ letter was read before Rehum, Shimshai the scribe, and their companions, they went up in haste to Jerusalem against the Jews, and by force of arms made them cease [building]. ²⁴ Thus the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem ceased, and it was discontinued until the second year of the reign of Darius, king of Persia.”

The children of Israel had been in captivity in Babylon. God was compelling them by His prophets to return home to Jerusalem to rebuild what their enemies had destroyed. As a result of all the opposition, it took 49 years, according to Daniel 9:25. Many years later, during the reign of King Artaxerxes, God was preparing Ezra, a scribe well-versed in the law of Moses, to return back to the homeland of his people to teach those decrees and regulations to the people of Israel. Ezra returned with full favor of God and the king, thus all was restored back to Jerusalem, both in goods as well as the enforcement of God's laws.

This is a prime example of a work of God. When it begins, satan will try to destroy it before it begins. I've watched young people make a great start in their journey with God, only to be hindered, or even stopped by the enemy that seeks to destroy before they get their footing. If you are getting lots of 'push-back', it just means that you are a threat to the kingdom of darkness.

This reminds me of the song, "It is well with my soul," by Horatio Spafford. What strength of perseverance and character to pen such a song of victory after losing his entire family. He did not have any idea the impact these words would have on the future generations.

We cannot say "*the latter reign is greater than the former*" without staying true to the plan God has for our lives. Great things to come, requires overcoming adversity, and that means we stay the course. You never know fully who is watching you in your walk with God, nor how it will impact other's lives. There will always be someone who will pick up the torch when it has been laid down, just as in the story of the Temple being built. Whatever you put your hand to for the Lord, He will bless. Just keep pursuing doing what is right in the sight of God.

Putting the Word to Work

Have you ever felt like giving up?

Seek out someone who will encourage and pray with you!

Write about it!

September 5

The Remnant Seek Restoration

Today's Bible Reading – Ezra 8-10

Ezra 9:9, "For we were slaves. Yet our God did not forsake us in our bondage; but He extended mercy to us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to revive us, to repair the house of our God, to rebuild its ruins, and to give us a wall in Judah and Jerusalem."

Ezra was a skilled scribe and the hand of the Lord his God was upon him. Chapter 8 of Ezra begins by naming the captive families of those who went up to Jerusalem with him from Babylon, in the reign of King Artaxerxes. As they traveled, Ezra looked over the people and priests with him and discovered that there were no Levites among them. So the leaders appointed a local group as servants to the Levites.

Twelve leaders were given the offerings of silver, gold and the articles which the king, his entourage, and all Israel who were present had offered to the Lord God. They were charged to watch them and keep them to bring to the Lord's chambers in Jerusalem. All the weight was written down. They brought the king's orders to his officers. *"So they gave support to the people and the house of God."*

Ezra heard that those left in Israel during the captivity had intermingled with the heathen nations around them. The *"holy seed of Israel was mixed"* with the peoples of all those lands. Ezra fell on his knees before God, and prayed 9:9 above. And verse 15: *"O Lord God of Israel, You are righteous, for we are left as a remnant, as it is this day. Here we are before You, in our guilt, though no one can stand before You because of this!"*

A large group assembled around him, repented, and agreed to correct their situation (to put away their pagan wives) and said to Ezra, *"Yes! As you have said, so we must do."*

Amplified notes: 'They saw complete separation from the foreign women as the unavoidable solution, which is obvious from the fact that only four [Ezra 10:15] spoke against it. However, those who were now actually married to native, heathen women were only 17 priests, 10 Levites, and 86 laymen—113 in all, according to the records, though the list may be incomplete.'

These are difficult chapters to study in light of today's culture. Keep in mind, this is not simply an opinion on interracial marriage, which is not a sin. For the Old Testament Jewish people, there were specific laws for any man who desired to marry outside of the Jewish race. The issue was not marriage, but obedience to God's ways. God always requires us to seek Him for our plans, decisions and attachments. Seeking Him first for everything in our lives is the best plan.

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened." Matthew 7:7-8

Putting the Word to Work

What choices in life are you facing?

Where are you looking for answers?

September 6

A Leader Made by God

Today's Bible Reading - Nehemiah 1-3

Nehemiah 2:17-18, "Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach. 18 Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work." KJV

If you are looking to develop your leadership skills, you must research the book of Nehemiah. From the onset, Nehemiah chapter 1, teaches us that we need to have a strong empathy for others to solve the problems around us, and must be in prayer for guidance, the right connections and necessary resources.

Chapter 2 educates leaders on how important it is to plan ahead, know your goals, and have a bold vision. These are required in order to save time and accomplish what you set out to do. For example, when Nehemiah sneaked in to look at the temple and its damaged walls at night, he was able to evaluate what he was going to need moving forward. This helped him know the materials, and the type of people he would need to recruit to accomplish such an endeavor.

Lastly, in Chapter 3 we learn how important it is to empower our teams and employ the right people for the job. I believe this leads us back to prayer and our true source of knowledge, the Lord. *"For (His) wisdom is better than rubies,"* (Proverbs 8:11) and He will give you all the wisdom you need. (2 Corinthians 9:8)

Some leaders are definitely more gifted at encouraging a team than others, but it is a necessity at times, if you are to lead any group. There is a saying I love, "God doesn't call the qualified, He qualifies the called." I have seen this play out in my own life, when as soon as I found I needed a certain gift in leadership, God somehow supplied it. He even confirms this in scripture, saying: *"Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you."* (John 15:16)

This implies that He is the One who chooses us to do whatever task we are involved in, and He will be faithful to be with us throughout its completion. (Philippians 1:6) So if you are starting a new project in your life, pray for the right people and resources, and watch Him work!

Putting the Word to Work

What is a project you believe the Lord is calling you to start?

Pray to Him about it.

September 7

God *is* our Refuge and Strength

Today's Bible Reading – Nehemiah 4-6

Nehemiah 6:16, "And it happened, when all our enemies heard of it, and all the nations around us saw these things, that they were very disheartened in their own eyes; for they perceived that this work was done by our God."

Nehemiah was authorized by king Artaxerxes to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls of the city that had been destroyed. The Israelites there agreed to follow his leadership. In chapter 4, two men, Sanballat and Tobias, opposed the workers with verbal threats. While the Israelites worked, half built the wall and half worked with a weapon in their hand for protection. Some both worked and held a weapon. The work continued by day, and each man stayed the night in Jerusalem with his servant to guard the work.

It was learned that many wealthy Israelites had taken slaves from among the sons and daughters of their own people who had suffered from a severe famine. They financed mortgages on the land for them to pay 'land taxes' to the king. Those elites were guilty of 'usury' (excessive interest rates) on the loans of their fellow Israelites. Nehemiah strongly rebuked them and commanded them to restore the lands and livelihood of the oppressed people. So, the people agreed to assist each other.

This life brings battles and attacks into our lives. I wish it were not so, but there are times when we must fight for our position, principles, family, and faith. We must seek the Lord for His plan of battle. Each situation is different, so we must seek Him.

The Word gives guidance for the fight. Search further for strength. Here are just a few scriptures to cling to:

Ephesians 6:10-20	Put on the whole armor of God, to stand against the devil.
Isaiah 41:10	Fear not, for I <i>am</i> with you
Isaiah 46:4	I will carry you and will deliver <i>you</i>
Nahum 1:7	The Lord <i>is</i> a stronghold in the day of trouble
Isaiah 54:17	No weapon formed against you shall prosper
Deut.31:6	God goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you
I Samuel 17:47	For the battle <i>is</i> the Lord's
Isaiah 12:2	The Lord, <i>is</i> my strength and song, He has become my salvation
Psalms 46:1	God <i>is</i> our refuge and strength, a present help in trouble, we will not fear
Romans 16:20	God will crush Satan under your feet

Nehemiah served for twelve years as governor of Jerusalem to accomplish this work. Thus, he and the Israelites finished the wall. And God received the Glory.

Putting the Word to Work

God has a plan for each of us to serve. Have you found ways to use your skills?

It is not selfish to look at our strengths. What are they? And how can you better use yours?

Week One Sermon Notes

Week One Sermon Notes

Date: _____

Sermon Title: _____

Series (if applicable): _____

Scripture(s)	Things I want to remember	Things I want to study further

Week One Sermon Notes

Date: _____

Sermon Title: _____

Series *(if applicable)*: _____

Scripture(s)	Things I want to remember	Things I want to study further

Week Two

Week Two Prayer Notes

Specific things I am praying about for my family.

Specific things I am praying about for people in my church.

Things I sense from the Holy Spirit while I pray.

People I am praying for their salvation.

September 8

Putting God first

Today's Bible Reading – Nehemiah 7

Nehemiah 7: 1-4, 1 “Now when the wall had been rebuilt and I had set up the doors, and the gatekeepers, singers, and Levites had been appointed, 2 I put my brother Hanani, with Hananiah the commander of the fortress, in charge of Jerusalem, for Hananiah was a more faithful and God-fearing man than many [of the others]. 3 I said to them, “Do not let the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun is hot; and while the watchmen are still standing guard, have them shut and bar the doors. Appoint guards from the residents of Jerusalem, each at his post [on the wall], and each in front of his own house.” 4 Now the city was spacious and large, but there were few people in it and the houses had not [yet] been built.”

The seventy years of captivity had been fulfilled and the children of God had returned to Jerusalem. The first thing they did was build the wall, and assign all the positions needed to properly fill the tabernacle. Then they set men of the city to guard the wall and their own homes.

The key verse here is verse four, before listing the people who returned to Jerusalem. “4 But there were few people and the houses had not [yet] been built.” The wall was built, the singers, gatekeepers, and the Levites had been set, yet the people had not yet built their homes.

Many times in life, we choose to do things ahead of what God has asked us to do. We want comfort and our own way. We feel we need our own wishes ahead of what God might have in store for us. Our vision is usually short sighted and selfish.

We are being called to build the kingdom just as the children of Israel had been asked to build the wall, but often we would rather sit and watch as others do the work. Ephesians 4:11-12 tells us that there are varied positions within the body, but all of them are for the building of the body.

Not everyone is called to be an evangelist, or teacher, or prophet, or pastor, but all are called to build the body. Stephen was elected to be a servant and fully served in that capacity with all his ability. Colossians 3:23-24, 23 “Whatever you do [whatever your task may be], work from the soul [that is, put in your very best effort], as [something done] for the Lord and not for men, 24 knowing [with all certainty] that it is from the Lord [not from men] that you will receive the inheritance which is your [greatest] reward. It is the Lord Christ whom you [actually] serve.”

Every single act of obedience (service) helps to build the body, even doing something that might be seen as a minor little act is service. Moving chairs, picking up trash, praying, or just helping someone who struggles to stand is service. Every time you do something that is needed, instead of heading out the door and home to your couch, is service and building the body. Putting God and His bride first is service to and building the body.

Putting the word to work

Do things that benefit the church body.

Volunteer, pray, give, or just talk to people. Everyone wants to feel they are seen and matter.

September 9

Obedience to the Word Brings Rejoicing

Today's Bible Reading Nehemiah 8-9

Nehemiah 8:8-12, "So they read distinctly from the Book, in the law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading. 9b "This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn nor weep." For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law. 10 Then he said to them "go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy unto our Lord. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

I really love chapter 8 as it shouts to me of God's Mercy given to not only the Israelites, but to all who receive God's Word.

God's Word is living. Hebrews 4:12, *"For the Word that God speaks is alive and full of power [making it active, operative, energizing, and effective]; it is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating to the dividing line of the breath of life (soul) and [the immortal] spirit, and of joints and marrow [of the deepest parts of our nature], exposing and sifting and analyzing and judging the very thoughts and purposes of the heart."* [Amplified]

People recognized their spiritual condition. A. W. Towzer said, "Until a man gets in trouble with his heart, he is not likely to get out of trouble with his God." No Scripture is complete without obedience. God has to be at the center of our lives.

Putting the Word to Work

To flourish we have to do the same: embrace the Word and praise His Name.
Is this your lifestyle? Is this your way of life?

Just one dose of the Holy Ghost is not enough for me!

September 10

Seal the Deal

Scripture Study: Nehemiah 10-11

Nehemiah 10:1... “Now those who placed their seal on the document were: the governor, the priests, the Levites, the leaders of the people, and the rest of the people...”

These chapters in Nehemiah record the length to which the children of Israel went to consecrate themselves to the completion of the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem that had been destroyed by the Babylonians in 58 BC. Their commitment to the Lord and to one another in this difficult task resulted in the writing of a document outlining the covenant they were making with God and with one another. After the document was written, our text above records how it was sealed.

In the midst of the struggle, when they faced setbacks, delays, and attacks from their neighbors, when they were about to give up and quit, the Lord used the leadership of Nehemiah to galvanize the people into an unbreakable unity. They sealed the deal!

What a powerful example for the church today! Unity with diversity is the calling of the people of God. People often confuse conformity for unity. They believe that oneness comes from sameness. That is simply not true in God's design. Look at nature. There is immense diversity in creation, but that diversity functions in harmony and balance that works in unity.

Paul, the apostle, celebrated the diversity God designed for the church: *“There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.”* 1 Corinthians 12:4-6

But he also admonished believers to work diligently to preserve unity: *“I beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”* Ephesians 4:1-3

Building projects have the potential to test the unity of the church. The challenges inherent in expansion projects can cause stress and strain that have the potential to generate division within a congregation. The children of Israel's experience while rebuilding the Temple is an example. The remedy? Agreement always seals the deal! Jesus placed a premium on agreement: *“Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.”* Matthew 18:19

Agreement arises from communication that produces mutual understanding that develops trust. Our text in Nehemiah provides the template for overcoming the challenges we face as the people of God working together. The people talked with God and with one another and then produced a document that they all signed – they sealed the deal!

Putting the Word to work

Describe how you celebrate the diversity God has created within the church:

Describe how you bear with others and work to preserve unity within the church:

September 11

Overseeing the Covenant

Today's Bible Reading – Nehemiah 12-13

Nehemiah 10:28-29, "Now the rest of the people—the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, the Nethinim, and all those who had separated themselves from the peoples of the lands to the Law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, everyone who had knowledge and understanding— 29 these joined with their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse and an oath to walk in God's Law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord our Lord, and His ordinances and His statutes."

In chapter 6, the wall was completed. In the 8th chapter, the Book of the Law of Moses was read publicly for all to hear. In chapter 10, all the people entered into a covenant to walk in God's law.

Then in chapter 12, Nehemiah dedicated the wall of Jerusalem and went to the Levites to bring them to Jerusalem to celebrate. Great sacrifices were offered and God gave them great joy.

Nehemiah had returned to the king of Babylon for a short time as he had arranged. When he returned again to Jerusalem, he found that the priest and the people disobeyed the laws of God and were not keeping the Sabbath holy. He commanded the Levites to cleanse themselves and go and guard the gates to sanctify the Sabbath day. He contended with the people and brought them before the Lord in prayer to intercede on their behalf.

Most parents can understand Nehemiah's upset with people who do not follow through. It is like trying to teach your children to complete assignments or commitments. How long before they learn? Being patient and standing firm are required. Then, you 'keep on keeping on,' and you pray!

The Book of Nehemiah ends with Nehemiah pleading before the Lord on behalf of the people.

13:2b, *"Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of Your mercy!"* 13:29-31, *"Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites." "Thus, I cleansed them of everything pagan. I also assigned duties to the priests and the Levites, each to his service, and to bringing the wood offering and the firstfruits at the appointed times." "Remember me, O my God, for good!"*

Putting the Word to Work

Keep asking God for the 'right' prayer for your challenges. The Holy Spirit will inspire it.

Make up your mind to not give up.

September 12

God established a covenant to bless all Nations

Today's Bible Reading - 1 Chronicles 1–2

1 Chronicles 2:12-15 — ¹²Boaz begot Obed, and Obed begot Jesse; ¹³Jesse begot Eliab his firstborn, Abinadab the second, Shimea the third, ¹⁴Nethanel the fourth, Raddai the fifth, ¹⁵Ozem the sixth, and David the seventh.” NKJV

The early chapters of 1 Chronicles may appear to be just a long genealogical record, but they serve a deeper purpose in telling God's story of redemption. Beginning with Adam, the chronicler traces the generations through Seth, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, reminding us that history has unfolded according to God's sovereign design. Every name represents a life, a family, a legacy and a link in the unbroken chain of God's covenant promises.

The genealogy steadily narrows from all humankind to the Nation of Israel and then to the tribe of Judah. This narrowing focus exposes that God's plan is not accidental, but intentional. Through Abraham, God established a covenant to bless all Nations. Through Isaac and Jacob, He preserved that promise despite human weakness, failure, and conflict. Even when families experienced sin, judgment, and division, God's purposes continued to unfold.

Among the many names are brief reminders that individual choices matter. Nimrod is remembered as a mighty ruler. Peleg's generation witnessed the dividing of the earth. Achan is identified as "the troubler of Israel" because of his disobedience. These short comments interrupt the genealogies to reveal that faithfulness and rebellion both leave lasting legacies.

The genealogies ultimately converge on Judah's descendants, carefully recording the line through Perez, Hezron, Nahshon, Boaz, Obed, Jesse, and finally King David. This progression reaches a climax in the simple yet powerful statement that "Jesse begot... David the seventh." The entire structure of these chapters has been moving toward this moment. David's appearance signals the beginning of the royal line that God would establish forever through His covenant with the House of David.

These chapters also preserve the histories of Ishmael, Esau, Edom, Caleb, and many others, demonstrating that God remembers every people group and every generation. Yet the chronicler emphasizes that the covenant line, a royal legitimacy through Judah, carries a unique purpose in salvation and theological purpose.

Far from being an assortment of overlooked names, these genealogies proclaim God's faithfulness across the centuries. They testify that He keeps His promises from one generation to the next, preserving His people through successes and failures alike. By establishing King David's lineage, 1 Chronicles lays the foundation for the books that follow and points beyond King David to the greater Son of King David, Jesus Christ - the promised Messiah, through whom God's covenant blessings would ultimately extend to every nation... and every generation.

Putting the Word to Work

Is there a member of your family who feels like an outcast, someone you question whether God could use for His purposes? In prayer, remind yourself that even when people fail and fall into sin, God restores, redeems, and still uses them as His sovereign plan continues to unfold.

September 13

Where did Jabez come from?

Today's Bible Reading - I Chronicles 3-5

I Chronicles 4:8-10, "Now Jabez was more honorable than his brothers... ¹⁰ And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, "Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and..." "So God granted him what he requested."

The first few chapters of Chronicles list the genealogies of the Israelite Nation. Now, I know how drearish reading page after page of 'who begat who' can be, but there is a reason for records that list the genealogies of this Nation. People were expected to know their own lineage back to at least the fourth generation.

The importance of having a written record of the line from which you descended was vital in some instances. As an example, when the Israelite Nation returned to Jerusalem from Babylon, they reestablished the priestly line so that they could worship God in a proper manner. Several of the men who claimed they were from the line of Levi, could not prove their lineage by written record, so they were considered unclean, and were not allowed to participate in a leading role in the worship.

As you read through the genealogies, you will often find a nugget that is hidden away. In 1 Chronicles 3:10-16 you find the descendants of King Solomon. If you read carefully, you will find a 'who's who' of the kings of Israel: Rehoboam, Asa, Ahaziah, Joash, etc. In Solomon's lineage were kings of Israel as fulfillment of the promise that God made to his father, David. "...*You shall not fail to have a man sit before Me on the throne of Israel, only if your sons take heed to their ways, that they walk before Me as you have walked before Me.*" (1Kings 8:25)

One of the best examples of these nuggets that I mention is found in 1 Chronicles 4:8-10. This is the story of Jabez, listed in the genealogies of Judah. How would you like to have a name that means, "*I bore him in pain*"? That sounds like a recipe for disaster right from the start. To my knowledge, this is the only place in scripture where the man, Jabez is mentioned. However, God, through the Holy Spirit, chose to have him mentioned in the Holy Scriptures.

Jabez, called upon God. We refer to this prayer as "The Prayer of Jabez." He asked God for four things: "1) *That you would bless me indeed*; 2) *That you would enlarge my territory. (My sphere of influence)*; 3) *That your hand would be with me*; 4) *That you would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain.*" What a powerful prayer. If God would grant those four things for each of us, what a different world we would live in.

After the instructions that the Lord Jesus gave us in Matthew 6:9-13 (known as "The Lord's Prayer"), this would be a great another example to show to those that are desiring to learn how to pray. It is a simple prayer, but God thought enough of it to include it in the Bible.

Putting the word to Work:

As you develop your prayer life, perhaps you should consider praying this prayer not only over yourself, but also over your family and friends.

September 14

Provision for the Tribe of Levi

Today's Bible Reading – I Chronicles 6

1 Chronicles 6:31, "Now these are the men whom David appointed over the service of song in the house of the Lord, after the ark came to rest. They were ministering with music before the dwelling place of the tabernacle of meeting, ...and they served in their office according to their order."

Those who were named to minister with music were important. We know from the Psalms that David placed much importance on worshipping the God of Israel. The Levites served in all capacities of worship in the House of God, from sacrifice, to maintenance of the tabernacle, to musical worship with instruments and songs, and more. In the above scripture, the "service of song" is a position of priority and honor.

Chapter 6 again provides Hebrew genealogy, but verses 1-30 turns attention to the descendants of Aaron specifically, naming them by generations. Aaron served with his eleven sons at the altars of the "Most Holy Place", as commanded by Moses.

Verses 48-49 describe the duties of the Levites in general as opposed to the duties of Aaron and his sons. It says, *"...the Levites were appointed to every kind of service of the tabernacle of the house of God. But Aaron and his sons offered sacrifices on the altar of burnt offering and on the altar of incense, for all the work of the Most Holy Place, and to make atonement for Israel, according to all that Moses the servant of God had commanded."* Each act of service is to the glory of God according to their calling.

The Levites were not given a territory to conquer like the other eleven tribes. Therefore, verses 54-81 names the many cities within the tribal territories that were "assigned" to the sons of Aaron. Specific cities were given to the families of specific children of Aaron. It was very orderly.

Joshua 21:2-3, *"And they (Levites) spoke to them (Eleazer and Joshua) at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, saying, "The Lord commanded through Moses to give us cities to dwell in, with their common-lands for our livestock. So the children of Israel gave to the Levites from their inheritance, at the commandment of the Lord, these cities and their common-lands."*

Life assignments may be clear in the scriptures, but sometimes we must wait on God's timing and revelation for each of us. In the meantime, we can practice patience while waiting on God, and being obedient one step at a time as He reveals the next step. Just know that He has a plan for each of us, and it is good!

Putting the Word to Work

How has God called you to serve? Your current position may be a stepping stone to more.

Stand on what He has revealed in His Word so far, and continue to seek Him.

Week Two Sermon Notes

Week Two Sermon Notes

Date: _____

Sermon Title: _____

Series *(if applicable)*: _____

Scripture(s)	Things I want to remember	Things I want to study further

Week Two Sermon Notes

Date: _____

Sermon Title: _____

Series (*if applicable*): _____

Scripture(s)	Things I want to remember	Things I want to study further

September 15

Righteousness Inherited

Today's Bible Reading - I Chronicles 7-8

I Chronicles 7:25, "Ephraim's line of descent was Raphal, Reshephe, Telah, Tahan, Ladan, Ammuhud, Elishhama, Nun and Joshua."

Yes, that's right....we just read the names of the generational leaders from Ephraim to Joshua who *"Fit the battle of Jericho!"* Verse 29 in that chapter names Joseph as the father of Ephraim.

Joshua and his family were among the tribes of Israel who crossed the Red Sea with Moses.

The book of Exodus, Chapter 17, tells us that Moses reached out to this young warrior when there was trouble with Amalek. He said, *"Choose us some men, go out and fight!"* Joshua led the Israelites to victory that day!

When Moses sent 12 spies into the land of Canaan, he chose a leader from each tribe. Joshua, the young warrior, was chosen to represent the tribe of Ephraim. He was one of the two leaders who brought back a positive, faith-filled report to Moses and the waiting people.

We find that this warrior was also a worshipper. Look at Exodus 33:7, 9 NLT *"It was Moses custom to set up the tent known as the Tent of Meeting far outside the camp. Everyone who wanted to consult with the Lord would go there..."* *"As he went into the Tent the pillar of cloud would come down and hover at the entrance while the Lord spoke with Moses..."* Afterward, Moses would return to the camp, but the young man who assisted him, Joshua, son of Nun stayed behind in the Tent of Meeting.

If, in that *"great cloud of witnesses"* mentioned in Hebrews 12:1, Joseph could see his great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great grandson, Joshua, how very proud he would be of him! Genealogy is fun! In this family line, one can see that Joseph's love for God was passed all the way down through the generations to his grandson, Joshua. What a legacy and a heritage!

Putting the Word to Work

Has the Love of God been passed down to your family from previous generations? How very grateful we are for that heritage!

What about you and your family? Will you be influencing future generations to come into your way of life?

September 16

The Gatekeepers

Today's Bible Reading – I Chronicles 9-10

I Chronicles 9:22-23, "All those chosen as gatekeepers were two hundred and twelve. They were recorded by their genealogy, in their villages. David and Samuel, the seer, had appointed them to their trusted office. ²³ So they and their children were in charge of the gates of the house of the Lord, the house of the tabernacle, by assignment."

Let's look at their qualifications:

- 1) They were Chosen
- 2) They were few in comparison to the number of people
- 3) They were appointed [deemed qualified]
- 4) They were trusted
- 5) They were detail-oriented, obeyed God and did exactly as He prescribed. No detail was left out, no matter how small.
- 6) They were highly observant in the things of God in keeping the *Holy* as holy.

Who is the gatekeeper? Who is the Chosen One? None other than Jesus! But wait. It says that their children are gatekeepers also. As children of God, we have been chosen just as Jesus was chosen. The pattern has been set. All we do is follow the pattern and we become gatekeepers to the ones that will follow, just like Jesus did. I pray we don't fail God, ourselves, our children, our community, our nation, in being worthy of the gatekeeper's code. Keeping us strong, eyes open, ears to hear, hearts loving, and holding onto the "*Holy*" of holies!

So, the next time you want to know who and what God has called you to, remember: of all things holy, the way has already been made. We just walk in it.

Putting the Word to Work

Have you ever experienced a time when the enemy, through deception, tried to convince you that what is unholy before God is holy?

How did you deal with it?

Did your thinking change? Where did you find your answer?

September 17

Victory, Honor and Coronation for David

Today's Bible Reading – I Chronicles 11-12

I Chronicle 11:1, "Then all Israel came together to David at Hebron, saying, "Indeed we are your bone and your flesh. ² Also, in time past, even when Saul was king, you were the one who led Israel out and brought them in; and the Lord your God said to you, 'You shall shepherd My people Israel, and be ruler over My people Israel.' "

The simple definition of CHRONICLE is a description of events in the order that they happened.

It can be very tedious reading list after list of the "begats" about who did what and when with names we cannot pronounce. One may ask, "Why bother? We won't remember anyway."

Well, every attempt, action, attitude and accomplishment is acknowledged by our God. He provides a 'Hall of Fame' in His Word for the heroes who believed and fought for God's decrees: they knew that David was God's chosen king for Israel.

In the prior chapter, the decimated warriors of Saul's followers and enemies are listed. In chapters 11 and 12, the tribes of Israel are named with the honorable deeds of their warriors who earned their positions in David's army. As they moved forward, all twelve tribes rallied around and supported the coronation of David as king of Israel. Even Saul's tribe of Benjamin turned their full allegiance to David.

I Chronicles 12:38-40, "All these men of war, who could keep ranks, came to Hebron with a loyal heart, to make David king over all Israel; and all the rest of Israel were of one mind to make David king. ³⁹ And they were there with David three days, eating and drinking, for their brethren had prepared for them. ⁴⁰ ... for there was joy in Israel."

Recounting the triumphs of the "Faithful" gives us courage to face our own trials. God is ever present.

'By Faith They Overcame.' Hebrews 11:32-34, ³² *"And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: ³³ who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens."*

Reviewing former victories can be encouraging and uplifting. Rehashing old wounds can be destructive. Keep your eyes on Jesus who will never leave you nor forsake you.

Putting the Word to Work

Old wounds may carry unforgiveness. The battle is put to rest when we forgive.

Remember: Forgiving is not forgetting. Forgiving is remembering without anger.

September 18

The Way That Seemeth Right

Today's Bible Reading 1 Chronicles 13-15

Proverbs 14:12 "There is a way that seemeth right to a man and appears straight before him, but at the end of it is the way of death." (AMP)

This verse shows us the importance of not walking in our own understanding.

David starts out on the wrong foot by consulting the leaders about moving the Ark. He did not do it God's way, but resorted to doing it the Philistines (world's) way. He took the path of least resistance. Why not? After all, it was ten miles! It was faster doing it by cart. He chose convenience/disobedience instead of seeking God as to how to move it.

A joyful celebration turns into tragedy when the ox stumbles and Uzziah touches the Ark to steady it and God strikes him dead. Good intentions do not justify wrong actions. If you have good intentions, you have to make sure that they are coupled with the right actions. Thank God that He is faithful and overlooked David's anger.

God deals with our emotions. When we do it God's way, He will bless it. In chapter 15, we see David doing so. It was quite the celebration.

Psalm 32:8a *"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go..."*(MEV)

John 16:13a *"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth..."*(MEV)

Psalm 119:35 *"Lead me in the path of Your commandments. For I delight in them."*(MEV)

Isaiah 55:9, *"God's way is higher than our way and His thoughts higher than our thoughts."*

Psalm 25:4 *"Show me Your ways, Lord, teach me Your paths."* (NIV)

Putting The Word to Work

Don't you just love the truth? How exciting it is that we can access Him daily. We don't have to wait until Sunday.

Have you ever done something and it went wrong? Was God able to help you get it right?

September 19

The House of God and the House of David

Today's Bible Reading: - I Chronicles 16-17

1 Chronicles 16:2-3, "And when David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD. ³ Then he distributed to everyone of Israel, both man and woman, to everyone a loaf of bread, a piece of meat, and a cake of raisins."

These chapters record the details regarding the return of the ark of God after King David had rescued it from years of exile and neglect. This was a significant moment in the history of the children of Israel. The ark represented the presence and power of God and King David aimed to establish Jerusalem as the center of worship and restore national obedience to the ways of God.

The tabernacle of Moses had first been pitched in Shiloh after Joshua led the children of Israel across the Jordan River and into the promised land. It also was carried before the army of Israel during every victorious battle in their conquest of the promised land until the Philistines captured it. David erected a new tabernacle on Mt. Moriah in Jerusalem and the people rejoiced when the ark of the covenant was finally returned to its proper place within the Holiest Place, the inner sanctuary of the tabernacle.

It was a momentous occasion, and it solidified David's role as a leader who prioritized God's presence among His people. He led the people in the offering of sacrifices, blessed the people in the name of the Lord, and distributed a loaf of bread, meat, and a cake of raisins to every man and woman in Israel. He appointed the priests and musicians who ministered before the Lord and the worship was loud and joyous. He offered a psalm of thanksgiving he had composed himself. This event marked the establishment of Jerusalem as both the political and spiritual capital of Israel.

In the afterglow, David, determined to build a temple in place of the tent he had erected in Jerusalem, confided his intent to the prophet, Nathan, who immediately approved of David's plan. But God visited Nathan that night in a vision and told Nathan to return to David and share the word of the Lord: that David would not build a temple, but his son would, and that the house of David would abide forever: *"He shall build Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son; and I will not take My mercy away from him, as I took it from him who was before you. And I will establish him in My house and in My kingdom forever; and his throne shall be established forever."* 1 Chronicles 17:12-14

David's response was immediate: *"Then King David went in and sat before the Lord; and he said: "Who am I, O Lord God? And what is my house that You have brought me this far?"* 1 Chronicles 17:16 Despite his disappointment, David humbly gave thanks to God and surrendered his desire to build a temple for God and accepted God's perfect Plan.

Putting the Word to work

Describe a situation when you were inspired to do important things for God but were prevented from doing them:

Describe how you reacted:

September 20

Grace For Today, Hope For Tomorrow

Today's Bible Reading: - I Chronicles 18-20

I Chron. 18:6 Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus; and the Syrians became David's servants, and brought tribute. So the Lord preserved David wherever he went.

There is a powerful statement tucked into this verse, "The Lord preserved David wherever he went." I love how God fights on behalf of those whose hearts are loyal to Him. You are not alone. That first day that David stepped onto the battlefield to face Goliath through the end of his reign as King in Israel, God preserved.

A powerful principle is embedded into David's story when he faced Goliath and becomes complete at the end of these three chapters detailing the wars David fought on behalf of the Nation of Israel. David refused to go into the battlefield wearing Saul's armor, but declared to King Saul, "*I am David, son of Jesse of the tribe of Benjamin. God who defended me before the lion and the bear will deliver this uncircumcised Philistine into my hands (Paraphrased from I Samuel 17)*". Just before stepping onto the battlefield, he stopped by the "brook," a stream running through the valley of Elah. There he picked up "*5 smooth stones.*"

These are no random details thrown in. This word "*brook*" in the Strong's Concordance is "*nachal*" (H5158) which comes from a root word "*naw-kahl*" (H5157) which is the word for "*inheritance*." Judah which we translate as "*praise*" (H3034) because its first definition means to extend the hand, often a sign of worship, but the second definition is "*one who throws a stone.*" The number five is inextricably linked throughout the Scripture to the idea of grace - God's empowerment and influence upon a life enabling one to do that which he or she could not accomplish on his own strength.

So let's put this all together. Just before stepping onto the battlefield, David refused to enter the battlefield dressed in Saul's armor, but instead, as a young man of the tribe of Judah (one who throws a stone), reached into the brook (his inheritance) pulled out 5 smooth stones (grace, God's empowerment and enablement to accomplish what he could not do on his own) and went into battle. With one of those stones, he slew the giant, Goliath and freed the nation from becoming enslaved in fear by the Philistines.

Many, many years later, recorded at the end of I Chronicles 20, and in a parallel passage in 2 Samuel 21:15-22, we see four more giants, relatives of Goliath who would also be slain by David's mighty men.

Sometimes the grace we pull on is for the battle today, sometimes the grace we pull on is for a battle in the future. In either case, stand your ground, pull on the inheritance of grace that comes from God and trust him as you enter the battle. He will preserve you.

Putting the Word to Work

What Scriptures can you think of that point to the inheritance you have as a son or daughter of God?

September 21

Your plans or God's?

Today's Bible Reading - 1 Chronicles 21-23

1 Chronicles 22:7-8, "And David said to Solomon: "My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build a house to the name of the LORD my God; ⁸ but the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'You have shed much blood and have made great wars; you shall not build a house for My name, because you have shed much blood on the earth in My sight.'"

King David had set his mind to build a house for the Lord to dwell in. Up to this point God had dwelt between the Cherubim in the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. King David, a man after God's own heart, had decided that the Lord needed a permanent dwelling place in the city of Jerusalem. He began to gather the materials necessary to construct a beautiful structure where the Lord can abide forever. He had iron in abundance, bronze in abundance, cedar trees in abundance. His desire was to build a house that was, "...*exceedingly magnificent, famous and glorious throughout all countries.*" So King David made "*abundant preparations...*"

However, God had other plans. In verse 8 – God did not allow King David to build His house for Him. He had already planned for the temple to be called Solomon's temple. David's son was to be the architect and contractor to do the job.

Often, we have great and glorious plans for the expansion of the Kingdom of God. Each of these plans, when taken at face value, are excellent Ideas, and are just what would appear to be the direction for the day. However, God may have other plans in mind, or He might have other people He wants to accomplish the same plan you have.

I am reminded of a story of a young preacher that received a word from the Lord at his ordination ceremony. The prophet spoke over him and said he would be ministering to hundreds of thousands of people during his ministry. This young man decided he was going to be the next Billy Graham. He took his savings and his rent money and went out and rented a big hall and put out his advertisements to the community to come to the great revival. Well, the people stayed away by the thousands. He had one person come the first night, that person came back the second night with a friend, and no one showed up the third night of the crusade. What happened? He did not bother consulting the Lord first. Later in his ministry, the Lord showed him that he received credit for whatever he did in service for the Lord, even if he was not the preacher.

What can we glean from these examples? Include God in all your plans. Just because the plan seems to be right and would be a benefit to the ministry does not mean it should be done now... or by you.

Putting the Word to Work:

Always take your plans before the Lord in prayer. Listen and hear what He has to say. It will save you a great deal of time and effort in the long run.

Week Three

Week Three Prayer Notes

Specific things I am praying about for my family.

Specific things I am praying about for people in my church.

Things I sense from the Holy Spirit while I pray.

People I am praying for their salvation.

Week Three Sermon Notes

Week Three Sermon Notes

Date: _____

Sermon Title: _____

Series *(if applicable)*: _____

Scripture(s)	Things I want to remember	Things I want to study further

Week Three Sermon Notes

Date: _____

Sermon Title: _____

Series *(if applicable)*: _____

Scripture(s)	Things I want to remember	Things I want to study further

Final 10 Days of the Month

Final 10 Days of the month Prayer Notes

Specific things I am praying about for my family.	Specific things I am praying about for people in my church.
Things I sense from the Holy Spirit while I pray.	People I am praying for their salvation.

September 22

The Ministers and Musicians

Today's Bible Reading: - 1 Chronicles 24-25

1 Chronicles 25:1, "Moreover David and the captains of the army separated for the service some of the sons of Asaph, of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, stringed instruments, and cymbals. And the number of the skilled men performing their service was..."

These chapters record the details regarding the selection and service of the ministers and the musicians who were assigned to serve the Lord in the house of God in Jerusalem during the reign of King David. The narrative provides significant instruction to those who desire to serve the Lord in His church today.

Those who were ordained to minister in the house of God were descendants of Aaron, the first High Priest, and all were members of the tribe of Levi, the tribe that God personally selected and separated unto Himself for the exclusive purpose of being set apart and separated from their Hebrew brethren for the service of God. That template continues today as God personally calls His ministers in His church unto Himself and sets them apart and consecrates, trains, and uses them as He anoints them and directs them in ministry.

The ministers in our text were called to be leaders among God's people. They were organized and assigned specific unique tasks in the sanctuary and in the house of God. The details were written and recorded for review by the king. All things were done decently and in order according to all that God commanded. Those who seek to respond to the call of God today must realize that surrender, sacrifice, and submission to the Word of God are the criteria. Like John the Baptist declared about his own place in ministry and his relationship with Jesus: *"A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. He must increase, but I must decrease."* 1 John 3:27, 30

Unlike the ministers, the musicians were selected and separated for service in the house of God by the king and the captains of the army. Thus, those trained and equipped for battle were responsible for identifying talented and anointed individuals who they assigned to do spiritual battle in prophetic worship.

King David chose Asaph as his chief musician and delegated the responsibility of directing the musicians. Every person selected and directed by Asaph was a skilled musician, instructed and knowledgeable about the entire library of songs utilized in the worship services in the house of God. There was no distinction between teacher and student, nor beginner and veteran as they performed their assignments, and there was no prejudice in the schedule of their duties because lots were cast to determine who would fulfill each duty. In other words, they were all interchangeable parts in God's worship team.

What a beautiful template that could benefit every church and every ministry department. Everyone has been called by God and can receive an anointing for an assignment. When done Biblically with integrity, humility, and sincerity, great power and advancement will occur. Following and living in compliance with the wisdom of the Word and resisting the invasion of the corrupting influence of worldly standards will empower the body of Christ to accomplish Great things. God, help us live by Your standards and advance Your kingdom.

Putting the Word to work

Q: Describe how a minister in the church inspired you:

Q: Describe how a musician in the church inspired you:

September 23

The Gatekeepers

Today's Bible Reading - I Chronicles 26-27

1 Chronicles 26:8, "All these were of the sons of Obed-Edom, they and their sons and their brethren, able men with strength for the work: sixty-two of Obed-Edom."

Who were the gatekeepers? What was their assignment? How important was the job assigned to them? They were blessed by God, able men who were strong, upright, capable men, worthy of the task set before them.

God needed able men to guard and watch the entrances to His Holy temple: Keeping Holy things Holy. No foul thing could enter in as long as God's gatekeepers were present and able. Not only the entry, but they were chosen to keep the Holy things Holy.

In chapter 26, one name stands out. Obed-Edom, and his descendants, were the ones that were given double duty: the gate and the storehouse. These people were tested and proven to be a tribe of people who were gatekeepers of God.

It seems that all who come to the Lord struggle with trusting God. Our faith is weak. We seek signs and wonders to increase and reassure our faith, striving to build a foundation in our walk with God.

Let's reverse this for a moment. God trusted the family of Obed-Edom to watch over and take care of the tabernacle and to keep God's storehouse.

Can God trust you to do the same? Can God trust that you are faithful? Are you allowing Him to walk beside you? Can He trust you in keeping Holy things Holy? Can He trust you to include Him in the countless decisions you make each day? Can He trust you to make Him your abiding place? Can He trust you to obey Him? Can He trust you? Can He trust you to teach His little ones about their Heavenly Father? Are you raising generations of gatekeepers? Are you a light that leads others to the "Gate"?

It wasn't complete. Our humanness got in the way of God trusting us, so He sent His son to stand in for us. Thus, Jesus became the Keeper for He was the Gate. He made it complete and perfect. He was well able to do what we couldn't do. Aren't you glad?

Putting the Word to Work

Can you identify with any of those questions?

Write them down. Then turn them over to the One True Gate... and He will keep them.

September 24

Establishing the House of David

Today's Bible Reading – I Chronicles 28-29

[Nathan prophesies to David] I Chronicles 17:11-12, "And it shall be, when your days are fulfilled, when you must go to be with your fathers, that I will set up your seed after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. ¹²He shall build Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever."

As we come to the end of I Chronicles, let's do a brief recap. In chapter 12 David was crowned king of Israel and endorsed by all twelve tribes: *"There was joy in Israel."* In chapter 16, David brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem and provided a tabernacle (tent) for a covering. David had great plans to build a permanent temple to honor his God. Our scripture above was God's answer.

Now, in chapter 28, David gathered the leaders of Israel and announced that he had plans for building a place of rest for the ark of the covenant, *⁴³But God said to me, 'You shall not build a house for My name, because you have been a man of war and have shed blood.'*

In 28:11, David gave all his plans (*'by the Spirit'*) for the temple to Solomon, as well as an abundance of "articles of service" to furnish the house of the Lord. David gave great weights of gold and silver articles, such as lamps, lampstands, tables, bowls, utensils, basins, even the gold cherubim that are over the ark of the covenant.

Chapter 29:2-5 lists all that was provided by David. He challenged the leaders to do likewise, and they, too, gave of their riches. Verse 9: *"Then the people rejoiced, for they had offered willingly, because with a loyal heart they had offered willingly to the Lord; and King David also rejoiced greatly."*

29:19, David prayed: *"Give my son Solomon a loyal heart to keep Your commandments and Your testimonies and Your statutes, to do all these things, and to build the temple for which I have made provision."*

They anointed Solomon and he sat on the throne as king instead of David, his father.

Chapter 29:27, *"Thus David the son of Jesse reigned over all Israel. And the period that he reigned over Israel was forty years; seven years he reigned in Hebron, and thirty-three years he reigned in Jerusalem. ²⁸So he died a good old age, full of days and riches and honor; and Solomon his son reigned in his place."*

Putting the Word to Work

David and Solomon were rich royalty. What do you have that God wants to use for His Glory?

Giving is more than gold and silver. How can we honor God to advance His Kingdom?

September 25

Solomon begins his reign of Israel

Today's Bible Reading – 2 Chronicles 1-4

2 Chronicles 1:1, "Now Solomon the son of David was strengthened in his kingdom, and the Lord his God was with him and exalted him exceedingly."

As I Chronicles ends with the death of David and the coronation of Solomon, 2 Chronicles sets the stage for the future of Israel under Solomon's reign. He begins with offerings at the tabernacle of meeting at Gibeon. This is the same tabernacle that Moses had made in the wilderness. Solomon approached the bronze altar in Gibeon and offered a thousand burnt offerings to the Lord. *"But, David had brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem"* and provided a tent covering.

Chapter 2:7 *"That night, God said to Solomon, "Ask! What shall I give you?" Solomon said, "Now give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this great people of Yours?"*

Because Solomon did not ask for riches, wealth or honor, God honored his request. And Solomon's wisdom and reign has been world renown for thousands of years. Every people-group and nation knows the story.

In Chapter 2, Solomon set up a great 'kingdom' with everything needed for such a large nation of people. Determined to build a temple for the Lord, he gathered the best equipment, materials, people and rich provisions to accomplish it.

Chapter 3:1, *"Now Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. ² And he began to build on the second day of the second month in the fourth year of his reign."*

Do you remember when David would not offer to God what *"cost him nothing"*? David paid Ornan for the threshing floor, which was also on Mount Moriah! Read about it again in 1 Chronicles 21:20-25.

Chapter 4 details all that was built for the temple. Everything is measured in "cubits." Did you know that a cubit is equivalent to 18 inches... or a foot and a half? The "cubit" is also used to measure Noah's Ark and other structures. This helps me picture the immensity of structures described in scripture, including... Revelation 21:2 *"... and John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God..."* In measuring the New City, cubits and furlongs are used as a means of measurement. Such glory!

2 Chronicles 4 completes the building of the Temple of God. It is ready to receive the Ark of the Covenant.

Putting the Word to Work

We must continue to establish a firm foundation in our hearts as a dwelling place for our God.

What about your heart? Study and tuck away the Word of God's Truth.

September 26

God's Covenant Faithfulness and Mercy

Today's Bible Reading - 2 Chronicles 5–7

2 Chronicles 7:14, "If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land." NKJV

2 Chronicles 5–7 recounts the glorious dedication of Solomon's Temple, one of the pivotal moments in Israel's history. After years of preparation begun by David and completed by Solomon, the work of building the house of the Lord is finished. Solomon gathers the elders, tribal leaders, priests, and all Israel to bring the Ark of the Covenant from the City of David into the newly completed Temple. With countless sacrifices offered in worship, the priests carefully place the Ark within the Most Holy Place beneath the wings of the cherubim, signifying God's covenant presence among His people.

As the priests, Levites, singers, and musicians unite with one voice in praise, declaring, *"For He is good, For His mercy endures forever,"* the glory of the Lord fills the Temple in the form of a cloud so overwhelming that the priests are unable to continue their ministry. God's visible presence confirms His acceptance of both the Temple and the worship offered there.

Standing before the assembled nation, Solomon blesses the people and praises God for fulfilling every promise made to David. He acknowledges that although heaven itself cannot contain God, the Lord has chosen this Temple as the place where His name will dwell. Solomon offers an extraordinary prayer of dedication, asking God to hear every sincere prayer directed toward this place. He petitions the Lord to judge with righteousness, forgive repentant sinners, restore those defeated because of sin, send rain after drought, deliver the nation from famine, plague, or disaster, welcome foreigners who seek His name, grant victory in battle, and restore those carried into captivity who return to Him with wholehearted repentance. Throughout the prayer, Solomon emphasizes God's covenant faithfulness, mercy, and willingness to forgive those who genuinely seek Him.

When Solomon finishes praying, fire falls from heaven to consume the sacrifices, and once again the glory of the Lord fills the Temple. The people bow in worship, proclaiming, *"For He is good, For His mercy endures forever."* (2 Chronicles 5:13)

That night, God appeared to Solomon with both a promise and a warning. His enduring invitation that is found in 2 Chronicles 7:14, declares that humility, prayer, seeking His face, and repentance bring forgiveness and healing. Yet God also warns that abandoning His commandments for idolatry will bring judgment upon both the nation and the Temple (2 Chronicles 7:19). His blessings are inseparably connected to covenant faithfulness and wholehearted devotion.

Putting the Word to Work

Your home may not have the beauty or richness of Solomon's temple, but it can still be a place dedicated to the Lord. If you have not already done so, consider praying through your home room by room, asking God to bless your family, your conversations, and all that takes place there for His glory. In the kitchen, you might pray for a heart of hospitality and service. In your children's rooms, you can entrust their character, decisions, and future to the One who loves them even more deeply than you do.

September 27

Entering the House of the Lord

Today's Bible Reading - 2 Chronicles 8-10

2 Chron. 9:3-4, "And when the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, 4 the food on his table, the seating of his servants, the service of his waiters and their apparel, his cupbearers and their apparel, and his entryway by which he went up to the house of the Lord, there was no more spirit in her."

The wisdom and wealth of King Solomon was heard about around the known world. Many wanted to come to see this man and the great wisdom he displayed. The Queen of Sheba represents what would be one of the wealthiest and most influential groups in the world at that time. When she came to see for herself if the rumors were true, she saw his house, food, servants, cupbearers and their apparel. But notice that it says when she saw the entryway and manner in which he went up to the House of the Lord, there was no more spirit in her, she melted. She could no longer argue, nor resist acknowledging the greatness of the kingdom.

I wonder what impact we make on people by the manner in which we approach and enter the house of the Lord... We strongly encourage people to dedicate themselves to a local church and to be faithful at least once each week. It is essential for one's own spiritual health. I also encourage you that it is important for your witness in the world, and that the things of God matter enough to you to build your life's schedule around your connection to the House of the Lord.

There is a beauty in being so comfortable in the presence of the Lord that one does not feel the need to wear a 3-piece suit in order to walk in the door. Clothes do not equal a higher level of connection with God. I can also say that there should not be a flippancy in how we approach the house of the Lord either. We want people to enjoy the house of the Lord. We also need to have a reverence for what happens in the House of the Lord. Do not confuse the passage above that clothes make the difference. It's the heart that matters most. We demonstrate what is in our heart in the way we carry ourselves.

Putting the Word to Work

A great question to ask oneself: Is the House of the Lord a sacred, special place to me? Do I demonstrate that in the manner of how I approach the House of the Lord?

September 28

The Danger of the Self-Appointed Priest

Today's Bible Reading - 2 Chronicles 11-14

2 Chronicles 11:13-15, "13 And from all their territories the priests and the Levites who were in all Israel took their stand with him. 14 For the Levites left their common-lands and their possessions and came to Judah and Jerusalem, for Jeroboam and his sons had rejected them from serving as priests to the Lord. 15 Then he appointed for himself priests for the high places, for the demons, and the calf idols which he had made."

There are few things more dangerous through the stories of the Bible than "self-appointed" solutions. I am so thankful to the Lord for leaving instructions on how to live, because over-and-over again, it seems man continues to fall into the trap of self-appointed solutions. Now for those who read this and are industrious and utilize 'God given skills' as problem-solvers in this life, I am not condemning the responsibilities we have as a man to work hard, to solve the problems we face. That is a part of our reasonable work as members of the household of faith, in the Kingdom of God. We are called to help solve the world's problems. The danger is when man begins to appoint himself or others to positions that God has not called them to.

Jeroboam, as the leader in the nation of Israel, does what is almost unthinkable, given the nation's history. After successfully leading 10 tribes of Israel in a separation from Judah, he appoints "for himself" priests. Priests, pastors, ministers, etc., should be in those offices because God appointed them, not because man appoints them. You cannot appoint someone to a place that God has not called without a disaster. Secondly, he had them create two golden calves and declared unto Israel that the golden calves were now their gods. Yes, you heard it. He did the same thing that a previous generation (see Exodus 32) did that almost got them wiped out, but for the intercession of Moses. The problem being, these were not taken down nor repented of by the nation for decades. One of the places that Jeroboam set up for one of these golden calves, as a place for pagan worship and rituals to take place, would have been on the far north of Israel in the territory belonging to Dan, at a high place that would become a site of future military conquerors like Alexander the Great, who also set up pagan worship and ritual sites. This would be the same physical location that Jesus walked to with his disciples in Matthew 16, that by then had become known as "the gates of hell."

Interesting isn't it? One generation installs self-appointed solutions against the plans and purposes of God that became the gates of hell to a later generation. But never forget Jesus' final word on the subject, "...*the gates of hell will not prevail.*"

Putting the Word to Work

Have you committed yourself to a local church under Godly God-ordained leadership? (This doesn't mean people are perfect, no one but Christ is perfect, but it is to recognize the God-call and God-assignment on one's life and to take one's place in the body of Christ as He sees fit.

September 29

Hide-and-Seek

Today's Bible Reading - 2 Chronicles 15-18

2 Chronicles 15:1-7 "Now the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded. 2 And he went out to meet Asa, and said to him: "Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin. The Lord is with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you. 3 For a long time Israel has been without the true God, without a teaching priest, and without law; 4 but when in their trouble they turned to the Lord God of Israel, and sought Him, He was found by them. 5 And in those times there was no peace to the one who went out, nor to the one who came in, but great turmoil was on all the inhabitants of the lands. 6 So nation was destroyed by nation, and city by city, for God troubled them with every adversity. 7 But you, be strong and do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded!"

What a beautiful prophecy! Every Scripture recorded was not just a story about some ancient people and their 'God encounters' that exist only for themselves, it is also written for our sakes. Notice a few things stated to king Asa.

First, *"The Lord is with you while you are with Him."* Our connection with God is not about us waiting on Him, but about us staying connected to Him. As long as we ensure our side of the communication, and our responsibilities are being taken care of, God will ensure we have a connection with Him.

Secondly, if we seek Him, He will be found. And if we forsake, He will forsake. It reminds me of playing hide-and-seek with my children when they were really young. My daughter was 2 years old, I counted to ten and hollered out "ready or not, here I come." Almost immediately I hear her voice "I'm hiding in the grapes." Obviously she was still figuring out how this game was supposed to be played. For her, the joy was about being found, not staying hidden. God is much the same way, He is not trying to conceal Himself, but loves to reveal Himself to those who are seeking Him.

Thirdly, *"do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded."* A parallel New Testament passage can be found in Galatians 6:9, *"Let us not grow weary in well-doing, for in due season you shall reap if you faint not."* All of your work for the Lord is recorded and will be rewarded one day. Do not worry about laying up treasures on this earth, but realize your efforts are producing treasures in heaven.

Putting the Word to Work

What does "seeking" the Lord look like for you? What are the daily habits and disciplines that keep your relationship with Jesus fresh?

September 30

The Lord Will Fight Your Battle

Today's Bible Reading - 2 Chronicles 19-21

2 Chronicles 20:17, 20-22, "17 You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!" Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord is with you." 20 So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper." 21 And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the Lord, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: "Praise the Lord, For His mercy endures forever." 22 Now when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated."

I think every musician who loves the Lord loves this story recorded in 2 Chronicles 20. The people of Ammon, Moab and Mt. Seir, joined together to attack and destroy the nation of Israel. Israel was outnumbered and overmatched, based upon military might and strength. So they began to seek the Lord and ask for His help. They received an answer from the Lord that God will fight their battles. They then amassed the musicians and worship leaders and sent them forward on the front lines, not armed with swords and spears, but with their instruments of worship. When they began to sing and to praise the Lord, the Lord set ambushes against the enemies, who turned on themselves and whipped themselves. When the people of Israel came prepared to fight, they found the enemies destroyed, and they simply came in to take all the loot and bounty of war back to their homes, instead of fighting to survive.

Worship is powerful. Yes, this is a one time moment in the Bible, but there is a powerful principle that is true throughout the Bible. In moments of overwhelming odds, worship matters. When we keep our praise on, and worship the Lord for who He is, in spite of what we see, we are inviting the presence of God into the fight. Never lose your worship.

Putting the Word to Work

When is a time that things looked bleak and you worshipped anyway? What fruit came from your decision to trust and honor God in spite of your situation?

Week Four Sermon Notes

Final 10 Days of March Sermon Notes

Date: _____

Sermon Title: _____

Series (*if applicable*): _____

Scripture(s)	Things I want to remember	Things I want to study further

Final 10 Days of March Sermon Notes

Date: _____

Sermon Title: _____

Series *(if applicable)*: _____

Scripture(s)	Things I want to remember	Things I want to study further

Final 10 Days of March Sermon Notes

Date: _____

Sermon Title: _____

Series (*if applicable*): _____

Scripture(s)	Things I want to remember	Things I want to study further

Acknowledgements

Special thank you to the following devotional contributors:

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 Pastor Kami Zumwalt

For more information about The Father's House, you can check out our website:

thefathershouseint.org or on Facebook or our YouTube channel. Weekly we gather:

Sunday	9 am & 11 am - Sunday Worship Experience
Tuesday	9 am - Prayer meeting
Wednesday	9 am - Prayer meeting
	5:30 pm - Family dinner at 5:30
	6:30 pm - Wednesday Worship Experience
Thursday	9 am - Prayer meeting
Friday	7 pm - Prayer meeting
Saturday	6 pm - Prayer Meeting

You can contact us in the following ways:

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