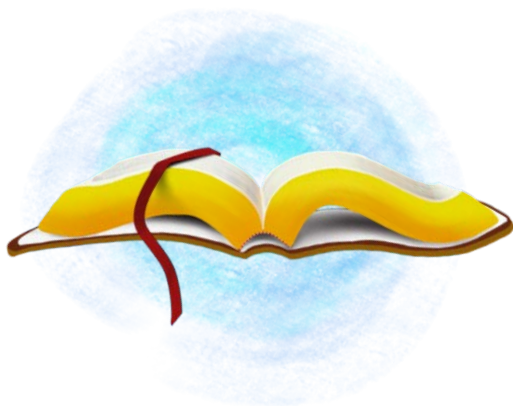


Mt. Sinai • Jericho



"Know the Bible, Fear the Lord"

2017 April Devotional Booklet

(Published by Cumberland Presbyterian Chinese Church)

Introduction To Quiet Time/Personal Devotion

What Is Quiet Time/Personal Devotion: Quiet Time or Personal Devotion is more than just reading the Bible, it's a time of fellowship and dating with God. It's a time to get to know God and His will more as well as to enjoy His presence. Since personal devotion is a process of communication, it involves both "listening" (Reading His Word, Meditating, and Reflecting) and "talking" (Praying, Responding, and Devoting) to Him.

Time and Place: Choose a quiet place and a set time. If possible, morning is most ideal. If you must choose another time, choose a time when you can be most serene and alert. Also make sure that you do your devotion before you spend time on the computer, TV, internet, or games so that your mind will not be filled with distractions that prevent you from meditating on God's words.

Focus: Ask God to quiet your heart and to open your eyes so that you can understand God's words. You can also praise God or sing a short hymn to Him.

Read & Reread: Read the Scripture carefully and meditate on what God is telling you. Usually, you may not be able to understand the meaning and essence of a passage when you first read it; only through repetition and meditation can one gain meaningful insights.

Using the Devotional Booklet: ①Please follow the steps in this booklet to first calm your heart with a short prayer and praise, then read and reread the given passage, and answer the questions accordingly. Then read the contributor's insights and see how you could apply what you have learned in your life. Finally, end your Quiet Time with prayer and ask God to help you live out His words. ②Besides the reflection questions, notes, and applications, this booklet also asks the reader to fill in the date and time of each daily devotion so that the reader can evaluate his/her devotional life more precisely. ③The Scriptures quoted in this booklet are from NIV (1984). We would encourage you not to use the Bible Apps in your cell phone to read the Scriptures lest you will be distracted by the notifications or incoming calls. ④This Devotion booklet is contributed by various staff of the Cumberland Presbyterian Chinese Church and is first written in either Chinese or English, and translated by other brothers and sisters. The contribution of the staff as well as of the translators is deeply appreciated. At times, some devotions are written in both languages by the contributor. ⑤Memory verses may be quoted for meditation and memorization depending on the context and as needed; thus, it may not be provided daily.

Be Ready To Meet The Lord

Passage: Exodus 19

April 1

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

PRAYER: Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

ADORATION: Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

READING GOD'S WORD: Read Exodus 19 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

RE-READING GOD'S WORD: Read Exodus 19 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

1. What did God promise for the Israelites if they kept the covenant (vv. 5-6)? What does this mean?
2. In preparation of giving His covenant, God warned the people three times not to come any closer to Him beyond the boundary that Moses had set up around Mount Sinai (vv. 12, 21, 24); why was such distance needed to be kept between God and the people?
3. God told Moses to consecrate the people (to set them apart) and have them wash their clothes in preparation to meeting God at Mount Sinai. How could washing their clothes help the Israelites be ready to meet God?

After Israel's miraculous deliverance from Egypt and the total defeat of the Egyptian army at the Red Sea and that of the Amalekites at Rephidim, God was going to found the nation of

Israel at Mount Sinai. The Israelites were about to completely end their time of slavery and to become a nation of their own, to be ruled by God according to His holy ways and moral standard. God promised that if the Israelites were to keep the covenant (i.e. God's laws and statutes), they would have the special place among all creation as the possession of God, the kingdom of priests, and a holy nation — meaning that Israel would be a people who followed after God's holy ways, and would be able to lead others to God as the priests did.

In preparation of giving His covenant, God warned the people three times not to come any closer to Him beyond the boundary that Moses set up around Mount Sinai (vv. 12, 21, 24). This distance demonstrated that man was separated from God because of sin. If any man were to stand before God on his own account, he would not be able to live but to perish in God's holy presence. If it were not for Jesus' sacrifice in our places, we would be facing the same fate when we come before God's presence.

Not only were the people commanded to keep a safe distance from God's holy presence, they had to take three days to diligently prepare themselves for the meeting of God. Moses was commanded to consecrate the people, and the people were to wash their clothes. The washing of clothes was not only to show respect and make the people presentable in their appearance, but even more so, it represents the need for the cleansing of sin. As the Israelites washed their clothes, they were reminded that anyone who approached the Holy God would need to rightly prepare themselves by having "clean clothes" to wear. Likewise, we need to have the same awareness and reverence of God when we come before Him; for we are not meeting just anybody, but the Creator of heaven and earth, the Mighty One who brought us out of "Egypt" on eagles' wing (v. 4).

APPLICATION: Think of specific ways to "consecrate and be ready" before you meet with God. Write down some of the ideas below.

PRAYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like to respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

To Know Right From Wrong

Passage: Exodus 20:1-17

April 2

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

PRAYER: Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

ADORATION: Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

READING GOD'S WORD: Read Exodus 20:1-17 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

NOTE: The complete covenant of God with the Israelites spans from Chapter 20 to 31; which includes the Decalogue/Ten Commandments (20:1-21), the Book of the Covenant (20:22-24:11), and the Ceremonial regulations (24:12-31:18).

RE-READING GOD'S WORD: Read Exodus 20:1-17 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

1. The first four commandments concern the vertical relationship with God, while the remaining six concern the horizontal relationship with others. How would you summarize the essence of the commandments concerning each of the two types of relationship? (try to use as few words as possible)

Relationship with God:

Relationship with others:

2. The 10 commandments were the hub of all of Israel's religious and civil laws. Imagine a nation that fully embraces and abides by these values; how would you describe such a nation? What does this show about a kingdom belonging to God?

The 10 commandments were the hub of all of the religious and civil laws of the newly and divinely established nation of Israel, with God as the sovereign King and the Israelites as the subjects. The commandments concern two types of relationship — that with God and that with others. The relationship with God is one where the subjects loyally submit to, trust in and revere God alone. While the relationship with others is one of respect and love (specifically toward others' position of authority, life, commitment, property, reputation, and prosperity).

If Israel were to fully embrace and abide by these commandments and the values that they represented, she would be a righteous nation that was full of harmony, peace and love. There would not be crimes or injustice of any sort, and hence all would live without fear, anxiety, anger, etc. What a beautiful picture that would be! When God sits on the throne as the ruler, His reign gives life to everyone in the Kingdom. His instructions and commands are never for selfish gain, but always for righteous and good purposes. No wonder the psalmist exclaimed that the one who delighted in the law of the Lord and meditated on it day and night would be like a tree planted by streams of water (Psalm 1:2-3).

These 10 divine rules for human conducts not only demonstrate the holy values of God's kingdom, but also serve as a spiritual "mirror of grace," to help the blind see the truth ("I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, 'Do not covet.'" Romans 7:7). The commandments are God's grace not only for the purpose of telling us what is right and wrong, but also to help us come to the realization that we are sinful beings in need of salvation.

APPLICATION: Re-read the 10 Commandments as if you are looking into a mirror; ask God to help you see any offenses you might have missed. Talk to God about what you see and come before Him in full repentance.

PRAYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like to respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

The Power Of The Blood

Passage: Exodus 24:1-11

April 3

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

PRAYER: Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

ADORATION: Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

READING GOD'S WORD: Read Exodus 24:1-11 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

NOTE: Burn Offering (cf. Lev. 1) — The offering that make atonement for sin. It requires a male without defect from the herd, flock, or bird to be burned completely, signifying the offerer's complete sacrifice and God's complete acceptance.

Fellowship Offering (Translated as Peace Offering in NASB, ESV, KJV, etc.; cf. Lev. 3) — There were three different kinds of fellowship offerings (Lev. 7:12-18): ① Thanksgiving Offering, in which an Israelite expressed thanks for a particular blessing. ② Votive Offering, in which the participant offered to fulfill his vow (cf. Jonah 2:9). ③ Freewill Offering, in which an Israelite could offer without reference to any particular blessing. It requires a male or female without defect from the herd or flock. The fat and organs were to be burned for God, with the blood sprinkled on the altar. The breast and right thigh were for the priests, and the remainder were to be eaten by the offerer. It was likely that the leaders were eating the meat of the fellowship offerings on top of the mountain.

RE-READING GOD'S WORD: Read Exodus 24:1-11 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

1. While the passage begins with God telling the leaders and the people, once again, not to come near, it ends with a picture of Moses and the leaders seeing God up close and having a meal before Him. What happened in between these two incidents?

2. What did Moses do with the blood of the sacrifices, and what followed? What was the significance of his actions?

At the end of the presentation of the covenant, Moses was called up to the mountain again. Just like before, God warned the leaders, as well as the people not to come near to His holy presence. Yet, when the covenant had been sealed with the blood of the offerings, the leaders being the representatives of all the Israelites, went up the mountain, encountered God up close, and most amazingly, sat down to eat a meal before God. The event that brought about this amazing change was the offering of the sacrificial animals and the sprinkling of their blood. The sacrifice of the young bulls and the shedding of their blood not only sealed the covenant that God made with the Israelites, it also changed the relationship between God and man, as the people could now approach God without God breaking out against them in His righteousness. God and man could once again see each other face to face and be together.

At the offering of the animals, Moses split the blood in half and did two things — ① He sprinkled the blood on the altar and read the book of the Covenant to the Israelites; in response, they declared their submission to God. ② He sprinkled the blood on the people; then declared God's covenant to them. The blood was the necessary uniting element that connected man to God and appeased God's righteous wrath toward sin, so man could approach God and have a fellowship meal before Him. Such was the foreshadowing of the Lamb of God, of Jesus' sacrifice and His shedding of blood on the cross — which once and for all cleanses the sin of man, and enables those who believe to commune with God directly. Such reunion did not come without a cost — it took the lives of sacrificial animals for a temporary reconciliation in the Old Testament; and ultimately, it took the life of the Son of God to secure this reunion permanently. Let us never again take for granted the privilege of having a personal relationship with God.

APPLICATION: Remind yourself that it took the blood of Jesus Christ to make it possible for you to encounter God and still live. Give thanks to the "God of Grace" for the sacrifice of His Son, and treasure the moment of the joyous fellowship with God.

PRAYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like to respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

It Is A Heart Matter

Passage: Exodus 25

April 4

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

PRAYER: Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

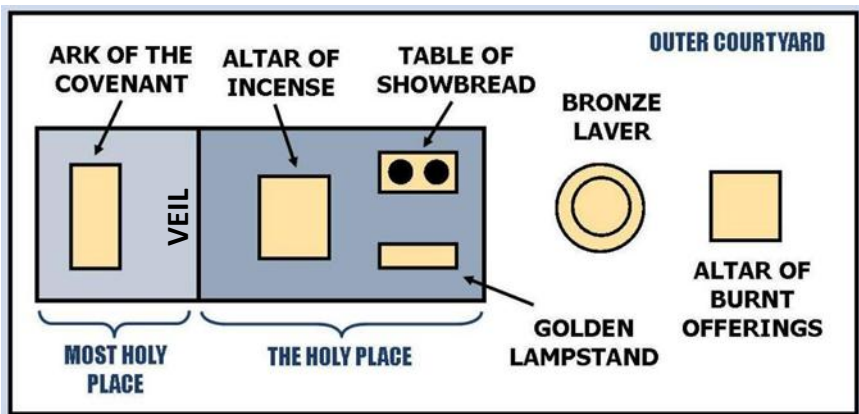
ADORATION: Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

READING GOD'S WORD: Read Exodus 25 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

NOTE: "The Tabernacle" was referred to by several names: ① "sanctuary," meaning a sacred place (25:8); ② "tent" (26:7, 11-14, 36), because of its tent-like structure; ③ "Tent of Meeting" (27:21), signifying its structure and purpose; ④ "tabernacle of the Testimony" (38:21; cf. Acts 7:44) and ⑤ "Tent of the Testimony" (Num. 9:15), meaning the place where the two tablets of the Law (the "testimony"; cf. Ex. 31:18) were kept. It is the place of worship for the Israelites and the prototype of the Temple.

The function of the Tabernacle was threefold: ① It symbolized God's presence with the people (v. 8). ② It was the meeting place of God and His people (25:22; 27:21). ③ It was the place where God proclaimed His will to man (25:22; Lev. 1:1).

Tabernacle Layout



"The Ark of the Covenant" — It, along with the Atonement Cover, was God's throne on earth (1 Chron. 28:2; cf. Psalm 99:5; 132:7). It was the symbol of God's covenant with the Israelites so it was the most important furnishing in the Tabernacle.



"The Atonement Cover" (NIV) or "Mercy Seat" (NASB, ESV & KJV) — It was a cover for the Ark which symbolized God's mercy in covering sin. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest sprinkled blood on the atonement cover, the blood then "made atonement for" Israel's sin (Lev. 16:1-20). This typified what was later accomplished by Christ, that the Lamb of God made atonement for sin by shedding His blood (Rom. 3:25, Heb. 9:11-14).

RE-READING GOD'S WORD: Read Exodus 25 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

1. What were the things that God asked the Israelites to bring for the making of the Tabernacle (vv. 2-7)? What were the things that God would bring (vv. 8, 9?, 16, 21-22)?

Israelites —

God —

2. When God commanded the offering for the Tabernacle, why did He add the description "from everyone whose heart prompts them to give"? What was God asking for in the offering?

3. The Ark of the Covenant was the most important furnishing in the Tabernacle. The whole Ark was made with acacia wood overlaid with gold, except the Atonement Cover with the cherubim on top, which was made of pure gold. What can you learn from this specification?

As a free nation belonging to God, the Israelites were commanded to build the Tabernacle — the place to worship God, and the sanctuary where God dwell among them. In this grant project, both God and the Israelites were personally involved. The Israelites were to gather and offer to God the precious material for the construction of the Tabernacle, while God would provide the most important element that made the Tabernacle a sacred place — His divine instruction (i.e. the construction plan, and the Commandments). As the people follow God's instruction for the Tabernacle, they will come to have the sacred place to be in presence of God and hear His words.

Interestingly, even though God's command is with authority, He added the condition that Moses was only to collect offering from those whose heart prompted them to give. In other words, if one's heart did not desire to give, the offering would not be received. For God did not ask for the offering because He needed the valuable material as a king needed taxes; rather, God desired the loving response from His people — if the heart is not willing, the offering is pointless.

Inside the Tabernacle, the most important furnishing was the Ark of the Covenant placed inside the Most Holy Place. Of the Ark of the Covenant, the most valuable part was the Atonement Cover made of pure gold. It was an object lesson that said, "Pay attention! The most important of the most important thing in the most important place is the Cover." The Atonement Cover, with its role in the Day of Atonement (cf. today's note on Atonement Cover), foreshadows Jesus' sacrifice as the Lamb of God. Jesus is the center, the most

important of our salvation and new life in God; for He did not only live a perfect life as an example for us, but He accomplished what we cannot do for ourselves — to atone for our sin and to bring new life.

APPLICATION: In your offering to and worship of God, remind your heart to get involved — ask your heart to recount God's love and blessing and let them become your "prompting." The sacrifice of Jesus to cover our sin is the biggest demonstration of God's love for us, what are some other demonstrations of God's love in your life?

PRAYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like to respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

The Golden Calf I

Passage: Exodus 32:1-14

April 5

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

PRAYER: Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

ADORATION: Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

READING GOD'S WORD: Read Exodus 32:1-14 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

NOTE: "Make us gods" — The Israelites were not requesting other "gods" to replace the LORD, they probably considered the calf-idol an image of God as they acknowledged it to be the "gods" who brought them out of Egypt (vv. 4-5). "Since only one idol was made, the word gods may refer both to the idol *and* to God whom it supposedly represented."* Also, it seems unlikely that Aaron would attribute the Exodus to anyone but the true God, and he declared the celebration to be the "festival to the LORD."

"indulge in revelry" — literally, "laugh," the same word as Sarah "laughed" (Gen. 18:12). It is also used in the false accusation of Joseph's approaching his master's wife (Gen. 39:14, 17). Here it suggests immorality (cf. 1 Cor. 10:7).

"relented" (vv. 12,14) — the form of the word here means "to have compassion, to be sorry." It "does not mean that God changed His mind but that He embarked on another course of action."*

RE-READING GOD'S WORD: Read Exodus 32:1-14 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

1. Why did the Israelites ask Aaron to make them gods? What was their mentality behind such request?

*John D. Hannah, "Exodus," in The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament Edition, eds. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1985), 155-156.

2. In God's conversation with Moses, what emotion and attribute do God's words reflect? And what emotion and attribute of God was Moses focusing on?
3. What can you learn about God's heart toward sinners from the result of His conversation with Moses?

It had been 40 days since Moses walked onto the top of the mountain and disappeared into the cloud. As the Israelites were waiting in the wilderness, still unaccustomed to the harsh condition and uncertain how they would get into the Promised Land ahead, they decided to take matters into their own hands. Since their visible human leader became "invisible," they asked Aaron to make them an idol that they could see to go before them, for their weak faith demanded something visible and tangible for them to follow. As we face the unknown future with all its difficulties, let us learn to live by faith and not by sight, not relying on the tangible and visible things that we could control, but on the mighty hand that carried us on eagles' wings and brought us to Himself (cf. Ex. 19:4).

In God's conversation with Moses, we can vividly see the strong emotional conflict within God. On the one hand, God's justice was burning in anger (as evident in God's words). He is a faithful God who cannot stand unfaithfulness. He cannot leave the guilty unpunished, but must punish the children for the sins of the fathers to the third and fourth generation (Ex. 20:5, the curse of the 2nd commandment on forbidding the making of idols). Yet, on the other hand, Moses was focusing on God's conflicting, but even stronger, emotion of faithful compassion — "do not bring disasters on YOUR people. REMEMBER your servants..." (v.12b-13). This is the anguish that our sin brings onto God's heart. This is the anguish that took the death of God's one and only beloved Son to bring reconciliation. When our hearts understand this anguish and what it cost, how could we take sin lightly any longer?

APPLICATION: Come before God and ask Him to show you what you are truly relying on — Him and His words, visible things/human, or something else? Ask God to build up your faith and thank Him for His mercy and sacrifice that brought you salvation.

PRAYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like to respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

The Golden Calf II

Passage: Exodus 32:15-35

April 6

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

PRAYER: Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

ADORATION: Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

READING GOD'S WORD: Read Exodus 32:15-35 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

NOTE: Atonement — the shedding of blood to cleanse sin and to appease God's righteous wrath against sin (Lev. 17:11).

"blot me out of the book you have written" — having one's name in God's book represent having life, thus Moses' request to blot out his name is to offer his life as a sacrifice for atonement for Israel.

RE-READING GOD'S WORD: Read Exodus 32:15-35 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

1. The tablets of the covenant laws were the personal writing of God. What did Moses' smashing of the tablets into pieces demonstrate to the Israelites?
2. Out of the twelve tribes of Israel, who responded when Moses called for those who are for the Lord? What was Moses' evaluation of them?
3. What does Moses' offer of atonement remind you of? What was the result of his offering?

Even though the people repeatedly responded to God's covenant with a loud "Yes, we will obey," they were "quick to turn away" and "stiff-neck" in their actions. They did exactly what God commanded them not to do in the 2nd commandment ("You shall not make for yourself an idol..."). When Moses smashed the tablets that God personally wrote the Ten Commandments on, he was demonstrating to the Israelites what they did to God's covenant with them — breaking it into pieces. Even though God relented from His plan to completely destroy the Israelites after Moses' plead, discipline was still needed for their sinful action. God's discipline of the people came through His faithful servant Moses. After smashing the tablets into pieces (v. 19b), Moses destroyed the idol according to God's instruction (Ex. 23:24) and made the people drink the powder ground from the calf-idol (v. 20), thus showing them how powerless the calf-idol was.

Then Moses summoned Aaron to give an account, thus giving him a chance to confess as a leader (vv.21-24), which sadly he did not do. In contrast, when Moses called for those who were for the Lord, the Levites was the only tribe which rallied to him. Moses told them that they had been set aside to and blessed by God; and later on, the Levites was the tribe chosen to serve in the House of God. Is this not the same calling that God is giving us today — to respond to God's calling and be set aside for His work?

After disciplining the people, Moses went back up the mountain to try making atonement for Israel (vv. 30-32). His offering of his own life in place of the Israelites resembled what Jesus, the Lamb of God, did on the cross for atonement. Yet, Moses' effort was futile because he could not take the place of sinners. No man is able to bring about atonement for others, for all have sinned (Rom. 3:23) except Jesus "who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin" (Heb. 4:15). Only the Lamb of God who is without defect is able to make atonement and bring forgiveness.

APPLICATION: What is the work that God is calling you to be set aside for? What is your response? How can you respond as the Levites did?

PRAYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like to respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

Go And Visit The Tent

Passage: Exodus 33:7-11

April 7

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

PRAYER: Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

ADORATION: Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

READING GOD'S WORD: Read Exodus 33:7-11 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

NOTE: "tent of meeting" — though sometimes the Tabernacle is also called the "tent of meeting," this tent was not the Tabernacle since the Tabernacle had not yet been erected and dedicated. It was apparently a place where one could inquire of God.

RE-READING GOD'S WORD: Read Exodus 33:7-11 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

1. Right after the recording of God's declaration that He would not go with the Israelites to the Promised Land (33:3) is the description of Moses pitching the tent where one could talk to God "outside the camp some distance away." What do you think such distance mean?

2. Despite the distance, anyone who sought God could go to the tent of meeting. What can you learn from this?

3. When Moses was in the tent, God would speak to him face to face as a friend, while the other Israelites worshiped outside. How does this inspire your "meeting" with God?

The Tabernacle, which represented the presence of God, was supposed to be erected inside the community of Israel. When the people committed the great sin of worshiping a manmade idol, they could not be in the presence of God. Now the meeting of God had to be outside of the camp, and the worship of God had to be done at a distance away from God. What a wedge our sin can put between God and us. Such is the contrast between Moses and the Israelites — one was a friend; the other, the enemy because of sin.

Yet, this same tent that marked the distance between God and man also provided a ray of hope — that "anyone inquiring of (or seeking) the Lord" could go to the tent as well. Even though Israel was separated from God because of sin; by God's grace, there was still a way back to God. This calls to mind Jesus' declaration: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).

As redeemed children who come to the Father through Jesus, we are entitled to the same intimate relationship that Moses had with God. In our "meeting" with God, we can talk to God face to face as one speaks to a friend — open and honest with each other. What a privilege it is! Are you taking advantage of such precious opportunities available to you? Are you staying in the camp some distance away, buried in your busyness; or standing at the entrance of your tent worshiping from afar, out of fear or shame? Or maybe you are wandering outside of the tent of meeting, unsure about what this "face to face" experience is going to be like? Whatever your situation may be, know that there is a faithful and compassionate friend inside the tent, waiting to meet and to talk with you.

APPLICATION: Just like the tent of meeting is open to anyone inquiring of the Lord, personal communication with God is available to us; Do not miss out on this privilege and set aside time to "visit the tent".

PRAYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like to respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

Knowing God's Name

Passage: Exodus 34:1-10

April 8

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

PRAYER: Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

ADORATION: Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

READING GOD'S WORD: Read Exodus 34:1-10 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

NOTE: "proclaimed his *name*" - in the Hebrew culture, one's name often tells of one's reputation and character.

RE-READING GOD'S WORD: Read Exodus 34:1-10 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

1. Compare to the first time, what was repeated in this second giving of the tablets (cf. 24:12-18)?
2. What things were unique to this second giving of the tablets (vv. 6-7)?
3. What are the descriptions of God when His name was proclaimed (vv. 6-10)? How did Moses respond after hearing God's name?

While the disobedience of the Israelites led to the breaking of the first tablets of the Covenant, the grace of God was there giving them a second chance. Compared to the first time, there were many repeats in the second time around — God personally wrote on the tablets, Moses was to be ready in the morning, it was on top of Mount Sinai, no one else could go with Moses, God came down in the cloud, and He spoke to Moses for 40 days and nights (34:28). Such repetition was a sign that God was renewing His covenant with His people.

On the other hand, there were unique and new things to this second giving of the tablets as well. This time, Moses had to chisel out the tablets to replace the ones he broke, so he went up with empty tablets instead of receiving them on the mountain. The most unique thing was that God "stood there with him and declared His name." On top of what God had told Moses about His name in Exodus 3:13-14, here God revealed even more of what He was like to Moses. Such was God's grace that after the experience of Israel's failure and God's discipline came a deeper revelation of who God was.

Rightly so, Moses "bowed to the ground at once and worshiped" (v. 8). What a beautiful picture of grace and response! With this deeper understanding of God's compassion and truth (v.7b, "he does not leave the guilty unpunished..."), Moses applied the knowledge and pleaded for the Israelites, which led to God's declaration of His renewed covenant.

APPLICATION: What is something new that you have learned about God from this passage? How can you respond to this new understanding and apply it in your life?

MEMORY VERSE: "For great is your love, higher than the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies." Psalm 108:4

PRAYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like to respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

The "Unimpressive" Lamb

Passage: Isaiah 53:1-12

April 9

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

PRAYER: Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

ADORATION: Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

READING GOD'S WORD: Read Isaiah 53:1-12 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

NOTE: Isaiah 52:13-53:12 is the fourth "Servant Song" of the book and is quoted or alluded to nearly forty times in the New Testament, with Jesus being the fulfillment of the prophecy of the "Suffering Servant," the long-awaited Messiah of the Jews.

RE-READING GOD'S WORD: Read Isaiah 53:1-12 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

1. Compare and contrast the description of the Suffering Servant in the beginning (vv. 2-3) and the end of the passage (vv. 11-12). What are the differences?
2. Of all the actions in the passage, majority was done to the Suffering Servant (i.e. "he was...") while only a few were his actions (vv. 4, 7). Sort out the actions into these two categories:

Actions done to the Suffering Servant:

Actions that the Suffering Servant took:

The passage starts with a comment that the work of the Suffering Servant (i.e. Jesus) is unbelievable and contradictory to the "common sense" of the world. Not only did He "sprout" from an unexpected place ("like a root out of dry ground" v. 2a), He was also unimpressive in His appearance. He was not attractive in look or status (v. 2b) so the world "despised" and "rejected" Him (v. 3). Yet, at the end of the passage, this apparently "unimpressive" man would be placed among the great and the strong by God after His suffering (v. 12), and many will be justified by him (v. 11). The one who is anything but glorious in appearance to the world will be divinely honored for His work.

What was the work of this Suffering Servant then? Although there were many horrendous actions done to Him (He was despised [v. 3], pierced, crushed, punished [v. 5], oppressed and afflicted, led to the slaughter [v. 7], taken away, cut off, stricken [v. 8], assigned a grave [v. 9], and caused to suffer [v. 10]), His actions were few but important — "...he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, (v.4)...he did not open his mouth (v. 7)...he poured out his life unto death,...he bore the sin of many (v. 12)...." The theme of these actions is that the Suffering Servant, Jesus, willingly took up the penalty due for our sin according to the will of God. He took the rejection, transgressions, iniquities, and punishment that were ours, in order to give us peace and healing.

APPLICATION: Take a moment to reflect on the images of Jesus' sacrifice for us, ask Him for His forgiveness and thank Him for all that He has done for you.

PRAYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like to respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

From Judas To Partaker

Passage: Mark 14:12-26

April 10

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

PRAYER: Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

ADORATION: Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

READING GOD'S WORD: Read Mark 14:12-26 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

Note: Passover — A Jewish festival on the evening of the 14th day of the month Nisan (March-April) to commemorate the LORD's passing over the houses of the Hebrews but slaying the firstborn of Egypt. Following the Passover is a week of celebration called the Festival of Unleavened Bread (Nisan 15-21), commemorating their hasty departure from Egypt.

The Lord's Supper (Communion) — an ordinance instituted by Jesus at the last supper before the cross. The bread and the cup are shared by believers (thus the name "Communion") to commemorate the sacrifice of Jesus (1 Cor. 11:24).

RE-READING GOD'S WORD: Read Mark 14:12-26 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

1. At this important festival dinner, Jesus made two "announcements"; what were they concerning?
2. If you were the traitor who was about to sell out Jesus, what would you have done when you heard Jesus said, "one of you will betray me"?

3. Notice that there is a pattern to Jesus' presentation of the bread and the cup. What were the repeated actions?

In Mark's recording of Jesus at the Passover dinner, two "announcements" were emphasized (i.e. "I tell you the truth" vv. 18, 25). Ironically, the first "announcement" concerned a traitor among the Twelve (vv. 17-21; Judas Iscariot was the traitor, cf. Mark 14:10, 43-45); while the second, the death of Christ Jesus (vv. 22-25). Jesus foreknew that Judas was about to betray him, and declared the horrific consequence for the evil act. This was not to shame him, but to give him a chance for repentance; for one would think that Judas would be scared since Jesus knew, and thus would quickly repent from his evil scheme. Unfortunately, he forfeited the chance by pretending to be innocent ("one by one they said to him, 'Surely not I?'" v. 19).

In light of such unrepentant betrayal, comes the second "announcement" concerning the presentation of the bread and the cup symbolizing the death of Christ Jesus. Judas' betrayal sets the backdrop to show the significance of Jesus' sacrifice and redemption. For we were all like Judas — a betrayer of God's law and love — unable to turn ourselves around; it is only through the receiving of Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf, that we can be in a relationship with God. As Jesus repeated the pattern of giving thanks, sharing with others, and taking the symbol of the bread and cup in remembrance of Him, we are reminded that Communion is to recall for us the great cost it took to bring us back to God, as well as the security ("blood of the covenant" v. 24) because of this great cost. The meaning of the Communion lies in grateful hearts coming together to remember the sacrifice received and to celebrate the relationship restored.

APPLICATION: Give thanks to God for turning you from a "Judas" to a partaker of the Communion. Think of ways to remind yourself of Jesus' words about the bread and the cup when you take Communion.

PRAYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like to respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

Death For Life

Passage: John 12:20-28

April 11

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

PRAYER: Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

ADORATION: Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

READING GOD'S WORD: Read John 12:20-28 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

NOTE: "Now my heart is *troubled*" — means "agitated, stirred" in the original language; the same word was also used in the Greek translation (LXX) of Ps. 109:22 as "my heart is wounded within me."

RE-READING GOD'S WORD: Read John 12:20-28 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

1. As Jesus was about to face the cross, what was His feeling (v. 27)? What can you learn about His thoughts from the analogy He gave in vv. 24 & 25?
2. What do you think Jesus meant when He said, "Whoever serves me must follow me" (v. 26)?

Jesus' heart was troubled or wounded within Him as the cross drew near. Such emotional turmoil was not out of the fear of pain or death, but out of the hurt from imagining His separation from the Father when He was about to take on the sin of the world. In agony, He wished that He could be delivered from "this hour." Yet, in the

analogy of the wheat kernel, Jesus explained the thoughts behind His obedience that ruled over His emotions. Just as the kernel that fell to its death would produce many seeds, Jesus' death would bring life to many, which was the "very reason" that He was sent by the Father. Knowing that fulfilling the reason He was sent would bring life to others and glory to the Father, Jesus declared, "Father, glorify your name!" (v. 28) For "the man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life." (v. 25) There is a temporary life in this world, and then there is an eternal life. Loving one's life does not only mean avoiding physical death, but it is a love of anything in this temporary life — wealth, fame, success, love, etc. If one loves anything in this temporary life more than God, he will eventually lose this life when he dies; on the contrary, letting go of things of this temporary life for God, will lead to a life that lasts.

Having set the example of obedience over emotion and desires, Jesus called for "whoever serves" Him to follow after Him. To follow after the Master is to value what He valued, to think what He thought, and to do what He did. "Where the [Master is], the servant also will be" (v. 26). It is unlikely that Jesus meant all believers have to follow His exact path of life events (even though many of the early church faithfuls, such as Peter who was thought to have been crucified upside down on a cross, were martyrs for their faith); rather, it is pointing to the imitation of His inner values that drove the outer actions. We are to follow His example of loving God more than our temporary life, of seeking God's glory over our own comfort and desires.

APPLICATION: What of your temporary life is God calling you to put to death for His glory — Wealth? Fame? Success? Love? Goals? Interests? How can you follow after Jesus' example?

PRAYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like to respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

Do As I Have Done

Passage: John 13:2-17

April 12

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

PRAYER: Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

ADORATION: Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

READING GOD'S WORD: Read John 13:2-17 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

NOTE: Foot washing — needed in Palestine where streets were dusty and people wore sandals without socks. It was the task of the servant to wash the feet of his master and the guests of the house (cf. 1 Sam. 25:41; Luke 7:40-50; 1 Tim. 5:10).

RE-READING GOD'S WORD: Read John 13:2-17 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

1. What do you imagine it was like to wash twelve pairs of dusty feet, including the pair of your betrayer?

2. What challenges does one have to overcome to take the position of a slave washing others' feet? (Fear of mess? Inconvenience? Please list as many as you can think of.)

Knowing that He would leave His students to return to God (v. 3), Jesus gave an important object lesson for one of the things that they were to do while He was away — that of washing feet. It must have been unappetizing to wash twelve pairs of dusty feet before a meal. Not only was the job filthy and messy, it was also unfitting and unexpected for a respected teacher to take the position of a slave, lowering himself to the feet of the students, not to mention, one of them being the traitor leading to His death. Likewise, if we are to serve others today, there may be troublesome messes, unappetizing tasks, inconvenient timings, unappreciative reactions, etc., that would require us to lower our pride and our comfort. To do so is to have a love for others that values the person over the mess and trouble they may create — like the love of a parent who does not mind, maybe even happy to cleaning byproducts to serve a child. What Jesus gave was an object lesson of love with humility and willing sacrifice.

By taking the lead to wash the disciples' feet, Jesus was saying, "Do as I have done, for 'no servant is greater than his master' (v. 16)." If Jesus the Son of God does not think it too lowly to serve as a slave, how can I think of myself as too noble to do the same? As believers in the body of Christ, we are commanded to do as He has done for us, to "wash one another's feet" in the spirit that Jesus has demonstrated.

APPLICATION: Who in your life has taken the posture of a slave to "wash your feet"? What did they do? Who can you serve in the same way today or tomorrow, and how?

MEMORY VERSE: "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet."

John 13:14

PRAYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like to respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

Beware Of Self-Confidence

Passage: Mark 14:27-31, 66-72

April 13

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

PRAYER: Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

ADORATION: Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

READING GOD'S WORD: Read Mark 14:27-31, 66-72 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

RE-READING GOD'S WORD: Read the above passages again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

1. What was Peter's feeling in vv. 29, 31? What was it in v. 72?
2. What do you think was going through his mind when Peter realized that he had failed just as miserably as Jesus had foretold?
3. Why did Jesus forewarn the disciples that "You will all fall away"?

When Jesus forewarned the disciples that they would all fall away, Peter was probably feeling self-confident that he would be the last of the 11 disciples to deny Jesus. Even when Jesus, the one who had never been wrong in His prophecy thus far, specifically laid out how he would fail, Peter "insisted emphatically" that he was confident that he would not fall. What a contrast as we reach verse 72 at the second crow of the rooster; Peter was feeling completely broken as he did exactly the thing that he could not imagine himself doing — denying Jesus, not once, but three times. All he could do was "broke down and wept" (v. 72).

Most likely, many questions and regrets were flowing through his mind, and maybe one of those questions was, "how did I come to this? I was confident that I would never fail like this." It was unimaginable to Peter when he first heard of his future denial. When it happened, it must have been humiliating and humbling at the same time — to know that he overestimated himself, but also realized that Jesus knew, yet Jesus was patient with his "boasting." Peter stumbled because of his overestimation on his own strength, and his example reminds us to keep watch over prideful confidence in ourselves. It is by the strength which God graciously provides that we can live a faithful life.

APPLICATION: What do you feel most confident about yourself? Pray for God's protection and wisdom to guard against stumbling in your confidence.

MEMORY VERSE: "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall."
Proverbs 16:1

PRAYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like to respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

Which One Do You Want?

Passage: Matthew 17:11-26

April 14

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

PRAYER: Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

ADORATION: Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

READING GOD'S WORD: Read Matthew 17:11-26 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

NOTE: Barabbas — a notorious prisoner who was an insurrectionist and murderer (Mark 15:7)

Washing of hands — a Hebrew tradition for demonstration of innocence (Deut. 21:6-9)

RE-READING GOD'S WORD: Read Matthew 17:11-26 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

1. What was the charge against Jesus as recorded in this passage? (v. 11)
2. What was Pilate's judgment of Jesus? (vv. 18, 23, 24)
3. Led by the chief priests and the elders, what was the crowd's judgment of Jesus? (vv. 21, 22, 23)

The Jewish leaders had been envious of Jesus' influence over the people and angry over Jesus' accusation against their pretentious self-righteousness. In order to put Jesus to death, the leaders brought Him to Pilate with the charge of claiming to be the King of the Jews, implying that He was leading a revolution against the Roman empire. It is ironic that in one sense, the charge was false because Jesus did not organize any civil rebellion; but in another sense, Jesus did claim to be the King of Jews whose kingdom "is not of this world" (John 18:36).

Pilate, as an outsider, was able to see clearly that Jesus was innocent (vv. 23, 24). He saw the envy behind the leaders' accusations of Jesus (v. 18). He even tried to appeal to the people thinking that they would choose Jesus because He was influential among the Jews. Sadly, the crowd gave in to the persuasion of the leaders instead, and declared that they wanted Jesus to be crucified (vv.22, 23). Likewise, in our life today, there are many voices that will persuade us to choose "Barabbas" instead of Jesus — to embrace other values, standards, life styles instead of the way of Jesus. Just like the crowd, we have to answer the question, "Which one of the two do you want?" What would be your answer today?

APPLICATION: How would you answer the questions, "Who do you want, 'Barabbas' or Jesus who is called Christ? Is He your King?" How would you demonstrate your answer with your life?

MEMORY VERSE: "But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."
Jos. 24:15b

PRAYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like to respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

The Purposeful And Powerful Silence

Passage: Matthew 27:32-54

April 15

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

PRAYER: Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

ADORATION: Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

READING GOD'S WORD: Read Matthew 27:32-54 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

NOTE: The curtain of the temple — the veil that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place (Heb. 9:2-3); only the high priest may enter into the Most Holy Place once a year, but after the sacrifice of Jesus, the veil was torn from top to bottom symbolizing the opening of a way into God's presence (Heb. 4:14-16).

RE-READING GOD'S WORD: Read Matthew 27:32-54 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

1. What were the insults that the different groups hurled at Jesus (vv. 37-44, 49)? Please list them out below.

2. What was Jesus' response to their insults? Why did He not accomplish the things that they challenged Him with?

3. What were the things that happened at the moment Jesus gave up His spirit? What are their significances?

After being sentenced to death even though He was found to be innocent, Jesus was brought to Golgotha to be crucified. The passersby and the Jewish leaders were relentless in their mockery of the innocent man dying on the cross. They challenged Jesus to repeat the miracles that He did for others, and they dared Him to have God rescue His Son. Ironically, while they thought that Jesus' and God's silence proved that He was a fraud, but in reality, their insults further demonstrated that Jesus willingly put down His power and rights to become God's guilt offering (Isa. 53:10).

In sharp contrast, the rest of creation was in tune with the meaning of Jesus' sacrifice. At the moment that Jesus gave up His spirit, the veil that separated man from God's presence was torn completely from top to bottom — the Mercy Seat where God spoke with Moses was now in plain view to mankind. At the death of the Son of God, the earth shook, the rocks split, and the tombs broke open (vv. 51-52). Creation itself was shook up over the fact that the Son of God had experienced death for the sake of mankind. Even the unbelieving centurion and the guards recognized who Jesus was.

Even today, at times God is silent toward unbelieving challenges, and even the requests of believers; but the fact is, silence does not mean inability or indifference. God will never cease to be able to surprise us with His earth shattering plans; and they are always plans "for the good of those who love him" (Rom. 8:28).

APPLICATION: When has God been silent toward challenges or requests in your life? Pray for God to help you see His purpose and power behind it all, and then take some time to listen for God's answer.

MEMORY VERSE: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."
Romans 8:28

PRAYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like to respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

Go And Tell

Passage: Matthew 27:62-28:20

April 16

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

PRAYER: Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

ADORATION: Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

READING GOD'S WORD: Read Matthew 27:62-28:20 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

RE-READING GOD'S WORD: Read Matthew 27:62-28:20 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

1. What was the chief priests' reaction when they found out Jesus was not a deceiver and He indeed had risen after three days (28:12-14)? What does that show about their heart condition?
2. Both the women and the guards encountered the angel, how was their experiences different (28:4-7)? How was their actions after the encounter different (28:8, 11)?
3. What is the commonality in the angel's and Jesus' instruction to the women and the disciples (28:7, 10, 19-20)?

The chief priests and the Pharisees were supposed to be the ones who knew God's word the best and strove the hardest to live by them; yet when they "remembered" what Jesus said and then heard of it coming true, instead of worshiping God, they devised a plan to

frame Jesus as a "deceiver" (vv. 28:12-14). What darkness has the effect of sin put men in! As the disciple John had written, "In [Jesus] was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it" (John 1:4-5). As believers and children of light, may we seek to fill our life with God's word of light daily.

Both the women and the guards were first hand witnesses of what the angel did at the tomb, and they were all afraid; but they differed in that the guards "became like dead men," while the women were invited to be the first ones to "come and see" the glorious empty tomb (vv. 4-5). Their respective actions afterward were vastly different as well. The guards reported to the chief priests and in turn took a large sum of bribe to tell a lie. On the contrary, the women, also being the first ones to see the resurrected Jesus, were afraid but "filled with joy" as they went and told the disciples. What honor and blessing it was to be the first to witness and to tell of the good news of hope!

Interestingly, Jesus' instruction to the women and the disciples were similar — "go and tell" versus "go and make disciples... teaching them..." (vv. 7, 19, 20). They shared a pattern of "seeing Jesus," "worshiping Jesus," and "go and tell about Jesus" (vv. 9-10, 17, 19-20). In fact, we are called to repeat the same pattern of "go and tell about Jesus" after we have seen; for we have been given "the ministry of reconciliation...and he has committed to us the message of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:18-19).

APPLICATION: Where and to whom is God sending you to "go and tell" His good news? Think of your personal experience of encountering God that you can share with others; then pray for courage and opportunity to "go and tell."

MEMORY VERSE: ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:"
2 Corinthians 5:17-18

PRAYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like to respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

Power From On High

Passage: Luke 24:36-53

April 17

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

PRAYER: Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

ADORATION: Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

READING GOD'S WORD: Read Luke 24:36-53 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

RE-READING GOD'S WORD: Read Luke 24:36-53 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

1. What were the different stages that the disciples went through during their meeting with Jesus? (vv. 37, 41, 52-53)
2. What were the different ways Jesus empowered the disciples in their faith? (vv. 39-40, 41-43, 44-49, 50-51)

This passage gives a great example of faith being empowered. At the beginning, the disciples were "startled and frightened," thinking that they had seen "a ghost" (v. 37). Then even though "they still did not believe it," joy and amazement were sparked in them as they considered that it might be real (v. 41). However, at the end of the passage, their joy became great, for their faith was empowered, and they stayed continually in the temple, praising God" (v. 52-53).

As amazing as it is to read about the disciples' transformation in their faith, it is even more astonishing to know all the things that Jesus did to empower the disciples. When they were frightened and mistaken, Jesus gently showed them His hands and feet (vv. 39-40). When they still did not believe, Jesus patiently ate in their presence (vv. 41-43). What they did not understand before, Jesus thoughtfully opened their minds and promised that they would be "clothed with power from on high" (vv. 44-49). And before He had to leave them, Jesus "lifted up his hands and blessed them" (v. 50-51). At every turn, Jesus sought to build up and to empower the disciples' shaken up faith after the cross. Even though, we do not have the honor to touch the hands and feet of Jesus, or have Him eat in our presence, the heart of Jesus is the same for all His followers — "Christ Jesus, who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us" (Rom. 8:34b). During moments of weakness in our faith, may we "approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in our time of need" (Heb. 4:16).

APPLICATION: What is an area of weakness in your faith right now? What would help to build you up in this area? Pray for Jesus' empowerment and patiently expect to receive mercy and grace.

MEMORY VERSE: "Christ Jesus, who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us." Romans 8:34b

PRAYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like to respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

From Dead To Alive

Passage: Ephesians 2:1-10

April 18

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

PRAYER: Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

ADORATION: Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

READING GOD'S WORD: Read Ephesians 2:1-10 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

NOTE: Ruler of the kingdom of the air — also called "the god of this age" in 2 Cor. 4:4, refers to Satan (1 John 5:19).

"spirit" (v.3) — "refers to the impersonal force or atmosphere, which is controlled and directed by Satan."*

RE-READING GOD'S WORD: Read Ephesians 2:1-10 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

1. In the world where we were dead in, what was ruling inside the person (v. 3)? What was ruling outside in the world (v. 2)?
2. In the world where we are made alive in, what are God's actions toward us (vv. 5, 6)? For what purposes (vv. 7, 10)?

*Harold W. Hoehner, "Ephesians," in The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament Edition, eds. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1983), 622.

In this passage, we are told about the sharp contrast between the world of death we were in and the world of life in Christ. In the former, sinful desires and thoughts rule inside the person (v. 3), while the "ruler of the kingdom of the air" and the spirit of disobedience rule the external world. It is a sphere that is filled inside out with selfish desires and oppositions to God. It is a world that will receive God's wrath in eternal death, and we were part of it (v. 3).

In contrast, the world we are brought into through Christ, is a world ruled by God who is rich in mercy and grace (v. 4, 7). Out of His "great love for us", God did not only make us alive and raise us up with Christ, He also seated us with Him in the heavenly realms (v. 5, 6). Through the sacrifice of Christ Jesus, God removed us from the path of eternal death and onto one with a place in heaven. Two purposes of why God graciously saved sinners are stated in this passage — ① to show God's incomparable grace and kindness, and ② for the saved ones to do the good works prepared for them (vv. 7, 10). Not only are we saved from eternal death, but we are also given an active purpose to live out our new life by doing good works according to God's plan.

APPLICATION: Thank God for His great love, mercy, and grace toward us. Knowing that God has prepared "good works" for you to do, list down what these "good works" might be in your life:

MEMORY VERSE: "For we are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."
Ephesians 2:10

PRAYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like to respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

Where, O Death, Is Your Victory?

Passage: 1 Corinthians 15:51-58

April 19

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

PRAYER: Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

ADORATION: Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

READING GOD'S WORD: Read 1 Corinthians 15:51-58 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

RE-READING GOD'S WORD: Read 1 Corinthians 15:51-58 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

NOTE: "sleep" — referring to death (cf. Matt. 9:24; 1 Thess. 4:13-18), describing the temporary effect of the first physical death, for there is also the second eternal death in hell (cf. Rev. 21:8).

"Last trumpet" — symbolizes "calling, awakening, and victory" and often signals the appearance of God (cf. Ex. 19:16; Lev. 25:9; Isa. 27:13).

1. Paul said twice that "we will be changed" (vv. 51 & 52). What are we now and what will we be changing into? (vv. 53 & 54)

2. What will happen at the sound of the "last trumpet" (v. 52)?

3. What is the victory that we have through our Lord Jesus Christ (v. 56)?

The mystery that Paul wanted to share with his reader is that not every one of the believers will experience physical death ("sleep," see comment above); but for sure, everyone will "be changed" at the end of time when Jesus comes again (v. 51). This change is from "perishable" to "imperishable," and "mortal" to "immortality" (vv. 53 & 54). Such change is not only spiritual, but a whole person change that also includes the physical body. For at the sound of the "last trumpet," which symbolizes "calling, awakening, and victory" at the appearance of God, those who have died will be resurrected into an "imperishable" body, while those still alive will be transformed instantly (v. 52). This is the beautiful and encouraging hope of Easter, that one day we will see our salvation fully demonstrated; for at the return of Jesus, believers "will be caught up" with our loved ones who are dead in Christ, to "meet the Lord in the air and so we will be with the Lord forever" (1 Thess. 4:17).

In Christ, death no longer has victory over us. We will no longer fear the "sting" of death, for its effect is only temporary like a long nap from which we will wake up to an imperishable life with the Lord forever. Our victory through the Lord Jesus Christ is the defeat of death — Christ's sacrifice in our place has fulfilled the requirement of the law, and thus taking away the power of sin to demand the wages of death (cf. Rom. 6:23). With this victory in hand, Paul exhorts us ① to stand firm, so we will not be confused or be led away by false teaching, and ② to always give ourselves fully to the work of the Lord, for surely we will enjoy the fruit of our labor in eternity with the Lord.

APPLICATION: In your current state, how can the certainty of a future imperishable life help you stand firm and do the work of the Lord?

MEMORY VERSE: ⁵⁵Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" ⁵⁶The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 15:55-57

PRAYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like to respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

From Attitude To Obedience

Passage: Philippians 2:5-13

April 20

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

PRAYER: Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

ADORATION: Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

READING GOD'S WORD: Read Philippians 2:5-13 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

NOTE: "appearance as a man" — The phrase does not mean that Jesus only looked like a human; the phrase in Greek means "an outer appearance which may be temporary." In connection with the description "very nature" of verse 6, it is referring to an outer appearance that reveals permanent inner quality.

RE-READING GOD'S WORD: Read Philippians 2:5-13 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

1. This passage starts with an exhortation regarding "attitude"; what exhortation does it end with (v. 12)? What can be learned from this progression?
2. What two or three words would you use to sum up Jesus' attitude?
3. How would you explain to someone what "continue to work out your salvation" means?

The progression of the passage starts, first, with an exhortation regarding one's attitude before ending at obedience. Unlike laws and policies, which only require obedience in behavior, the example of Jesus is one of visible obedience that corresponds with an inner attitude. The two are elements of one whole — "[Jesus] humbled himself and became obedient to death" (v. 8). We are exhorted to follow Jesus' example of obedience in attitude and action.

Two of the words that can sum up Jesus' attitude are "selfless humility". Though Jesus is fully God, He did not grasp on to His power and authority as something He is unwilling to put down (v. 6). Instead, He "made himself nothing" and willingly took on the humble nature, as well as the appearance of a man (fully human; v. 7). Jesus' attitude is one of humility without any claim on the interest of Himself.

With this attitude of "selfless humility," Paul exhorts his readers to obey and to "continue to work out [their] salvation" (v. 12). Notice that he does not say "work for your salvation," but "work out." The verb "work out" carries the meaning of "work to full completion"; it was also used for "working a mine," that is, getting out of the mine all the valuable ore possible. Paul goes on to say that this is because "it is God who *works in* you to will and to act according to his good purpose" (v. 13). Thus, to "work out your salvation" means to dig out (as in a mine) the "will" and "act" which God has already put inside us when we first believed. It is not a barter and exchange of works for salvation, but a revealing, a bringing to the surface, of the salvation that God freely gave. Paul's exhortation is also for us today — to obey in attitude and action and continue to reveal in our life the salvation that God has given us.

APPLICATION: Come up with at least one actionable item to "dig out" God's salvation in you, then make a game plan on how to carry it out this week.

MEMORY VERSE: "¹² Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed — not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence — continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose." Philippians 2:12-13

PRAYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like to respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

Wear Your New Clothes

Passage: Ephesians 4:17-32

April 21

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

PRAYER: Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

ADORATION: Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

READING GOD'S WORD: Read Ephesians 4:17-32 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

RE-READING GOD'S WORD: Read Ephesians 4:17-32 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

1. In this passage, what imagery does Paul use to describe the transformation of believers? (vv. 22-24)

2. What is the "former way of life" like according to verses 17-19?

3. What can you learn about the process of "put off, made new, and put on" from the specific examples that Paul gives (vv. 25-32)?

In comparison to the "work out" in Philippians 2:12, here Paul gives another imagery of "put off, made new, and put on" (vv. 22-24). This vivid imagery brings into mind a person "putting off" (or "lay aside" in NASB) the old self like a piece of "corrupted" clothing; then after being transform in attitude and thinking, he puts on a new garment that shows the likeness of God in "true righteousness and holiness." What an amazing transformation it would be!

To help his readers better understand this transformation, Paul first describes the thing to be "put off." The "former way of life" is the lacking in understanding and resistant to the life of God (hardening of hearts, v. 18). Due to such attitude of the minds, the results are endless indulgence in self-gratification and disregard for others. To bring out the contrast, Paul gives specific examples of the transformation process from "put off" to "put on." The common theme in the examples is that not only is the corruptive behavior terminated, they are replaced with godly behaviors that are ① beneficial to others and ② purposeful for the doer — the doer's hands are useful, and his mouth, truthful and helpful (vv. 25, 28-29). This process of "put off, made new, and put on" embodies the essence of true repentance which is to stop, to turn around, and to go in the right direction.

APPLICATION: Reflect on your process of "put off, made new, and put on," in which area(s) are you having success, and in which area(s) are you struggling? Re-read the specific examples in verses 25-32 to help you think of ways to break through your struggles.

MEMORY VERSE: ²²You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness." Ephesians 4:22-24

PRAYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like to respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

God Reconfirmed His Covenant

Passage: Numbers 13:1-2, 21-33

April 22

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

PRAYER: Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

ADORATION: Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

READING GOD'S WORD: Read Numbers 13:1-2, 21-33 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

NOTE: "we saw the *Nephilim* there" — "Nephilim" means "the fallen" or translated as Giants, also appears in Genesis 6:4. It is used here to denote the intimidating appearance of the Anak who were descendants of the Nephilim.

RE-READING GOD'S WORD: Read Numbers 13:1-2, 21-33 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

1. What did the men's report confirm about God's promise? What worries did it bring? (vv. 26-29)
2. After seeing the same things that the other men saw, what was Caleb's conclusion (v. 30)? What was the men's reason for disagreeing with Caleb (v. 31)?

3. What was different in the "bad report" that they later spread (vv. 32-33)?

When the Israelites arrived at the Desert of Paran (Ex. 12:16), which was right outside of the Promised Land, twelve men were sent in to explore the land. They went throughout the land, exploring from the southern end (Desert of Zin) to the northern edge (Rehob). The men's report confirmed that the land was as good as God said in His promise — "it does flow with milk and honey!" (v. 27). Yet, their report brought worries along with confirmation. They reported that throughout the land were powerful people and fortified cities (vv. 28-29), thus hinting that it was a daunting challenge to take possession of Canaan.

After seeing the same powerful people and fortified cities as the other men, Caleb had a different conclusion - "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can **certainly** do it" (v. 30). Instead of reacting to the sight of "people and cities," Caleb responded to God and His promise (v. 2). For after all, God had overcome many daunting challenges for His people — in Egypt, at the Red Sea, in the wilderness (water and manna), just to name a few. In contrast, the men only saw how strong the Anakim were, so they disagreed with Caleb and declared, "We can't attack those people" (v. 31). And out of such fear, the men dragged the rest of Israel into their lack of faith by spreading a bad report, that instead of "flowing with milk and honey", now the land "devours those living in it" (v. 32). Often, challenges and difficulties of this life can drag us into a state of "little faith" as well, but may the example of Caleb inspire us to respond to God, instead of to react to sight.

APPLICATION: Recall the times when God protected and lead you through different challenges, so that you could be prepared to respond by faith and not by sight even when "bad reports" come.

PRAYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like to respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

He Will Do Just What He Said

Passage: Numbers 14:11-24

April 23

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

PRAYER: Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

ADORATION: Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

READING GOD'S WORD: Read Numbers 14:11-24 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

RE-READING GOD'S WORD: Read Numbers 14:11-24 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

1. What was God's evaluation of the Israelites' actions (vv. 11 & 12)?

What their actions mean:

The punishment due:

2. On what ground was Moses pleading for God's forgiveness of the Israelites? (vv. 17-19)

3. Since God forgave the Israelites (v. 20), what do you think is the point of God forbidding the men to enter Canaan?

Concerning the Israelites' refusal to go into Canaan, God declared that they were rejecting God — treating Him with contempt and refusing to believe in Him (v. 11). The punishment due for such rejection "in spite of all the miraculous signs" was death by a plague (v. 12). Just like he did after the golden calf rebellion (Ex. 32:7-14), Moses again pleaded on behalf of the people for God's forgiveness. The ground of his plead was not on any good deed or value of the people, but on God's faithfulness to His oath and His great love that would forgive (vv. 16-18). Agreeing with Moses' understanding of Him, God forgave the Israelites as Moses had asked.

Yet, even though the Israelites were forgiven, those who disobeyed were forbidden to enter the Promised Land. This consequence was given as discipline and as a lesson from God. For they did not believe God would do the things He promised, so God showed them that He would do exactly what He said. God said that those who did not believe would not enter Canaan, so even though they were the strong men of Israel, they would end their lives in the desert. God said that those who believed would inherit the land, so even though Caleb would be old, he would inherit just as God promised. The lesson is that God will accomplish what He says regardless of any obstacles.

APPLICATION: Think of at least one area in your life today where you can practice believing in God's promise. Write it down and record your experience.

PRAYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like to respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

There Is No Short Cut

Passage: Numbers 14:39-45

April 24

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

PRAYER: Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

ADORATION: Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

READING GOD'S WORD: Read Numbers 14:39-45 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

RE-READING GOD'S WORD: Read Numbers 14:39-45 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

1. What do you think the Israelites tried to accomplish by going "up toward the high hill country" the next morning?
2. What was Moses' counsel for them? (vv. 41 & 42)
3. What was the result? (vv. 44 & 45)

After hearing God's declaration that they would miss the opportunity to go into Canaan and die in the desert, the Israelites tried to take a short cut to avoid the consequence of their actions. They thought that by "confessing" and marching up to the high hill country, they could "cheat the system" and go into the Promised Land. Is this not the same temptation that we may face in the aftermath of our stumbling? We would dread the torture of facing the consequence of our mistake, and hope that we could altogether avoid it with a superficial confession.

Moses' counsel to the people was that they should not go and thus disobey God again. They might try to go and attack the enemies, but they would not succeed without God's presence. God's word is the final word, and it cannot be manipulated. The Israelites' thoughtless repentance is demonstrated by their disregard for Moses' counsel to accept and obey God's command (v. 41). Not surprisingly, the Israelites were badly defeated by the enemies. The lesson for them was that there was no short cut around it — they needed to face the discipline in the desert and learn to obey.

APPLICATION: Slow down and take time to reflect and to absorb God's discipline in your life. Do not hurry the process, but seek to understand and practice the lesson thoroughly.

PRAYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like to respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

Let God Be The Judge

Passage: Numbers 16:1-4, 12-22

April 25

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

PRAYER: Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

ADORATION: Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

READING GOD'S WORD: Read Numbers 16:1-4, 12-22 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

NOTE: "Korah son of Izhar" — cousin of Moses and Aaron, their grandfather was Kohath from the tribe of Levi. Korah as a Levi had the job of serving in the Tabernacle, but only Aaron and his descendants could be part of the priesthood (cf. Lev. 7:34; 13:2).

RE-READING GOD'S WORD: Read Numbers 16:1-4, 12-22 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

1. What was Korah and his followers' accusation of Moses and Aaron (vv. 3, 12-14)?
2. What did Moses do when he was made "very angry" by the opposition (v. 15)?
3. When God said that He would destroy the whole assembly, what was Moses' and Aaron's response (v. 22)?

The group of 250 leaders led by Korah, Dathan and Abiram went up to Moses and Aaron to accuse them of being power hungry and liars. First they accused Moses and Aaron for selfishly setting themselves above other Israelites who were just as "holy" (v. 3). Then Dathan and Abiram added on to the slander that Moses lied about bringing the Israelites into the Promise Land, but intended to kill them in the desert (vv. 12-14). These accusations were meant to challenge Moses' leadership and Aaron's priesthood in favor of a new leadership, namely that of Korah and his men.

After the rejection of his attempt to talk with the men (v. 12), Moses was feeling indignant and angry, for he did not "take so much as a donkey from them" (v. 15) to deserve such challenge and slander. Even though he was "very angry," the only one Moses talked to and vented with was God. In the face of injustice, what Moses sought first and foremost was God's understanding and judgment. Throughout the incident, Moses did not make any argument or present evidence in his own defense; he only insisted on having God be the judge. Such wisdom and discipline in handling injustice and anger is a worthy example for us today. As Paul wrote in Rom. 12:19, "Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' said the Lord."

Yet, when God was prepared to do justice and to avenge Moses and Aaron, they "fell facedown and cried out" for God to spare the assembly. It is inspiring to read such great example of leadership that in their anger against injustice, there was still urgent love and care for the people which took priority over the hurt of the self.

APPLICATION: Think of specific ways to adopt a "Moses and Aaron" type of attitude in your life (e.g. "to seek God first in your anger," "to let God do the judging," "to love others over my own feelings,"...). See how you could apply these principles to your life.

PRAYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like to respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

Standing Between The Living And The Dead

Passage: Numbers 16:28-35, 41-50

April 26

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

PRAYER: Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

ADORATION: Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

READING GOD'S WORD: Read Numbers 16:28-35, 41-50 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

RE-READING GOD'S WORD: Read Numbers 16:28-35, 41-50 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

1. What was God's judgment of the assembly's opposition (vv. 43-45)?
2. What was Moses' instruction to Aaron as God's judgment came to the assembly?

Even though the people saw the opposition leaders die of divine judgment, they went on the same path and "grumbled against Moses and Aaron" who had been confirmed as divinely appointed leaders (vv. 28-30). To grumble and stand in opposition to God's leaders was to "treat the Lord with contempt" (v. 30). For this sin against God, the judgment was for God to "put an end" to the assembly at once in the form of a plague (vv. 45 & 46).

As God's judgment came upon the assembly, not only was Moses sensitive to the fate of the people, he immediately instructed Aaron to "hurry...to make atonement for them" (v. 46). One can imagine Aaron running into the midst of the assembly for the lives of the people, and right on the spot, he "offered the incense and made atonement for them," and the plague stopped. As Aaron looked down, on the one side of him was the living, and the other, the dead. This image of Aaron standing between the living and the dead embodies the spirit behind Jesus' Great Commission to us — for God's judgment is coming upon the world, and we are instructed to hurry into the midst of the people bringing God's atonement for them. We are the "Aarons" of this age, the Gospel carriers who have been given the ability to "stop the plague" for others and to stand between the living and the dead.

APPLICATION: Who is God calling you to "hurry and make atonement for"? Pray for that person's salvation right now, and think of ways to start a conversation about God with him/her in the near future.

MEMORY VERSE: ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation."
2 Corinthians 5:18-19

PRAYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like to respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

Be Strong And Courageous!

Passage: Joshua 1:1-9

April 27

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

PRAYER: Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

ADORATION: Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

READING GOD'S WORD: Read Joshua 1:1-9 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

RE-READING GOD'S WORD: Read Joshua 1:1-9 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

1. What was God's promise to Joshua? (vv. 3-5)
2. For three times God said to Joshua, "Be strong and courageous." What was the reason God gave for each of the encouragement?

Verse 6 —

Verses 7 & 8 —

Verse 9 —

After the death of Moses, Joshua, the aid of the late leader, was officially taking up the task of leading the Israelite into Canaan. Even though there was visible human leadership turnover, the LORD, the God who gave and sustained authority was the same. God reassured Joshua that His oath to give the Promise Land had not and would not change; and He promised Joshua that, "As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you." (v. 5) Such divine reassurance must have been a boost of confidence for the new leader.

For three times God said to Joshua, "Be strong and courageous." The reasons God gave for such encouragements are: ① God would keep His promise and for sure Joshua would succeed in bringing the people into Canaan (v. 6). ② God would bless the Israelites wherever they went if they kept the commandments (vv. 7 & 8). ③ God would stay with Joshua every step of the way (v. 9). Even though the task that God gave Joshua was challenging, God sent him out with a great promise of strength and of His presence. Likewise in our life today, we can be sure that God is still the same — He will not send us to face challenges without giving us sufficient strength and grace.

APPLICATION: Recall some of your experiences of receiving encouragement from God when facing a challenge. Write them down and use them as a reminder of God's grace.

MEMORY VERSE: "Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."
Joshua 1:9b

PRAYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like to respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

The Prostitute Who Was Saved By Faith

Passage: Joshua 2

April 28

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

PRAYER: Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

ADORATION: Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

READING GOD'S WORD: Read Joshua 2 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

NOTE: Rahab — Her family was the only survivors from the destruction of Jericho due to her agreement with the spies. She went on to become part of Jesus' genealogy as the great-grand-mother of king David (Matt. 1:5).

RE-READING GOD'S WORD: Read Joshua 2 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

1. What did Rahab hear about the God of Israel? (v. 10)
2. What was Rahab's belief about God? (vv. 9, 11)
3. What was the spies' instruction to Rahab (vv. 17-21)? What other event does it remind you of?

When Rahab's country heard about God parting the Red Sea and leading the Israelites' defeat of the Amorite kings (v. 10), Rahab came to have new beliefs about the God of Israel. She believed that Jericho would fall just as God said, and that Israel's God was the real God who had authority in heaven and on earth (vv. 9, 11). These were the beliefs that drove her to disobey the order of the king of Jericho, but to surrender to the will of the "LORD".

The spies' instruction to Rahab was for her to tie a scarlet cord in the window and her family had to stay inside the house in order to be saved (vv. 17-21). These instructions were very similar to those given to the Israelites at the first Passover — they had to put blood on the top and sides of the doorframe, and no one should go out of the house until morning (Ex. 12:22-23). God told Abraham that when "the sin of the Amorites had reached its full measure," his descendants will come to take possession of the land (Gen. 15:16). Rahab the prostitute was supposed to perish with her country, but because she believed in the God she heard about, she was given the same "pass over" that the Israelites had received. Rahab was the foreshadow of all of us who are sinners saved through faith.

APPLICATION: Rahab's belief in God drove her to reject the king of Jericho in favor of surrendering to God's plan. Who is the "king of Jericho" demanding your obedience today? List down some of the things with that he is asking you to comply? Be determined to let your belief of God drive you into surrendering to God alone.

PRAYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like to respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

Monthly Reflection

Passage: Psalm 103:8-12

April 29

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

QUIET DOWN: Use one to two minutes to quiet down yourself, try not to think about anything. If light music (without lyrics) helps, you could play some light music to help you focus.

PRAYER AND MEDITATION: Ask God to calm your heart, then read aloud Psalm 103:8-12, slowly and repeatedly (you may repeat it three to five times or more, but avoid rushing through it). As you read, try to pay attention to specific words, moods or feelings, or any particular thoughts that speak to you between the lines. Use this Bible passage or your respective insight as a beginning prayer of today's reflection.

*⁸The LORD is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in love.*

*⁹He will not always accuse,
nor will he harbor his anger forever;
¹⁰he does not treat us as our sins deserve
or repay us according to our iniquities.*

*¹¹For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his love for those who fear him;*

*¹²as far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our transgressions from us.*

Psalm 103:8-12

YOUR FEELINGS:

REFLECTION: Please meditate quietly and answer the following questions and prompts.

1. Please count and write down the various situations that you experienced God's grace in your life in the past month.
2. List down areas that you need to improve on?
3. Other reflections:

PRAYER: Ask the Lord to grant you strength to live out what you have learned today.

See, I Have Delivered Jericho Into Your Hands!

Passage: Joshua 6:1-23

April 30

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

PRAYER: Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

ADORATION: Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

READING GOD'S WORD: Read Joshua 6:1-23 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

RE-READING GOD'S WORD: Read Joshua 6:1-23 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

1. What was the order in the arrangement of the Israelites' march (vv. 8 & 9)?
2. Instead of fighting with the swords in their hands, how did the soldiers "fight" in the war against Jericho (vv. 11-20)?

3. How does the fall of Jericho's wall affirm God's declaration that He has delivered Jericho into Israel's hands?

40 years ago, the 10 unbelieving explorers thought that they would have to attack the powerful enemies and break down the fortified city wall in order to take possession of the land. Ironically, the day of the fall of Jericho was nothing like they expected. The Israelite army marched in the order of: the armed guard, the seven priests blowing trumpets, the Ark, and the rear guard (vv. 8 & 9). As the guards marched, the word of the Lord and His presence were in the middle of the army. As the guards marched, the Law of the Lord came and surrounded Jericho with God's judgment.

In the war against Jericho, the soldiers did not fight with swords and their own strength. Instead, their "fighting" was done in the form of obediently marching, and on the seventh day, they shouted. They "fought" by the strength of God's promise, and the wall collapsed at the shout of the people (v. 20). The effortless destruction of Jericho affirmed that Israel had received the victory from God. Israel did not have to fight by their own strength, but only to take possession of what God delivered into their hands.

APPLICATION: List down some of the challenges and threats that you have to face in life, take them to God by prayer and take time to finish listening to God's guidance. Even if the answer sounds irrational, remind yourself of Israel's experience at Jericho, and march on with a faith in God's promise.

PRAYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like to respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

Overall Insights In April

Write down the overall spiritual insights that you have learned in your daily devotion this month:

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