




FAITH JOURNEY **Devotional**

BUILDING
FOR THE
VISION



The Prayer Team wishes to express great appreciation and much thanks to all those who spent time in prayer and wrote what God laid on their hearts to contribute to this devotional booklet. It is our prayer that this Faith Journey Devotional will help focus our minds on the Lord Jesus Christ and encourage prayer, both corporate and private in the life of Faith Baptist Church.

May the God of the entire universe, Creator of heaven and earth, find us faithful in glorifying Him, proclaiming the Gospel and being faithful servants until the day He appears to take us into Glory.

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OCTOBER 14, 2007

SCRIPTURE READING: James 1

Key Verse: James 1:5 *"But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him."* (NASB)

It is so hard to let them go on the bus. This is the thought that goes through the mind of many parents as they wait with their child for the bus to pick them up for kindergarten. The bus ride to school embodies so many unknowns. We wonder what will they learn, whom they sit with and whether or not they will become carsick. However, it isn't only the bus. It is all the other influences that are potential threats and the list is endless.

As we enter a journey of faith, it is paramount that we understand that we cannot rid ourselves of all potential threats and risks. Our only hope in times of testing and trial is the person of God. Do you know that God cares for you as a person? Do you know that He has your best interests at heart? God's desire is to give wisdom "to all generously." So, how does this happen? Wisdom is better caught than taught. We catch wisdom as we spend time with God.

In a similar way, the only hope our children have is to know that they can walk with God too. We must humbly articulate and impress that true wisdom and understanding is not the invention of man, but the nature of God.

Have faith that God will give wisdom.

Personal thoughts:

Personal Prayer:

October 15, 2007

SCRIPTURE READING: I Corinthians 10:1-11

"For whatever was written in earlier times, was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." Romans 15:4 (New American Standard Bible)

I am now fully qualified wherever there is a Senior Citizen Discount available – regardless of the establishment's definition! I have been a believer since I was 10 years old. In all these years, I have given intellectual and verbal ascent that the Bible is God's word and is the only sure guide for life and for the church.

I confess that very often my every day life has made me out to be a liar in this respect. My prayer for the church of Christ and myself today is that we will know with certainty that God's word is true and that I (we) will not again fall short by failing to trust the Holy, Living word of God in every situation. Lord I believe, help my disbelief!

It is written, *"Thy word will I hide in my heart that I might not sin against Thee!"* (Ps. 119:11), and in another place, *"For the Word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two edged sword...and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart"* (Heb. 4:12) and again it is written, *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."* (II Tim. 3:16-17)

As children we used to sing, The B-I-B-L-E, yes that the book for me. When I stand on the Bible, God's living Word I am not standing alone!

Personal thoughts:

Personal prayer:

October 16, 2007

SCRIPTURE READING: Jude 1: 20-22

"But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. Be merciful to those who doubt, snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy mixed with fear..."

How is God working at Faith Baptist? I suppose that's a good topic considering there are a hundred different things God is using people to do for His will in our church. Our church.....our family. That sounds really good.

I wonder how awesome that sounds to someone who has never had the experience of church being like a family. Or never even had a positive family experience at all. I know for me just the knowledge that someone is going to be excited to see me when I get to church is powerful. When our family was searching for a new church to attend, the biggest thing that popped out at me at Faith Baptist was the people asking you about yourself and actually wanting to (try to) remember.

I think God has equipped this church with a fire for Him and a love for people; and that fire has pushed us to step out and lead, or even to step out and follow. Further, to encourage and to prepare for his coming. To be unashamed of a God who wants so desperately to draw people close to him...into his family. To turn the church inside out and reach those beyond the church walls. To be unashamed of a God who loves us individually, whether we have a gift to use for Him or feel inadequate in our talents. To be unashamed of a God who created every single person for a purpose...how amazing is that??

We could wish God had given us different talents...‘better’ talents, but the talents He has given each one of us cause us to lean on others in the church where their talent lies, to keep on building, keep on growing. I believe that if every person in this family asked themselves how God could use them and acted on it, God would bless us beyond what we could dream.

But then, His dreams must be much bigger than ours.

Prayer: God wants us to be unashamed of Him, to show others the freedom of being a part of Gods family. God knows your purpose in this church...ask Him to reveal it to you.

October 17, 2007

SCRIPTURE READING: Exodus 25:1-2

1 *The LORD said to Moses,*

2 *"Tell the Israelites to bring me an offering. You are to receive the offering for me from each man whose heart prompts him to give. (NIV)*

The context of this portion is building the tabernacle with all the details coming from God. We learn much from this portion regarding God being in all the details of our life including building the place we meet to worship Him.

This text hit me as God told Moses to tell them all to bring an offering. Then to receive from each one "whose heart prompts him to give." God simply wants our offering, our money, only if the heart's desire to give matches the gift.

Prayer: "O Lord, speak to my heart and clear my head so I hear you specifically regarding my part in this Journey at Faith in "Building for the Vision."

Personal thoughts:

Personal prayer:

October 18, 2007

For the Praise of His Glory!

SCRIPTURE READING: Ephesians 1:1-14

Paul begins this letter with a statement of his role: a messenger of Christ Jesus by the will of God. He writes to the saints (those set apart by God) who are faithful in Christ Jesus.

When this passage was written, verses 3-14 were one single sentence. My English teachers would not have been pleased with me had I written a sentence like this. But what a sentence this is! It is not a typical introduction to an argument nor is it a summary of points. Rather, it seems like Paul is standing on a mountaintop and trying to describe what he has seen of the fireworks display of God's glory expressed in His grace and mercy and purpose for us. But Paul doesn't start at the beginning; he starts by describing the grand finale in the fireworks display!!

The big idea of this soaring passage is that God has blessed believers with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. God has blessed us; this has already been accomplished. Whether we live in the present realization of how blessed we are or not, the reality is that we have been blessed by God. And we have not just been blessed with a few spiritual blessings, but with all spiritual blessings. As we scan the passage we see that these blessings are like huge blossoms of the shining light of God's grace given to us in and through Christ Jesus: chosen to be holy and blameless in His sight, predestined to be adopted as His sons, given redemption and forgiveness of sins, had mysteries revealed to us, had grace lavished upon us, and more. Paul also makes apparent God's purpose in doing these things ... in order that we might be for the praise of His glory!! We were given all spiritual blessings so that we might reflect and shine with His glory.

Today, are you living in the present realization that God has already blessed you with all spiritual blessings? Are you enjoying Him as His grateful adopted child? Will your thoughts and actions today bring praise to His glory? That is our purpose, you know. One final thought ... at Faith Baptist Church, we are constantly found reading and interpreting God's Word, the Bible. This passage points out one of the reasons: this is the mechanism God has chosen to use in calling His people. The process is described in verses 13 and 14. You were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the good news of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked with the Holy Spirit. For us, it is not ritual to read and study God's Word, it is recognized as the lifeline that God provides to spark belief! We have pledged together that "each one would reach one." I don't fully understand why God choose us, but it affects me deeply when I realize that God has given us the privilege and responsibility to have His Word on our lips and His glory reflected from Christ in us be a mechanism for calling others to Himself!

Personal thoughts:

Personal Prayer:

SCRIPTURE READING: Luke 22: 39 - 44

"Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground."

A little over a year ago our family was praying to the Lord to provide the finances Wycliffe Associates required so that we could move to Florida to begin full-time ministry. Actually, not *all* of our family was praying this...one member was praying something quite the opposite: "Please, let us stay here. Please, don't provide the money."

We knew this daughter had no desire to move. We struggled with the heartache and anger she was expressing. There was little doubt in our hearts that God had called us to join Him in this venture, but we wanted to convince this specific child; of course, we couldn't do that. Only God knows how to reach the heart. So we prayed.

The Lord led us to Luke 22:42, "*Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.*" (NIV)

Jesus too went through a time of heartache and struggle. What grief and sorrow did He feel? What did He feel for those He was leaving behind? Jesus knew what the end result would be, but did He not dread the pain of beatings and crucifixion? Did He not trust God with all that would happen because it was God's will?

We pulled our daughter aside and looked at Christ's example. We spoke of what He felt and His grief and sorrow. We spoke about how He put Himself aside to do what He knew God wanted...what brought God glory...and we asked her to pray the same prayer. We asked her to trust God to take care of her fears, sorrows, grief and give up her will to stay put and pray that His will be done...whatever that meant. In the process, we too learned to pray 'yet, not my will, but yours be done' as we faced our own trials throughout that year.

October 20, 2007

SCRIPTURE READING: II Corinthians 9:6-9

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

As it is written: "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever."

When we read these verses do we ever think about a farmer? Does a farmer plant 100 seeds during the sowing season and then wait and wait to see a crop of thousands? The obvious answer is no-he plants what he hopes to harvest. If he plants a small crop he will only expect a small crop. If he plants a large crop he will expect a large crop.

What kind of crop do we want here at Faith Baptist Church? Do we want a small crop of a few people meeting regularly to chat and enjoy each other's company? Do we want to reach thousands for Christ?

The vision at FBC is quite simple. Let's each one reach one in the next few years. Let's build a building that will hold 800 believers. Let's send some of our people out to begin a new church that can grow and flourish in their community. Let's grow and replant, grow and replant.

Are you saying in our heart "let's go"? Or are you saying let's stay the way we are. Let's not change things. I am really comfortable the way things are.

I am so thankful Jesus didn't say, "I am so comfortable here in Heaven I think I'll just stay put." He didn't say, "Let someone else do it."

Jesus gave us His very life, His comfort, His power, His passion. Even though it meant that Jesus had to leave His comfort zone and even though it meant He had to die and take on a punishment He didn't deserve. He did it for the joy that was set before Him.

So what is the joy set before us? It is the joy of sharing our faith and seeing people born into the family of God. It is the joy of knowing that our family, neighbors and friends will spend an eternity in heaven. It is knowing that we were obedient to Christ's call on our lives. It is the joy of knowing that we will grow in our knowledge of our Savior because of our obedience to Him.

Let's go!!

October 21, 2007

SCRIPTURE READING: II Chronicles 1 - 14

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

This scripture was given to Solomon at night after he had lead in the dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem. It speaks to a particular people - Israel! It speaks to a then future time, that when Israel departs from God and comes under God's judgment for sin that if they truly repent God will pour out his blessing on them, restoring their land and healing them! I have heard it taught that this verse doesn't apply to the church, since the promise of blessing in the Promised Land was only for that people and that place.

However the principle stands! When God engrafted the gentiles into the body of Christ then we together with all believing Jews become one in Christ and the people of God. There seems to be a pattern in the history of believers where we become on fire for the Lord, and then with the passage of time, perhaps over a generation or two we cool off and wander away - sometimes to open idolatry but more often perhaps to just luke-warm faith or shall I say more accurately "un-faith". We begin trusting our own wealth, mental powers, health, and physical strength. Like two year olds our mantra becomes "I can do it myself"

I am very afraid that this is a picture of the American church today. When I wake up and realize that I am on that downward path, I need to stop and "humble myself and pray and turn from my wicked ways". But...I don't want to use that word about me! "Wicked" is to act cruelly, beating the kids, rioting, Hitler and his ilk, but not me; or is it? God said in Ex 20 "Thou shall have no other gods before me!" If I have begun to trust me instead of God, have I not put another god before God? I have broken the first and greatest commandment! Is that not wicked?

But lets not ask the question about the "church" but about me, have I sinned and become guilty of placing another god before God in my life? If my answer is yes, then when I remember and humble myself, and pray and seek God's face, and turn from my wicked ways, then God will hear from heaven and will forgive my sins and heal my relationship to Him and His body.

Personal thoughts:

Personal Prayer:

Hal Miller

October 22, 2007

SCRIPTURE READING: James 2

Key Verse: James 2:18 *"But someone may well say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works." (NASB)*

We have plenty of artificial substitutes in our culture. We have artificial relationships online, artificial reality on television, even artificial sports on our video games. America is obsessed with getting things artificially.

One that tops the list is artificial sweeteners. Artificial sweeteners are in everything these days from soda to baked goods. Have you also noticed that these artificial sweeteners have begun to taste more like sugar? They are getting so close that many cannot taste the difference anymore.

In a similar way, our culture makes it hard to distinguish between true faith and artificial faith. We can believe we can have faith without the calories. We can have all the benefits (forgiveness, joy, etc.) of Christianity without the cost. However, this isn't Biblical faith. Our English understanding of the word faith is often wishful thinking. For instance, you must have faith that you can win your game. The root word here for faith is the Greek word "*peitho*", which means to persuade, to trust, to yield to, to obey and to be confident. Faith means that you are a person who persuades trusts, yields to, obeys and is confident in the object of your faith, Jesus Christ.

James tells us that the test of true faith is whether or not it is accompanied by works (vs. 17). Faith is not a mask that we put on when our Christian friends are present. It is a matter of our will and from the center of who we are. It is a change of course that recognizes that we are sinners in need of a Savior and new life. It is a change of heart, which precipitates into a change of life. Only true faith has the energy to live it out. Accept no substitutes.

Showing our faith is a matter of the will.

Personal thoughts:

Personal Prayer:

SCRIPTURE READING: Ephesians 1:15-23

After beginning this letter with a fireworks display of words describing the all-encompassing spiritual blessings that God has provided for us who believe, and after summing it all up with three repetitions of our ultimate purpose – to be for the praise of God’s glory, Paul pauses to pray for the believers. The prayer here is soaring and specific. Paul asks God to do two things: to give us (believers) the Spirit of wisdom and revelation (uncovering) and to enlighten “the eyes of our heart.” Paul asks for four specific outcomes: that we might know God better and that we might know the hope of our calling, the riches of Christ’s inheritance in the believers, and the incomparably great power for believers. After mentioning God’s power, Paul launches off into an explanation of this power that is available to the believer. This is not ordinary power; it is the very same power that God used to raise Christ from the dead.

In verses 17 and 18, the English word “know” appears twice but in Greek, these are two different words. Paul is asking that we might “know” God better, that is that we might know God definitely, thoroughly and completely in a deep and rich experiential way. The second “know” is to know about the hope, the riches, and the power of God.

When Paul talks about God’s incomparable great power, it is like he is building word upon word to glorify God. “Incomparably” literally means extreme, extraordinary, supreme, above and beyond the top of a scale. “Great” literally means the very upper range of a scale. So, by “incomparably great” Paul is saying extremely beyond the top of the upper range of any measure! But that is not enough for Paul to express this power, he uses several different words for power that are translated in English as power, working, mighty, strength, and exerted. This power is the same power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him at the Father’s right hand in heaven far above everyone and everything for all time. Christ is the head over the church, which is His body which He fills in every way.

Today are you tapping into this incomparably great power source? Are you straining to know God better in experience and to know more about Him. Are you in right alignment with Christ, the head over the church? Our purpose at Faith is to be following Christ (we are changed in the process) and to invite others to follow Him. Today, pray that at FBC we might come into our inheritance, that we might come to know God better, and that we might realize in actual experience the awesome power that is available to us in Christ.

Your thoughts:

Your Prayer:

October 24, 2007

SCRIPTURE READING: Hebrews 11:1

"Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. "

What does this verse really teach us about faith? What does it mean to be sure of something? How much does it depend on our own abilities and best efforts?

It means that there is no doubt. Our certainty is not in our ability, but in the ability of the God we serve. God promises that He will never ask for more than we can handle with His help. You see, He never asks us to grit our teeth, to think positive and then do it all ourselves. He accomplishes things through us, if we will let Him.

As we look to the future of our church do we believe God is at work or do we think it is about what we can do for Him? Our answer to this question will determine how limited our vision will be.

If we believe it is what we are doing for God then we will grow weary, tired, frustrated and at times confused. This is always the outcome of our best efforts if we strive on in our own strength and ability.

If our answer is that the future of Faith Baptist depends on what God does through us we will find overwhelming joy, excitement, freedom, enthusiasm, awe and a humble joy with no boundaries.

As you ask God what He wants to accomplish at Faith simply ask Him what He would have you to do? How much would He have you give of your time, your finances and your talents? Then obey!!

You may struggle as I do with "but if...?" or "but how...?" God says that His yoke is easy and His burden is light. I want to carry His yoke, not my own. How about you?

Your thoughts:

Your Prayer:

October 25, 2007

A Vision for our Children

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm 119: 9-16

Psalm 119:11 *"I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you."*

In only a few years, the children of Faith Baptist Church will be faced with the challenges of life on their own. Many will face challenges that will question their self-worth, their purity, and ultimately their faith in God. Recent research by the Barna Group found that 75% of church-going youth disengage with God in their mid-twenties.

FBC has partnered with Awana to counteract this trend. The Awana program at FBC draws over 100 children each Friday night. Awana's Vision is to help these children develop a Biblical Worldview that will enable them to make the right decisions in their lives. Children are encouraged to invite neighbors, creating opportunities for evangelism. More than just memorizing scripture, the Awana curriculum teaches children how to answer life's questions directly from the Bible.

This fall, the Truth and Training Club (3rd - 6th grade boys and girls) embarked on a study of Psalm 119:9-16. We have been discussing God's plan for purity in our lives. For some of the children, it is the only spiritual instruction they will receive all week. They look up verses and provide examples of influences that help or hinder purity. It is exciting to see these young boys and girls get excited about God's Word.

Being involved in the Children's Ministries at FBC means more than volunteering in a church program so our children can participate. Explaining verses and preparing lessons has strengthened my personal walk with God and made me a better spiritual leader for my family. Being a part of the Children's Ministries at FBC give me the opportunity to help develop the next generation of Christian leaders.

Please pray for the Awana ministry at FBC. Please pray for the Leaders, parents and children to feel God's hand in this ministry. And please pray that FBC can continue to build its vision for our future our children.

Personal thoughts:

Personal Prayer:

October 26, 2007

Not Yet

SCRIPTURE READING: Jeremiah 29:11

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Usually when people pray to God for something they want their answers to be 'yes' or 'no'. There is a thing as a 'not yet' which means not now, but later. One example of a 'not yet' would be if a child asked for a bike right now. God might answer yes, not right now, or no.

God has a big plan for you so you have to accept His answer of yes, no, or not yet. God knows what's good for people. We have to trust Him.

I met a Chinese lady at the park. We had invited her over for an American pizza dinner at our house. (This was when we lived at my grandparent's house.) She taught us how to make wontons and a Chinese cucumber salad. My parents talked to her about Jesus. Later, she moved to New York City. Before she left, we gave her a Chinese Bible. Now we have lost contact with her. I keep on praying that I might see her again and tell her about how much Mandarin I have learned. I think God's answer to me would be a 'not yet'.

I pray for two people groups in China that their hearts will become ready for a Bible translator to translate a Bible into their native language. I want to go to China someday either to be a Bible translator or a missionary. God hasn't told me what He wants me to do, but He has put China on my heart. I am waiting to see what God has planned for me.

Personal thoughts:

Personal prayer:

Emily Hancock

SCRIPTURE READING: Exodus 20:1-7

"You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold (him) guiltless who takes His name in vain." Ex 20:7 NKJV

I enjoy watching people in times when their conversation is peppered with expressions of excitement and enthusiasm or surprise. Perhaps when they are waiting for a family member to come out of the security zone at the airport to greet one another. Maybe they are talking about the "big game" the day before or they meet in the mall or at the water cooler in the office; or perhaps you talk over the fence with your neighbors, or maybe you stand on the curb with your elementary school children waiting for the school bus to pick them up. There is an expression I hear nearly every time I am in a similar situation; it goes something like, "Oh my God!" or perhaps something was "God awful," or some similar expression.

Most Christians recognize that Exodus 20:7 is a prohibition of using the name of God as a profanity. Yet today, such expressions are heard every day everywhere whether or not the speaker has a relationship with the Lord God.

In early times when the scriptures were being copied devout Jewish scribes would stop, bathe, change clothes and take a new quill before they copied the name YHWH, translated LORD in our modern Bibles and Jehovah in older versions. In fact, their fear of using the name in vain was so great that when Jewish scholars added vowels to the text they didn't use the vowels that would fit YHWH because it would not be spoken aloud.

Most of the world uses God's names so casually that they don't even recognize they are doing this but Christian brother or sister, consider this possibility, if I use one of the names of God in speech when I am not doing it to pray to Him, praise Him, proclaim Him, testify of Him; might I not be using the name of God in vain? Think about it!

Personal thoughts:

Personal Prayer:

October 28, 2007

SCRIPTURE READING: James 3

Key Verse: James 3:1 *“Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.”* (NASB)

I love multiplication, especially when it is in my favor. I must admit that when I hear that I can “triple your money in 30 days” on television it does perk my interest. One of the blessings of teaching is that we are able to influence others, who influence others, who influence others, etc... The other side of this is that we can influence others negatively as well. This is one reason why those who teach must be careful.

James intention is not to scare us from teaching, but to help us understand that it is not to be entered into haphazardly. Here are two ideas to help us positively impact our students.

1. Teach from a genuine heart. We must be followers of Jesus before we can teach others to follow Jesus. Being genuine is of utmost importance when we are teaching others. Ask yourself the question, “Am I asking them to do something I am not willing to do?”

2. Accurately represent the character of God. In Matthew 21, Jesus drove the “money changers” out of the temple because they were making it difficult for the Gentiles to worship God. The moneychangers were fostering confusion about the truth the God desired the Gentiles to worship Him. We must make sure we not only accurately handle the Word of God, but we must represent the character of God well.

God wants a teacher who understands what is at stake and who steps up to the challenge. Are you ready to take the next step?

Teaching the faith is serious business.

Personal thoughts:

Personal Prayer:

October 29, 2007

SCRIPTURE READING: Luke 21: 1-4

"As he looked up, Jesus saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. "I tell you the truth," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

WOW!! Jesus wasn't impressed with what the rich were giving, but with what the poor widow gave! I don't know about you, but I want Jesus to be pleased with my offerings to Him. I don't want to give just because I can. I don't want to give because I can afford to do so. I want to give because God has called me to give everything I have. It is all His anyway.

Now, this all sounds good, but I also know the struggle to give and to "simply" trust and obey. As I pray and ask God how much He would have me give I listen and wait and wait and wait. When I hear an answer I think, "that can't be" and "how could I possibly give that much?" Then God reminds me that He has it all under control. I need to trust Him. He will provide. He promised to supply all my needs according to His riches. The question then is, "AM I WILLING?"

His riches are vast and endless. So why do I get so worried about some money? I'm human and Satan works hard to make me doubt.

For me this Faith Journey isn't about having a big beautiful building. It isn't about looking good to the community. IT IS about being obedient to God. He has called us to reach out to the community, to share our faith and to help people come to know Christ as their Lord and Savior. IF we don't have the room to do this we are being disobedient. If we aren't doing this regardless of the facility we are disobedient.

I want Jesus to look at my gift as pleasing. I want it to be one that I know He has done and that I could never have done it without Him. I want God to be glorified beyond measure. How about you? What do you really want?

Your thoughts:

Your prayer:

SCRIPTURE READING: Philippians 4:1, 4-8

"... but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind" Romans 12:2

It occurs to me that Romans 12: 2 is not just a slogan or a suggestion. In fact the quoted phrase is grammatically in the imperative form, we are commanded to be transformed by renewing our minds. The scripture doesn't just command us to do something in our own power but it also tells us how to do it.

One of my college roommates and my best man, used to say, "I don't cuss but I know all the words!" His father wasn't a believer at the time, he was a "self-made" successful businessman and though I didn't know him well I can imagine the context of my best man's comment.

I have learned in my own experience that when I fill my mind with negative images like watching a brutal movie, or reading a book with a lot of profanity or watching TV programs with sensual images that those images come back even when I don't want them to. Just working in an environment where things are less than perfect, images enter my mind that I would rather not dwell on, whether its worrying about a problem or thinking of inconsiderate or angry people I work with on the job I see negative thinking working its way to the surface far to often.

I ask the Lord to help recognize when my thinking becomes negative or when these images come to the surface. Then I consciously determine to follow the guideline of Phil. 4:8 and to deliberately think about, *"...whatsoever is true, whatever is honest, what is just, things that are pure or lovely or of good report or virtuous or praiseworthy"*.

I have not reached my goal in this area yet, but it is working!

Personal thoughts:

Personal Prayer:

October 31, 2007

SCRIPTURE READING: 2 Timothy 2: 11-13; Ephesians 3:16-20; Psalm 50:9-11

"I have no need of a bull from your stall or of goats from your pens, for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills."

It was a \$2 lesson, but really much more valuable than that. The amount, in fact, doesn't really matter. I was in college at the time, attending Northeastern University in Boston. Betsy (she was my girlfriend at the time) and I attended a church just outside the city. It required going through a tunnel. On the way into church, the tunnel was free. But leaving, they it cost \$1. One dollar, that doesn't sound like much, but to a poor college student who had recently cleaned his car of all spare change, \$1 was worth a lot more. As Ben Franklin put it, "When the well's dry, they know the worth of water."

So, here I was in church with literally \$1 to my name. When it came time for the offering, I heard this voice. "Put the dollar in the offering." Nope. That couldn't be from God. That wouldn't be responsible. I've got one lonely dollar in my pocket that is needed to get me back home. "Put the dollar in the offering." Why do You want me to put a dollar in the offering? You own the cattle on a thousand hills (which is really an major understatement) and did I mention I've got one lonely dollar in my pocket. Surely You don't need MY dollar. "It's My dollar." (He didn't really say that, at least, as I heard Him, but it would have been an accurate statement).

The dollar was burning a hole in my pocket. I put it in the offering. I'd be taking the long way home, I thought to myself. I hoped I had enough gas in my Ford Escort. But that's not the end of the story. After the service, as Betsy and I were heading out (and Betsy didn't know this little conversation going on between God and me), the pastor's wife, Karen, calls out to me to wait.

"I know it may not sound like much but God wants me to give you this \$2." She handed me two not-so-lonely dollar bills.

You've really gotta laugh at this don't you. I did as I recounted the story to my pastor's wife. My obedience, which seemed foolish to me at the time. Her obedience, despite its apparent insignificance. God had doubled my gift and gave it all back to me. His name was glorified. He did it to show me that He can pull off anything. He is God. He gets a kick out of this stuff. He really does. If I can just trust Him. He's proven Himself to me over and over again and I'm convinced we're going to have a church full of stories just like this.

I've thought about that story several times because I wonder - what if I hadn't obeyed? What if I'd just kept my buck, driven myself home and done it my way. I would have lost a great story. I wouldn't have experienced my Father providing for me because He cares for me. I wouldn't have given Him the chance. We need to give Him the chance to do what only He can do. As Keith Green once sang, "He'll take care of the rest."

Rick D'Errico

November 1, 2007

SCRIPTURE READING: Genesis 22: 1-19

Can you imagine what Abraham must have been thinking? You want me to do what Lord? I must be hearing you wrong. You don't really mean you want me to offer Isaac, right? Isaac was your promised son to me. You surely didn't give him to me just so I could kill him?! It must have been an agonizing time for Abraham. How would he explain this to his son? To his wife?

When God asks us to make a sacrifice it is because He loves us and wants us to really know Him. What would have happened if Abraham had refused to obey God's will? Abraham would never have seen God's miraculous provision of the ram in the thicket. Abraham would have missed out on a great teachable and life changing moment with his son. Abraham would have missed out on knowing the deep love of his God.

What is God asking of you as we Build for the Future at Faith Baptist? Is he asking you to give Him extra time? Money? A hobby? TV? That second job or source of income? What is it? Are you trying to ignore His still small voice? Are you talking yourself out of God's request on your life?

It says in I Timothy 6:6 that "Godliness with contentment is great gain." Abraham was not content in what God asked him to do, but in God Himself. He was a godly man in that he chose obedience in spite of the agony of God's request. Because of his obedience there was great gain.

Can you imagine the joy of Abraham as he came off Mt. Moriah? Can you imagine the joy of Isaac? What about the servants? Not only were they blessed, but you can believe that everyone who saw them coming knew that they had seen the goodness of God firsthand.

What will you miss out on if you do not choose to obey Him? We can never really know our Savior unless we obey Him in every way. Go ahead. Put it on the altar. It is for God's ultimate Glory and for your good. It is through obedience that we learn the "secrets" of God, the Maker of the universe.

Your thoughts:

Your prayer:

November 2, 2007

SCRIPTURE READING: James 4

Key Verse: James 4:14 *"Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away."* (NASB)

Last week my "doin' life" team had a "doin' life" night. It is time where we do life with our students by learning something new together, serving, or just having fun. This time we had the privilege of taking Kung Fu together. We had a great time learning how we can defend ourselves through this Chinese martial art. During one of the demonstrations the teacher demonstrated something at full speed. It was neat to see the jaws of the guys drop as they saw how fast he moved his hands. It was as if they were at one place one moment and in a totally different location at the next moment.

James moves to a birds eye view of our lives warns us that our lives go too fast to waste time. Our lives are like a vapor. We are like a fist that is one location and then suddenly vanishes and then we are in a different location. How fast does your life seem like it is going right now?

We sometimes react to this truth by saying, "I will now live only for the moment." Even though it sounds good, don't be deceived. This is only a half-truth. James tells us that we "ought to say, "If the Lord wills..." (vs. 15). In other words, live every moment for the Lord. Live for what He desires. What are you living for right now? Make sure it is for the One who will last.

Our faith is to be lived today.

Personal thoughts:

Personal Prayers:

November 3, 2007

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm 23

Names of the Lord	Meaning/Reference	Reference in Psalm 23
Jehovah-Rohi	The Lord My Shepard-Psalm 23:1-given by David	The Lord is my Shepard
Jehovah-Jireh	The Lord Shall Provide-Genesis 22:5-Abraham didn't kill Isaac because the Lord provided a ram	I shall not want
Jehovah-Shalom	The Lord Who Heals-Exodus 15:26-In the desert with the complaining Israelites Moses celebrated the Lord who heals	He restores my soul
Jehovah-Tsidkenu	The Lord Who Is Righteous-Jeremiah 23:5-6-In the midst of sin and destruction, God showed Jeremiah that a ruler was coming who would establish righteousness in the land	He leads me in the paths of righteousness
Jehovah-Shammah	The Lord Who Is There-Ezekiel 48:35-To keep Ezekiel from despairing over the future of Jerusalem, God showed him He would once again reign in Jerusalem	For You are with me
Jehovah-Nissi	The Lord My Banner-Exodus 17-After the victorious battle where Aaron and Hur hold up Moses' arms he builds an alter; banner is not a flag but to be high, raised, or conspicuous	In the presence of my enemies
Jehovah-M'kaddish	The Lord Who Sanctifies-Leviticus 20:7-8-Worship and sacrifice were to be carried out in such a way that the holiness of God is reflected; He cleanses us and makes us holy	You anoint my head with oil

Personal thoughts:

Personal Prayer:

Submitted by Linda Deschenes

NOVEMBER 4, 2007

From: Clare Hudson,
SIM Missionary in Thailand

OUR GOD IS AN **AWESOME** GOD!

I HAD AN INTERESTING DISCUSSION WITH MY LANGUAGE TEACHER THE OTHER DAY. She is a young woman, married with one preschool child and a Buddhist. She asked me, "What does the word "**Awesome**" mean?" She said she hears it a lot on the TV on the radio and often is overhearing it in conversations. The foreigners (farangs) say this a lot!

Having considered this myself before I began slowly to gather my thoughts. GRAMMAR>>>I wrote the words LOVELY and BEAUTIFUL and **AWESOME** on her whiteboard. I said they meant full of love and full of beauty. In the same way Awesome means full of awe. What does it mean to be full of awe? Let's fill in the meaning...awe means full of glory, wonder, power, majesty, strength, and holiness. The object of our awe is the Lord God who made heaven and earth-the Christian's God.

God is "Phi seet", special, like no other. To him alone belong these attributes. If everything in life...clothes, shoes, music, is **awesome**, how can God be seen as holy and special? If we make everything awesome we lessen GOD. If everything is "phi seet", then nothing is "phi seet"!

I said, "I would not think of going into a temple and sitting on the lap of one of the gold Buddha images. That would be disrespectful to the max. In the same way in my speech I want to remember that my God deserves awe in a special way. He is **AWESOME!**" We continue to dialogue during lessons on life and relationships. Pray with me she can come to know the God we know, who is **AWESOME!**

P.S. Buddhism has no concept of God, or any stable, eternal state; rather there is uncertainty, reincarnation, illusion and a determination to depend on one's own self.

Personal thoughts:

Personal Prayers:

Received and Submitted by Darlene Miller

SCRIPTURE READING: Ephesians 2:1-10

After the soaring words of the first part of the letter, the beginning of this passage seems shockingly blunt. The preceding passages focus upon the brilliant shining of the glory of God meant to be reflected in believers and upon God's incomparably great power available for believers. Now, however, the white-hot spotlight is focused on an ugly picture of our spiritual condition before we put our faith in Christ. Before Christ, we were spiritually dead. Note that Paul does not say we were sick and tired or wounded and bleeding - we were simply dead. Because we were without God, we were actively disobedient in all ways ... selfishly living according to our sinful nature. Our true position before God in this state was that we were simply objects of His wrath. Notice that this was our position before we believed and it is the position of our friends and family and acquaintances that have not put their faith in God. This picture always makes me pause and weep for people that I know who do not believe in Christ.

Next come some of the most comforting words to me in the Bible. There is a wonderful turning point in this passage. "But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive in Christ even when we were dead in transgressions - it is by grace you have been saved." We were not left in our state of spiritual death; we were made alive with Christ, raised up with Christ, and seated with God in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus. Why would God do this for us? God did this for us so that we might be an illustration of the incomparable riches of his grace! Do you think of yourself in this way? You are an illustration of God's grace. All this is the gift of God; none of it comes from us.

The final thought in this passage is my very favorite. We believers are God's workmanship (*poema*), literally his poem or his finely-crafted work. We are created as believers by the Master's hand in order to accomplish things that God has prepared in advance for us to do. This is an awesome truth! God has shaped and fashioned us individual believers as his tools to accomplish things, which He prepared in advance for us to do. At Faith Baptist Church, we have been made and shaped individually to do our part of God's work here together. May we today each find the things God has made us for and may we be faithful to the task!

Personal thoughts:

Personal Prayer:

SCRIPTURE READING: Ephesians 2:11-22

Paul now turns from the individual believer to groups of believers, specifically Jews and Gentiles. Before Christ, non-Jews were separate from Christ, were excluded from citizenship in Israel, and were foreigners to the covenants of the promise. They were without hope and without God in the world. This position parallels the position described about the individual without Christ. As in the previous passage, this passage turns on the grace of God. In Christ Jesus, those who were once far away have been brought near.

In Christ, the Jews and Gentiles are brought together into a new man: a Christian (a little Christ). All believers are joined into one body in Christ and reconciled to each other and to God through Christ's cross. Through Christ we have access to the Father by one Spirit. Together, we are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household. This body of Christ is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. This building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. In him, we are being built together. Why is this church built together in this manner? So that we might become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. This is our purpose, to be the dwelling of God in this place. We are fitted and joined together as individual believers into this living structure, the body of Christ.

Note that believers are built into this building together. There is no mention of age; as soon as one believes in Christ, he is included in Christ. We are linked one to another, younger to older, and older to younger. Together we are the dwelling place of God here in this place. Praise God that he has give us the privilege of living and working individually and together for Him and for the praise of his glory! Continue to pray that God would link us strongly together for his purpose as we follow his vision. And pray that, as we proceed, our vision would remain continually aligned with the chief cornerstone.

Your thoughts:

Your Prayer:

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