

A Short Thought from God's Word

Year 2

Short, concise daily devotions from God's Word

By David Dennis

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1/1 - Guard Your Heart

Proverbs 4:20-22: My son, pay attention to what I say; listen closely to my words. Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart; for they are life to those who find them and health to a man's whole body. Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.

Whatever is in our heart determines our life. Jesus said that "The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart." --Luke 6:45

1/2 - Corrupt Lips

Proverbs 4:24 Put away perversity from your mouth; keep corrupt talk far from your lips.

Perversity and corrupt talk are reflections of an unclean heart. As we begin to try to walk pure before God, we should start by examining how we speak.

1/3 - Looking Straight Ahead

Proverbs 4:25-27: Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you. Make level paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm. Do not swerve to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil.

Hebrews 12:2 tells us to fix our eyes on Jesus. Anything else can distract us from holiness and lead to evil.

1/4 - Smooth, but Deadly

Proverbs 5:3-6: For the lips of an adulteress drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil; but in the end she is bitter as gall, sharp as a double-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave. She gives no thought to the way of life; her paths are crooked, but she knows it not.

Not just an adulteress, but any temptation that comes across this way: Smooth as honey, but leading to the grave. We must remember the end before we get seduced by the beginning.

1/5 - Choose a Good Path

Proverbs 5:7-10: Now then, my sons, listen to me; do not turn aside from what I say. Keep to a path far from [the adulteress], do not go near the door of her house, lest you give your best strength to others and your years to one who is cruel, lest strangers feast on your wealth and your toil enrich another man's house.

The best way to keep from falling into temptation is to do what you can to avoid it. The dieter should not keep Twinkies in his cupboard. The believer should never flirt with or take lightly the glamour of sin.

1/6 - Powerful Regret

Proverbs 5:11-14: At the end of your life you will groan, when your flesh and body are spent. You will say, "How I hated discipline! How my heart spurned correction! I would not obey my teachers or listen to my instructors. I have come to the brink of utter ruin in the midst of the whole assembly."

We are warned that if we fall to sin, our regret and pain will far exceed the delights of sin.

1/7 - A Graceful Deer

Proverbs 5:15-19: Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well. Should your springs overflow in the streets, your streams of water in the public squares? Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers. May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. A loving doe, a graceful deer--may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be captivated by her love.

We do not need to look to ungodly sources to satisfy our needs, for God has promised to meet all our needs. In this passage we are taught that there is no need to seek adultery when one has a marriage blessed by God.

1/8 - Ensnared by his Deeds

Proverbs 5:22-23: The evil deeds of a wicked man ensnare him; the cords of his sin hold him fast. He will die for lack of discipline, led astray by his own great folly.

The wickedness of those who follow that way will eventually be a trap that will lead to their ruin. This day will occur on the day of judgment, unless they are lucky enough to have it happen sooner, so that they have time to repent.

1/9 - Free Like a Gazelle

Proverbs 6:1-5: My son, if you have put up security for your neighbor, if you have struck hands in pledge for another, if you have been trapped by what you said, ensnared by the words of your mouth, then do this, my son, to free yourself, since you have fallen into your neighbor's hands: Go and humble yourself; Press your plea with your neighbor! Allow no sleep to your eyes, no slumber to your eyelids. Free yourself, like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter, like a bird from the snare of the fowler.

Our own forgiveness from God is directly related to our ability to forgive others. If then, we hold something against another, it would be the course of wisdom to follow this advice, and waste no time in setting things right.

1/10 - Sudden Poverty

Proverbs 6:6-11 Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest. How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest-- and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man.

In all things, but especially in spiritual things, to be lazy has severe consequences that may take us by surprise. "'Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.' Be very careful,

then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil." --Ephesians 5:14-16

1/11 - Seven Things God Hates

Proverbs 6:16-19 There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers.

Use this as a checklist to make sure than none of these things describe your behavior.

1/12 - Bound on Your Heart Forever

Proverbs 6:20-22: My son, keep your father's commands and do not forsake your mother's teaching. Bind them upon your heart forever; fasten them around your neck. When you walk, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; when you awake, they will speak to you.

These words are written from a Godly father trying to teach God's wisdom to his son. If we love God's Word enough to hold it in our hearts, our way will always be clear.

1/13 - How to Destroy Yourself

Proverbs 6:30-33: Men do not despise a thief if he steals to satisfy his hunger when he is starving. Yet if he is caught, he must pay sevenfold, though it costs him all the wealth of his house. But a man who commits adultery lacks judgment; whoever does so destroys himself.

Our society looks at immorality as a victimless crime, and therefore not a serious one. But God says that it destroys those who participate in it. Paul commanded us to "Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body." -- 1 Corinthians 6:18

1/14 - More Precious than Rubies

Proverbs 8:10-11: Choose my instruction instead of silver, knowledge rather than choice gold, for wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with her.

The path of wisdom leads to repentance and everlasting life, so there is nothing more important that can be found in this world.

1/15 - Better Than Gold

Proverbs 8:17 I [wisdom] love those who love me, and those who seek me find me. With me are riches and honor, enduring wealth and prosperity. My fruit is better than fine gold; what I yield surpasses choice silver.

Riches, honor, wealth and prosperity that last for eternity is for those who follow the path of Godly wisdom and embrace Christ as savior.

1/16 - The Wisdom of Eternity

Proverbs 8:22-31 "The LORD brought me [wisdom] forth as the first of his works, before his deeds of old; I was appointed from eternity, from the beginning, before the world began. When there were no oceans, I was given birth, when there were no springs abounding with water; before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I was given birth, before he made the earth or its fields or any of the dust of the world. I was there when he set the heavens in place, when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep, when he established the clouds above and fixed securely the fountains of the deep, when he gave the sea its boundary so the waters would not overstep his command, and when he marked out the foundations of the earth. Then I was the craftsman at his side. I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in his presence, rejoicing in his whole world and delighting in mankind.

Here wisdom is described in the very way we would describe Jesus Christ. Jesus is the reason, the logic, the purpose of all creation.

1/17 - The Essence of the Book

Proverbs 8:34-36: Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway. For whoever finds me finds life and receives favor from the LORD. But whoever fails to find me harms himself; all who hate me love death."

The essence of the book of Proverbs is found in these verses. Whoever finds spiritual wisdom finds Christ and eternal life. Whoever fails to find wisdom will die in their sin. (For a discussion on this topic by Paul, read 1 Corinthians 2:6-16.)

We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. However, as it is written, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.

The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?"

But we have the mind of Christ. --2 Corinthians 2:6-16

1/18 - A Message of Life

Proverbs 9:3-6: She [wisdom] has sent out her maids, and she calls from the highest point of the city. "Let all who are simple come in here!" she says to those who lack judgment. "Come, eat my food and drink the wine I have mixed. Leave your simple ways and you will live; walk in the way of understanding.

Again, wisdom sounds like the voice of Christ, who sent out his disciples with a message of life.

1/19 - Rebuking the Righteous

Proverbs 9:7-9: "Whoever corrects a mocker invites insult; whoever rebukes a wicked man incurs abuse. Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate you; rebuke a wise man and he will love you. Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning.

Many are the servants of God who have found this to be true. When we confront sin with the price Jesus paid for redemption, the fools reject and the wise are instructed.

1/20 - Wisdom Apart from the Lord

Proverbs 9:10 "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

There is no true wisdom apart from The Lord.

1/21 - A Voice of Foolishness

Proverbs 9:13-18: The woman Folly is loud; . . . calling out to those who pass by, who go straight on their way. "Let all who are simple come in here!" she says to those who lack judgment. "Stolen water is sweet; food eaten in secret is delicious!" But little do they know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of the grave.

The ways of sin seem so pleasing, but consequences of sin are not so easily seen. They are, however, very real.

1/22 - Ill-gotten Treasures

Proverbs 10:2 Ill-gotten treasures are of no value, but righteousness delivers from death.

The pleasures or rewards of sin have no lasting value, especially as compared to eternity.

1/23 - No More Hunger

Proverbs 10:3 The LORD does not let the righteous go hungry but he thwarts the craving of the wicked.

There have been righteous people who have gone hungry throughout history and even in the Bible. Famines, like the one that caused Jacob and his family to suffer, strike the just and the unjust. This statement then, means two things. First, that God will meet the true needs of the righteous man (the things that he really needs for his salvation and his growth in and relationship with God). And the day will come when we live in that new world when there will be no hunger ever again, for the righteous. (Rev. 7:16)

1/24 - Sleeping In Harvest

Proverbs 10:4-5: Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth. He who gathers crops in summer is a wise son, but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son.

This is a spiritual truth as well as a physical one. If we are lax in our duties to our Lord, we will have very little to show for it on the day of judgment.

1/25 - A Chattering Fool

Proverbs 10:8 The wise in heart accept commands, but a chattering fool comes to ruin.

The wise man will accept and obey those in authority, whether it is parents, teachers, police, employers, government or God. The chattering fool in the proverb is the one who complains about those in authority, or else who talks about obeying but does not carry through.

1/26 - Skeletons in the Closet

Proverbs 10:9 The man of integrity walks securely, but he who takes crooked paths will be found out.

If you have no skeletons in your closet, you need never worry about them coming out. If you have never lied to anyone, you don't ever need to worry that the truth will come out.

1/27 - A Fountain of Life

Proverbs 10:11 The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but violence overwhelms the mouth of the wicked.

Everything that a righteous man says tends to reflect the Spirit of God who lives in Him. They direct the hearer toward the One who gives life.

1/28 - A Peacemaker

Proverbs 10:12 Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers over all wrongs.

It is our choice whether to hate or to love. Those one who hate bring about more trouble for himself. The one who loves brings peace.

1/29 - Holding Your Tongue

Proverbs 10:19-21: When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise. The tongue of the righteous is choice silver, but the heart of the wicked is of little value. The lips of the righteous nourish many, but fools die for lack of judgment.

The more we talk, the greater tendency we have to say something that is harmful. If you would be wise, you must hold your tongue and carefully consider the things that you say. Then the things we say will bring help to others, and not harm.

1/30 - A Extreme Choices

Proverbs 10:24 What the wicked dreads will overtake him; what the righteous desire will be granted.

Which would you rather have for your future, your hopes, or your fears? This is our choice when we

choose between righteousness and wickedness.

1/31 - Sudden Justice

Proverbs 10:25 When the storm has swept by, the wicked are gone, but the righteous stand firm forever.

It may seem to us that the wicked prosper and are happy, but all in an instant they will be judged and found wanting when they stand before Christ. It may seem to us also that the righteous are hard pressed and afflicted, but the day will come when Christ will return with their reward.

2/1 - Smoke in the Eyes

Proverbs 10:26 As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is a sluggard to those who send him.

We have been sent by God, so we must not be lazy about our mission.

2/2 - Adding Length of Life

Proverbs 10:27 The fear of the LORD adds length to life, but the years of the wicked are cut short.

In a most dramatic way this is true, for those who truly fear the Lord will find eternal life, but those who do not will suffer the just punishment of their sin.

2/3 - The Prospect of the Righteous

Proverbs 10:28 The prospect of the righteous is joy, but the hopes of the wicked come to nothing.

Proverbs 11:23 The desire of the righteous ends only in good, but the hope of the wicked only in wrath.

In these two Proverbs, we see that the hope of the righteous far exceeds the hope of the wicked. While the righteous look forward to joy and good things, the wicked have nothing to look forward to but God's wrath.

2/4 - A Refuge and a Ruin

Proverbs 10:29 The way of the LORD is a refuge for the righteous, but it is the ruin of those who do evil.

Jesus, the cornerstone, is precious to the righteous, but "A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall" to those who do not believe.

2/5 - Different Things to Say

Proverbs 10:32 The lips of the righteous know what is fitting, but the mouth of the wicked only what is perverse.

What comes out of the mouth is what comes from the heart. The wicked and the righteous will be very different in the things that they say.

2/6 - Dishonest Scales

Proverbs 11:1 The LORD abhors dishonest scales, but accurate weights are his delight.

"Dishonest scales" refers to a merchant who will sell goods by weight, but cheats in the measurement of the things that are sold. God delights in the honest, but abhors the cheater.

2/7 - Disgraced Pride

Proverbs 11:2 When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.

No one can stand honestly before God in pride, therefore pride is rebellion against God, and will always bring disgrace.

2/8 - Worthless Wealth

Proverbs 11:4 Wealth is worthless in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death.

Death is the great equalizer. Wealth and poverty make no difference to the dead. The only thing that matters is our relationship with God.

2/9 - A Straight Way for the Blameless

Proverbs 11:5 The righteousness of the blameless makes a straight way for them, but the wicked are brought down by their own wickedness.

Proverbs 11:6 The righteousness of the upright delivers them, but the unfaithful are trapped by evil desires.

The statements do not always seem to be true in this world, but will certainly be true on the day that Christ judges each one according to the things they have done.

2/10 - The Power of the Wicked

Proverbs 11:7 When a wicked man dies, his hope perishes; all he expected from his power comes to nothing.

This is the same thought that Jesus illustrated when he taught that there is no profit in gaining the world and losing the soul. No matter how much we may have accomplished, it is all meaningless at death, unless it is accomplished for the Lord Jesus Christ.

2/11 - What to Say to Your Neighbor

Proverbs 11:12 A man who lacks judgment derides his neighbor, but a man of understanding holds his tongue.

A man of understanding knows that he is a sinner, and therefore will not be quick to be critical of another.

2/12 - An Information Steward

Proverbs 11:13 A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret.

When you are entrusted with information that might hurt someone, you are like a steward who has been given a trust. And a good steward will faithfully carry out the duties of his trust.

2/13 - Many Advisors

Proverbs 11:14 For lack of guidance a nation falls, but many advisers make victory sure.

It is always wise to listen to the advise of many. It is also wise for the believer to have many different teachers.

2/14 - Deceptive Wages

Proverbs 11:18 The wicked man earns deceptive wages, but he who sows righteousness reaps a sure reward.

When we labor for things that we can see, we labor for that which will not last. When we work for things unseen ... heavenly things ... we labor for something more sure, but less easy to recognize.

2/15 - A Question of Motives

Proverbs 11:20 The LORD detests men of perverse heart but he delights in those whose ways are blameless.

Underlying this verse is a question of motives. Doing right things for the wrong reasons will not please God at all. God delights in those who have pure motives in the right things they do.

2/16 - No Getting Around It

Proverbs 11:21 Be sure of this: The wicked will not go unpunished, but those who are righteous will go free.

There is no getting around the final verdict of judgment day.

2/17 - A Ring in a Pig's Snout

Proverbs 11:22 Like a gold ring in a pig's snout is a beautiful woman who shows no discretion.

Beauty, like many of God's gifts, is wasted if it is not appreciated and used wisely.

2/18 - Prosperity of the Generous

Proverbs 11:24 One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty.

Proverbs 11:25 A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.

God takes note of those who are generous, especially those who are generous to the poor. If we use

what we have to do God's work, he will give us more to do it with.

2/19 - Curses and Blessings

Proverbs 11:26 People curse the man who hoards grain, but blessing crowns him who is willing to sell.

If we look only to our own interests, then we live under a curse. If we look out for the interests of others, we live under a blessing.

2/20 - Thrive Like a Leaf

Proverbs 11:28 Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf.

When tough times are ahead, do you feel secure because you have money in the bank, or because you have trust in the Lord?

2/21 - Fruit of the Tree of Life

Proverbs 11:30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise.

A righteous life will become a tree of life to others, so that by the righteousness of one, others will follow. It is important, then, no matter what our place in life, that we live as righteously as possible.

2/22 - Receiving Their Due

Proverbs 11:31 If the righteous receive their due on earth, how much more the ungodly and the sinner!

Peter quotes this verse in 1 Peter 4:18 to demonstrate that even the righteous will suffer discipline from God in this world. If that is the case, then the wicked should really beware.

2/23 - How to be Stupid

Proverbs 12:1 Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid.

If we want to be wiser, we must not be afraid to be corrected when we are wrong. This is a simple statement, but hard to live by. Proverbs 13:1 says that "a mocker does not listen to rebuke."

2/24 - The Advice of the Wicked

Proverbs 12:5 The plans of the righteous are just, but the advice of the wicked is deceitful.

A strong argument is made here that the righteous should not seek out the advice of the unrighteous in matters of life. If the source of all truth is in our God, then we should look to those who know the truth for advice.

2/25 - Men With Warped Minds

Proverbs 12:8 A man is praised according to his wisdom, but men with warped minds are despised.

We are known by all according to the wisdom of the choices we make. This is a very compelling reason to desire wisdom.

2/26 - Better to be a Nobody

Proverbs 12:9 Better to be a nobody and yet have a servant than pretend to be somebody and have no food.

This sums up the Bible's teaching on humility. If we humbly come to Christ to have our needs met, then we are much better off than if we are too proud to admit that we need Him.

2/27 - Kindness to Animals

Proverbs 12:10 A righteous man cares for the needs of his animal, but the kindest acts of the wicked are cruel.

It is the duty of the righteous to do what is right even in the smallest of things, whether this means the care of the animal, or in obedience to the authorities, or in any other thing by which we can honor God.

2/28 - Don't Get Rich Quick

Proverbs 12:11 He who works his land will have abundant food, but he who chases fantasies lacks judgment.

This is a strong proverb against those who seek to get rich fast, either through gambling or through investments or anything else. Titus 6:9 says "People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction."

3/1 - The Fruit of the Lips

Proverbs 12:13 An evil man is trapped by his sinful talk, but a righteous man escapes trouble.
Proverbs 12:14 From the fruit of his lips a man is filled with good things as surely as the work of his hands rewards him.

If we lie or hurt people by what we say, we fall into a trap which involves the loss of trust and respect from men, and the punishment or judgment of God. But if we use the things we say to help and bless others, it will come back as a blessing to us.

3/2 - The Way of a Fool

Proverbs 12:15 The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice.

A wise man will consider carefully, and seek other counsel, especially in making important life changing decisions. The fool has no one to blame for his mistakes than himself, because he listens only to his own advice.

3/3 - Overlooking Insult

Proverbs 12:16 A fool shows his annoyance at once, but a prudent man overlooks an insult.

If one is wise, he will overlook small insults, or at the very least, keep to himself his feelings until he finds the truth. The fool reacts at once and guarantees by his reaction that there will be friction and ill will. Believers should avoid this, for we are called to peace.

3/4 - Think First and Speak Later

Proverbs 12:18 Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

Sometimes it is very easy to talk first and consider later. Such a use of the tongue often brings trouble, and causes great pain. Those who want to be wise should think first and speak later.

3/5 - Plots or Joy

Proverbs 12:20 There is deceit in the hearts of those who plot evil, but joy for those who promote peace.

The hearts of the unrighteous have no room for joy, for they are full of their own plots and plans and fears. Those who trust in the Lord have no such fears and can rest in joy, knowing that their future is in the hands of God.

3/6 - Free From Harm

Proverbs 12:21 No harm befalls the righteous, but the wicked have their fill of trouble.

Even those troublesome things that happened to God's children are not truly harmful, not in the eternal scope of things. God allows suffering for our good, and therefore it could not be considered harm. Ultimately, in eternity, we will see and know, and there will never again be place for sorrow, but the wicked will have eternal sorrow.

3/7 - Delightfully Truthful

Proverbs 12:22 The LORD detests lying lips, but he delights in men who are truthful.

Being truthful in everything we do is difficult, but this proverb shows us how important it is to our God.

3/8 - Blurting Out Folly

Proverbs 12:23 A prudent man keeps his knowledge to himself, but the heart of fools blurts out folly.

This verse refers to information that one might have about another. The wise man does not gossip, but the fool speaks what he knows to others, to his own shame and disgrace.

3/9 - A Kind Word Ready

Proverbs 12:25 An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up.

If we are to keep the command of our Lord to love each other, then we must be ready with a kind word

to any in need.

3/10 - The Path of Immortality

Proverbs 12:28 In the way of righteousness there is life; along that path is immortality.

This is a statement that not many understood in the days that it was spoken, and is still not often believed. The righteous get their reward for eternity, but the wicked have only this life to enjoy the fruits of their schemes.

3/11 Guarded or Overthrown

Proverbs 13:6 Righteousness guards the man of integrity, but wickedness overthrows the sinner.

The right things that a person does in his life build a shield of integrity that will help in any crisis. The man with no integrity walks about like an unarmed man in den of thieves.

3/12 - A Poor Man's Gift

Proverbs 13:8 A man's riches may ransom his life, but a poor man hears no threat.

The rich man needs all his money to protect him from all who would desire to gain from his wealth. This is one of many problems that the poor man will never have to face. Poverty is a gift from God, though it is not often seen that way.

3/13 - Shining Brightly

Proverbs 13:9 The light of the righteous shines brightly, but the lamp of the wicked is snuffed out.

In the scope of eternity, the righteous will always prosper, and some day will shine like the sun. The wicked have no such hope.

3/14 - Dangerous Pride

Proverbs 13:10 Pride only breeds quarrels, but wisdom is found in those who take advice.

Proverbs 13:13 He who scorns instruction will pay for it, but he who respects a command is rewarded.

These two proverbs warn us that pride can prevent our willingness to ask or heed good advice from those who love us. This type of pride can be very dangerous, and will eventually result in sorrow.

3/15 - Hope Deferred

Proverbs 13:12 Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.

Proverbs 13:19 A longing fulfilled is sweet to the soul, but fools detest turning from evil.

Our longing is for the return of Jesus Christ, and for this we yearn, but his return will be "a tree of life" and "sweet to the soul." It will be well worth the wait.

3/16 - A Fountain of Life

Proverbs 13:14 The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life, turning a man from the snares of death.

This is the reason that the reader of Proverbs is so often warned to pursue wisdom. Knowledge of the truth is knowledge of what it takes to gain favor with God and to have eternal life. Those who have this wisdom should teach. Those who don't should learn.

3/17 - Acting Out of Knowledge

Proverbs 13:16 Every prudent man acts out of knowledge, but a fool exposes his folly.

The way we live our lives is based on our knowledge and beliefs. The man who has learned of God's love and forgiveness should live his life based on his knowledge. Those who don't know will live lives based on their ignorance.

3/18 - A Trustworthy Envoy

Proverbs 13:17 A wicked messenger falls into trouble, but a trustworthy envoy brings healing.

Believers are messengers sent to the world with the message of redemption in Jesus Christ. Are you a wicked messenger or a trustworthy envoy?

3/19 - Walking With the Wise

Proverbs 13:20 He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm.

Since our lives will be impacted by our companions, we must be wise in those we choose.

3/20 - A Good Man's Inheritance

Proverbs 13:22 A good man leaves an inheritance for his children's children, but a sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous.

The inheritance left should be, I believe, a knowledge of the truth found in Jesus Christ. This is an inheritance worth more than anything in this world. A man cannot make his children live for Christ, but he can model the truth of Christ in his own life.

3/21 - Sweeping Injustice

Proverbs 13:23 A poor man's field may produce abundant food, but injustice sweeps it away.

God despises injustice in any form. This is the reason Christ had to suffer so that we could be forgiven. Those who are unjust will have to answer to God, unless forgiven through Christ.

3/22 - The Discipline of a Father

Proverbs 13:24 He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.

We are taught in Hebrews 12 that one of the proofs of God's love for us is that he disciplines us. Like a

loving Father, he does not cast us out for our sin, but will discipline us for our own good. That is why David wrote in the 23rd Psalm that God's rod and staff comfort him.

3/23 - A Wise Woman Builder

Proverbs 14:1 The wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down.

This is another way of saying that you reap what you sow. Our diligence in righteousness will bring us reward, while our disobedience to God will surely bring us sorrow.

3/24 - Foolish Lips

Proverbs 14:7 Stay away from a foolish man, for you will not find knowledge on his lips.

We should be careful about the company we keep, for our company affects our character, and those who are foolish can cause us to be foolish as well.

3/25 - Making Amends

Proverbs 14:9 Fools mock at making amends for sin, but goodwill is found among the upright.

When we have sinned against someone, or they have sinned against us, we should do whatever it takes to make things right again. The world cannot understand this, but it is the will of God.

3/26 - Bitterness and Joy of the Heart

Proverbs 14:10 Each heart knows its own bitterness, and no one else can share its joy.

Hebrews 12:1 tells us to run the race marked out for us. Each of us will have our own share of pain and sorrow, as well as joy and happiness. And while the compassion of others can be a help to us, no one understands our bitterness better than our Lord.

3/27 - The Way of a Man

Proverbs 14:12 There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.

The logic of men is foolishness to God, so it is a dangerous guide that often leads to death. The road to life is the path of trust. If we trust God, and not our own understanding, we will not fall into this trap.

3/28 - Laughter and Heartache

Proverbs 14:13 Even in laughter the heart may ache, and joy may end in grief.

All of our days in this world will be a mixed bag of joy and sorrow, but the day is coming when there will be no more sickness or crying or death or pain.

3/29 - Faithlessness Repaid

Proverbs 14:14 The faithless will be fully repaid for their ways, and the good man rewarded for his.

It does not seem that this verse is true, but the final verdict will not be heard until the day of judgment. And that time, all justice will have its place, and the righteous will shine like the sun.

3/30 - A Hotheaded Man

Proverbs 14:16-17: A wise man fears the LORD and shuns evil, but a fool is hotheaded and reckless. A quick-tempered man does foolish things, and a crafty man is hated.

Proverbs 14:29 A patient man has great understanding, but a quick-tempered man displays folly.

If we would be wise, we must learn to control our tempers, or reckless and foolish deeds will follow.

3/31 - Despising One's Neighbor

Proverbs 14:20-21: The poor are shunned even by their neighbors, but the rich have many friends. He who despises his neighbor sins, but blessed is he who is kind to the needy.

This Proverb is a warning that it is sin to live like others, and to favor the rich over the poor. We need to see through the eyes of God who cares for the poor.

4/1 - Hard Work or Mere Talk

Proverbs 14:23-24: All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty. The wealth of the wise is their crown, but the folly of fools yields folly.

The wise will prosper, if not in this world, then in the world to come.

4/2 - A Truthful Witness

Proverbs 14:25 A truthful witness saves lives, but a false witness is deceitful.

The things we say about others have a significant effect on their lives. We must guard what we say. Also, we must be faithful witnesses to the resurrection of our Lord, for this message is essential to saving others.

4/3 - A Fountain of Life

Proverbs 14:26-27 He who fears the LORD has a secure fortress, and for his children it will be a refuge. The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, turning a man from the snares of death.

A man who fears the Lord will pass great blessing to His children by his Godly example. The fear of the Lord leads a man to find eternal life in Him.

4/4 - A Heart at Peace

Proverbs 14:30 A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.

It has long been known that the attitude effects the health. If we make peace with God and with others,

we have the benefit of physical blessing.

4/5 - Contempt for God

Proverbs 14:31 He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.

If God chooses to love the needy with a special love, it would be very foolish to oppress them and add to their burden. We honor God in our caring for the poor.

4/6 - A Refuge in Death

Proverbs 14:32 When calamity comes, the wicked are brought down, but even in death the righteous have a refuge.

No matter how bad things get for believers, we know that at death we have a sure reward.

4/7 - A Wise Servant and a Delighted King

Proverbs 14:35 A king delights in a wise servant, but a shameful servant incurs his wrath.

This is very true of our relationship with Jesus Christ, our King.

4/8 - A Healing Tongue

Proverbs 15:1 A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

Proverbs 15:4 The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit.

Proverbs 15:18 A hot-tempered man stirs up dissension, but a patient man calms a quarrel.

Three different Proverbs here instruct us that if we are slow and careful in what we say, great quarrels can be avoided. We are often told in the New Testament that God wants us to live in peace, and here is a recipe for it.

4/9 - Always Being Watched

Proverbs 15:3 The eyes of the LORD are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good.

We would do well to remember that God hears and sees every deed, and will reward the righteous.

4/10 - Detesting Sacrifice

Proverbs 15:8-9: The LORD detests the sacrifice of the wicked, but the prayer of the upright pleases him. The LORD detests the way of the wicked but he loves those who pursue righteousness.

When those who do wickedness try to seek the Lord in hypocrisy, their search is in vain. It is only in repentance that the wicked can find grace. When a man truly pursues righteousness through repentance, the Lord will see that he finds it.

4/11 - Discipline and Wrath

Proverbs 15:10 Stern discipline awaits him who leaves the path; he who hates correction will die.

We should be afraid of God's discipline, but we should be more afraid of His wrath. It is better to be disciplined by God and to be corrected by it, than to go our own way.

4/12 - No Secret Thoughts

Proverbs 15:11 Death and Destruction lie open before the LORD--how much more the hearts of men!

If God has all knowledge of death and destruction, then the things that go on in the hearts of men are no secret to Him either. We should make sure that our thoughts are pleasing to Him.

4/13 - The Diet of a Fool

Proverbs 15:14 The discerning heart seeks knowledge, but the mouth of a fool feeds on folly.

Do we seek the truth, or do we seek to hear only that which is pleasing to hear? The wise man seeks true knowledge, even if the truth is painful.

4/14 - Vegetables with Love

Proverbs 15:15-17: All the days of the oppressed are wretched, but the cheerful heart has a continual feast. Better a little with the fear of the LORD than great wealth with turmoil. Better a meal of vegetables where there is love than a fattened calf with hatred.

We have heard many stories of the unhappiness of someone who seemed to have everything. Before the stories began, God told us that this is the way. The faith, hope, love and joy that come from the Lord make life better than anything the world has to offer.

4/15 - Success Through Advisers

Proverbs 15:22 Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.

It is always best to make plans with the counsel of others. It is pride which makes us think that we have no need for such advice, and pride makes us blind.

4/16 - A Timely Word

Proverbs 15:23 A man finds joy in giving an apt reply--and how good is a timely word!

A timely word of encouragement or of warning can save a person from much heartache. We should not be quick to speak, but we should never fear to speak in love.

4/17 - The Thoughts of the Pure

Proverbs 15:26 The LORD detests the thoughts of the wicked, but those of the pure are pleasing to him.

Or as the Psalmist wrote: "May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in

your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer." --Psalm 19:14

4/18 - Trouble for the Family

Proverbs 15:27 A greedy man brings trouble to his family, but he who hates bribes will live.

Bribes or any other dishonest means of gain will not increase the quality of life in any way. The peace that comes with integrity, especially mixed with the grace of God, brings real contentment.

4/19 - Weighing the Answer

Proverbs 15:28 The heart of the righteous weighs its answers, but the mouth of the wicked gushes evil.

It is much wiser to consider very carefully the effects of our words than speak whatever comes first. Here the Proverb tells us that such consideration is a mark of the righteous.

4/20 - Listening to Rebuke

Proverbs 15:31-32: He who listens to a life-giving rebuke will be at home among the wise. He who ignores discipline despises himself, but whoever heeds correction gains understanding.

This proverb emphasizes the need to have a willingness to submit to discipline or correction. When we refuse such correction, we damage ourselves to the extent that the Proverb teaches us that we despise ourselves.

4/21 - Humility Before Honor

Proverbs 15:33 The fear of the LORD teaches a man wisdom, and humility comes before honor.

Proverbs 18:12 Before his downfall a man's heart is proud, but humility comes before honor.

Humility before honor is one of the basic New Testament Teachings as well. Jesus emphasized this when He taught of the dinner guests looking for places of honor, and taught that we should take place of least honor, for it is better to be exalted than abased. Peter wrote to "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time." --1 Peter 5:6

4/22 - A Flawed Motive

Proverbs 16:2 All a man's ways seem innocent to him, but motives are weighed by the LORD.

It is important to see that when we examine ourselves we are flawed in our evaluations. This is one reason we should try to live in humility. Let us pray instead that we can see ourselves through the eyes of God.

4/23 - Plans Committed to the Lord

Proverbs 16:3 Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.

Our work in the Lord will always bring about the results that God intends. Paul advises us to "stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know

that your labor in the Lord is not in vain." --1 Corinthians 15:58

4/24 - For His Own Ends

Proverbs 16:4 The LORD works out everything for his own ends--even the wicked for a day of disaster.

God's ways are beyond our understanding. But in the end, justice, righteousness and mercy will prevail.

4/25 - Through Love and Faithfulness

Proverbs 16:6 Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for; through the fear of the LORD a man avoids evil.

Through love on the part of God, who sent His son Jesus, and through faithfulness of Him who has made us promises and will keep His Word, but also through faith on our part God has chosen to count the sinner as if He were righteous.

4/26 - At Peace with Enemies

Proverbs 16:7 When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD, he makes even his enemies live at peace with him.

When we please God, He works all things for our best good, even our relationship with those outside the faith.

4/27 - Little is Better

Proverbs 16:8 Better a little with righteousness than much gain with injustice.

Proverbs 19:1 Better a poor man whose walk is blameless than a fool whose lips are perverse.

The very poor who walk in righteousness with God will always have more than those who don't, no matter how much their riches.

4/28 - Determined Steps

Proverbs 16:9 In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps.

You can make all the plans you want, but it is comforting to know that the God of all wisdom and understanding has made His own plan for our lives.

4/29 - Pride Before Destruction

Proverbs 16:18-19: Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be lowly in spirit and among the oppressed than to share plunder with the proud.

This is a very strong warning against pride. It was the downfall of the Pharisees in Jesus' day, and of many other religious leaders in history. Those who have learned to trust God whole heartedly are most in danger of taking pride in what they have done. Beware!

4/30 - Sweet Healing Words

Proverbs 16:24 Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.

We should always seek to build each other up with the things we say. What a blessing we can be to others.

5/1 - Deadly Logic

Proverbs 16:25 There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.

Human logic is completely flawed. This is why the people of Nazareth reasoned the Jesus could not be from God. They had seen Him grow up. Their reasoning was wrong and so they rejected the One who could give them life. It is always better to trust God than to trust our own logic.

5/2 - Driven by Hunger

Proverbs 16:26 The laborer's appetite works for him; his hunger drives him on.

The worker continues to work to earn money for food. His appetite pushes him to continue his work. This should be true in our spiritual lives as well. Oh that we would hunger and thirst for more of God.

5/3 - Separating Friends

Proverbs 16:28 A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends.

If we would be wise, we should choose to protect others with the things we choose to say or repeat.

5/4 - A Crown of Splendor

Proverbs 16:31: Gray hair is a crown of splendor; it is attained by a righteous life.

It is the way of the world to despise the aged as if they had nothing of value to offer, even if they are God's people. It is the way of the Lord to see them as those who have gained a life of wisdom.

5/5 - Nothing by Chance

Proverbs 16:33 The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.

There is nothing that the Lord leaves to chance. He controls all things.

5/6 - Refined by Fire

Proverbs 17:3 The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but the LORD tests the heart.

Just as silver and gold are refined through the fire, God will test our hearts through the fire of affliction.

5/7 - Contempt for God

Proverbs 17:5 He who mocks the poor shows contempt for their Maker; whoever gloats over disaster will not go unpunished.

Let us beware of mocking God by showing contempt for any of His creation.

5/8 - Separating Friends

Proverbs 17:9 He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.

Covering an offense means forgiving it, and keeping it to oneself. If we complain or gossip, we divide people that Jesus prayed would live in unity.

5/9 - Responding to Criticism

Proverbs 17:10 A rebuke impresses a man of discernment more than a hundred lashes a fool.

Just simply pointing out one's sin will make an impression on him, if he is wise. A fool can't learn even from torture. If we would seek wisdom then, we should be willing to respond quickly to a simple rebuke.

5/10 - Ever Present Evil

Proverbs 17:13 If a man pays back evil for good, evil will never leave his house.

We live under a curse if we treat with evil those who have been good to us.

5/11 - Breaching a Dam

Proverbs 17:14 Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam; so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out.

Amazing amounts of harmony could be obtained if we would be willing to simply let go of a matter that is not critical.

5/12 - A Brother for Adversity

Proverbs 17:17 A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

Jesus Christ is the model for the perfect friend. He will be faithful through any problem, and will never fail in His love. And Jesus is such a friend to us.

5/13 - Punishing the Innocent

Proverbs 17:26 It is not good to punish an innocent man, or to flog officials for their integrity.

When someone is critical of the innocent, and especially those in authority, it is not a good thing and that person will have to answer to God for the harm they do.

5/14 - Lazy and Destructive

Proverbs 18:9 One who is slack in his work is brother to one who destroys.

Being lazy is like being destructive, because the result is the same: A lack of what should have been.

5/15 - Everlasting Safety

Proverbs 18:10 The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.

Proverbs 18:11 The wealth of the rich is their fortified city; they imagine it an unscalable wall.

There is eternal safety in trusting God, and nothing comparable in this world.

5/16 - Slow to Judgment

Proverbs 18:17 The first to present his case seems right, till another comes forward and questions him.

We should be slow to believe the first account of things, especially if it shows someone in a negative light. Be careful to have all the facts before you judge.

5/17 - A Sticky Friend

Proverbs 18:24 A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

This is where seeking popularity falls flat on its face. A loving friend is worth more than thousands of casual ones.

5/18 - Acting Without Knowing

Proverbs 19:2 It is not good to have zeal without knowledge, nor to be hasty and miss the way.

Getting excited about our direction with no knowledge of the way will lead to great mistakes. Even people with greatest intentions can run into trouble if they act without knowledge.

5/19 - Ruined Life

Proverbs 19:3 A man's own folly ruins his life, yet his heart rages against the LORD.

We make many mistakes and then get mad at God when the consequences fall on us. It would be much wiser to seek God before ruin hits, than to wait till after.

5/20 - Overlooking an Offense

Proverbs 19:11 A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense.

God has overlooked our offenses, and we would be wise to be godly in this matter. If we have patience and forgiveness for others, He will have the same for us.

5/21 - The Roar of a Lion

Proverbs 19:12 A king's rage is like the roar of a lion, but his favor is like dew on the grass.

This is especially so for God, our King. We should have great fear of His wrath, and a great desire for His favor.

5/22 - Contemptuous Ways

Proverbs 19:16 He who obeys instructions guards his life, but he who is contemptuous of his ways will die.

Specifically, we are talking about instructions from God's Word. Contempt for God's Word will always bring eventual ruin unless there is repentance.

5/23 - Lending to the Lord

Proverbs 19:17 He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward him for what he has done.

This is true because God has a special love for the poor. If we lend to God, do you think God will pay us back?

5/24 - Hot-Tempered Man

Proverbs 19:19 A hot-tempered man must pay the penalty; if you rescue him, you will have to do it again.

Natural consequences are a powerful teacher to those who cannot control their tempers. Tough love is sometimes needed to allow people to face their own penalties so that they can learn by them.

5/25 - The Prevailing Plan

Proverbs 19:21 Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.

Nothing takes place without the consent of the Lord. All of our plans come to nothing unless God is behind them. "Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain." --Psalm 127:1

5/26 - Better Poor Than Dishonest

Proverbs 19:22 What a man desires is unfailing love; better to be poor than a liar.

People might think they want riches or power, but the root desire of all is unfailing love. That is why a poor man will be happier than a rich man who has obtained those riches through deceit. His character will separate him from the faithful love he needs.

5/27 - Untouched by Trouble

Proverbs 19:23 The fear of the LORD leads to life: Then one rests content, untouched by trouble.

There is no one more content than the person who has learned to trust and obey the Lord. And we know that the eternal life he gives will be untouched by trouble.

5/28 - A Mockers and a Brawler

Proverbs 20:1 Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise.

A person who uses alcohol cannot trust even his own judgment. This is one of the reasons it is wise to abstain. Another is that such things can cause others to drink who should not.

5/29 - The Honorable Thing

Proverbs 20:3 It is to a man's honor to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel.

The most honorable thing that a man can do in a potential conflict is to manage to avoid a quarrel. In many battles, it is better to surrender than to win.

5/30 - Now is the Time

Proverbs 20:4 A sluggard does not plow in season; so at harvest time he looks but finds nothing.

In our spiritual lives, now is the time for sowing, and eternity is the time to reap the benefits of that work. So what will you find?

5/31 - A Heart of Deep Waters

Proverbs 20:5 The purposes of a man's heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out.

People rarely understand the motivation for the things they do. If you would be wise, you need to see yourself through God's eyes, and know your true motivation, and whether it pleases Him.

6/1 - Dishonest Scales

Proverbs 20:10 Differing weights and differing measures--the LORD detests them both.

Proverbs 20:23 The LORD detests differing weights, and dishonest scales do not please him.

These two different Proverbs combine to make one clear thought: God detests a cheater. Dishonest weights and measures were scales and measuring containers that did not accurately reflect the truth so that the seller could sell less and charge for more. Any kind of gain that is made dishonestly will gain the disapproval the Almighty God.

6/2 - Known by Our Actions

Proverbs 20:11 Even a child is known by his actions, by whether his conduct is pure and right.

This verse is quoted at children a lot, but the point is this: Just like you judge a child by the things he

does, and a tree is known by its fruits, a man's heart will be known by his actions.

6/3 - Guidance to Wage War

Proverbs 20:18 Make plans by seeking advice; if you wage war, obtain guidance.

It is never wise to impulsively make decisions without advice. Find Godly people to whom you can look for counsel.

6/4 - Better to Wait

Proverbs 20:22 Do not say, "I'll pay you back for this wrong!" Wait for the LORD, and he will deliver you.

Romans 12:19-21 expands on this when it tells us that God will repay if we wait on Him. But our job is to overcome evil with good.

6/5 - Who Knows the Way?

Proverbs 20:24 A man's steps are directed by the LORD. How then can anyone understand his own way?

Proverbs 20:27 The lamp of the LORD searches the spirit of a man; it searches out his inmost being.

God knows us better than we know ourselves, and so we should trust Him with the direction He desires us to go.

6/6 - The Splendor of the Old

Proverbs 20:29 The glory of young men is their strength, gray hair the splendor of the old.

If the strong young man should be honored for his strength, how much more should the old be honored for his wisdom.

6/7 - Blows, Wounds and Beatings

Proverbs 20:30 Blows and wounds cleanse away evil, and beatings purge the inmost being.

This is a sure sign that God will not hesitate to discipline us "because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son." (Hebrews 12:6)

6/8 - A Directed Heart

Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases.

It is a comfort to know that when it comes to world events, God is in control, even of the world's leaders.

6/9 - The Weight of the Heart

Proverbs 21:2 All a man's ways seem right to him, but the LORD weighs the heart.

Sometimes a person's actions may seem to be good, but if they are not done with the right heart, they are still evil. If God looks even to the heart of such deeds, let us work hard to act only to please Him.

6/10 - Better than Sacrifice

Proverbs 21:3 To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.

It is more important that our daily walk pleases God, than that we make great commitments and gifts to Him. He wants our hearts, not our gifts.

6/11 - The Plans of the Diligent

Proverbs 21:5 The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty.

The wisdom of careful thought is being taught here. If we think over our plans and actions, we are far more likely to make right choices.

6/12 - A Fleeting Fortune

Proverbs 21:6 A fortune made by a lying tongue is a fleeting vapor and a deadly snare.

Not just money, but any kind of advantage that is gained by deceit is doomed to self destruct, if not in this world then in the next. Whatever we gain involving a lie on our part is cursed.

6/13 - The Cry of the Poor

Proverbs 21:13 If a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out and not be answered.

This is not always true in this world, but there is a day of judgment coming. The story of Lazarus and the rich man in Luke 16:19-31 is an example of that. We must not be apathetic about the poor.

6/14 - Pursuing What Matters

Proverbs 21:21: He who pursues righteousness and love finds life, prosperity and honor.

So let us pursue them with all of our hearts.

6/15 - A Man named "Mocker."

Proverbs 21:24 The proud and arrogant man--"Mocker" is his name; he behaves with overweening pride.

There is danger that even a believer may succumb to this spirit, and develop pride and a critical heart. When we face our Lord, we have no reason to be proud. Only in humility can we find forgiveness.

6/16 - No Plan that can Succeed

Proverbs 21:30 There is no wisdom, no insight, no plan that can succeed against the LORD.

This is a great promise to remember whenever we face difficulties, and especially when we face opposition. God's plan will be accomplished, no matter what people try.

6/17 - The Pursuit of Victory

Proverbs 21:31 The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but victory rests with the LORD.

You can prepare all you want for whatever you do, but it will only be accomplished with the will of God.

6/18 - Better Than Money

Proverbs 22:1 A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.

It is important then, that we walk in honesty and integrity, so that we can gain this respect that is worth more than money.

6/19 - Comparison of Rich and Poor

Proverbs 22:2 Rich and poor have this in common: The LORD is the Maker of them all.

The rich or powerful are no better in the eyes of the Lord than the poor. This is why God has "chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him." --James 2:5

6/20 - Eyes Wide Open

Proverbs 22:3 A prudent man sees danger and takes refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it.

And never is this more true than in looking toward our eternal destinies. The obvious choice of the wise is to find refuge in Jesus Christ, while the foolish just cannot see the need. What will their fate be?

6/21 - Humility and Fear

Proverbs 22:4 Humility and the fear of the LORD bring wealth and honor and life.

Once again, we have a Proverb here that looks beyond our present life into eternity. There is no guarantee that a believer will live long in this world, but the promise of eternal life is worth more than all the days you could dream of in this world.

6/22 - Thorns and Snares

Proverbs 22:5 In the paths of the wicked lie thorns and snares, but he who guards his soul stays far from them.

It is the best choice of the wise to make every effort to avoid temptations and the traps of the devil. This is why we should work so hard to control our anger and live a life of love and forgiveness.

6/23 - Food for the Poor

Proverbs 22:9 A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor.

Being generous means giving away a lot, but it also means that we will be rewarded by God for our gifts to the needy.

6/24 - Driving Out the Mockers

Proverbs 22:10 Drive out the mocker, and out goes strife; quarrels and insults are ended.

From this Proverb we learn that just one person in a group can cause strife, quarrels and insults. The group is better off without such a person. It is important then that we make sure that we never take on the attitude of a mocker.

6/25 - In Your Heart and On Your Lips

Proverbs 22:17-19: Pay attention and listen to the sayings of the wise; apply your heart to what I teach, for it is pleasing when you keep them in your heart and have all of them ready on your lips. So that your trust may be in the LORD, I teach you today, even you.

It is much easier to trust God if we know Him well. It is of great benefit to listen to and study His will. It pleases God when you know His will, and are ready to speak it.

6/26 - Bad Tempered Friends

Proverbs 22:24-25: Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man, do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn his ways and get yourself ensnared.

We learn here not only that we must control our tempers, but that we must carefully choose friends that can control theirs as well. To lose control of one's temper is to invite anger into one's life, and bitterness will always follow. These things are complete opposites of God's commands to love and forgive each other.

6/27 - Wanting to be Rich

Proverbs 23:4-5: Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint. Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle.

Our days in this world are very temporary compared to eternity, and so there is nothing of lasting value in riches. This is why Jesus said "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal." (Matthew 6:19-20)

6/28 - Saving the Soul of a Child

Proverbs 23:13-14: Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish him with the rod, he will not die. Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death.

If this is true of earthly parents, how much more of our heavenly Father. He would rather chastise us than let us go our ways and suffer the true penalty of our sins.

6/29 - Envy the wicked

Proverbs 23:17-18: Do not let your heart envy sinners, but always be zealous for the fear of the LORD. There is surely a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off.

Proverbs 24:1-2: Do not envy wicked men, do not desire their company; for their hearts plot violence, and their lips talk about making trouble.

Remember, as you look at the prosperity of the wicked, that their prosperity is limited to their days on Earth, while the hope of the righteous goes on into eternity.

6/30 - Building a House by Wisdom

Proverbs 24:3-4: By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established; through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures.

Remember that as you live your life, living by God's wisdom will bring blessing in everything you do.

7/1 - Faltering in Times of Trouble

Proverbs 24:10 If you falter in times of trouble, how small is your strength!

Since we know that times of trouble are certain to come, we should prepare ourselves to stand firm in our faith in God through any trial.

7/2 - I Know Nothing

Proverbs 24:12 If you say, "But we knew nothing about this," does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who guards your life know it? Will he not repay each person according to what he has done?

God sees and will judge even the motives of our hearts. There is nothing hidden from him. It is well to remember that when we try to justify our mistakes.

7/3 - Eating Honey

Proverbs 24:13-14: Eat honey, my son, for it is good; honey from the comb is sweet to your taste. Know also that wisdom is sweet to your soul; if you find it, there is a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off.

Honey may be good to the taste, but wisdom is better for the soul. Eating honey is a delight to the tongue, but the path of wisdom leads to an eternal future hope.

7/4 - Gloating Over Your Enemy

Proverbs 24:17-18: Do not gloat when your enemy falls; when he stumbles, do not let your heart rejoice, or the LORD will see and disapprove and turn his wrath away from him.

Proverbs 25:21-22: If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the LORD will reward you.

These two passages teach a theme that is often repeated in the New Testament. God requires that we show only good to those who oppose us. Since God loves the wicked, He desires His children to do so also. This will lead to one of two ends, both of which the believer can rejoice in. Either they will repent, or God will bring about their ultimate punishment.

7/5 - Fretting Because of Evil

Proverbs 24:19-20: Do not fret because of evil men or be envious of the wicked, for the evil man has no future hope, and the lamp of the wicked will be snuffed out.

Remember that the ultimate destiny is more important than the temporal one. If the wicked seem to prosper now, it is only a breath compared to eternity.

7/6 - A Kiss on the Lips

Proverbs 24:26 An honest answer is like a kiss on the lips.

There is no better way to show true love to someone than to be honest with them.

7/7 - Testimony Without Cause

Proverbs 24:28-29 Do not testify against your neighbor without cause, or use your lips to deceive. Do not say, "I'll do to him as he has done to me; I'll pay that man back for what he did."

Not just in court, but in our daily dealings, we must be honest in what we say about others. The Bible teaches that gossip is wicked (Romans 1:29), but especially so if there is a hint of untruth or maliciousness about it. It is better to let God repay those who hurt us, while we continue to show them nothing but love.

7/8 - A Little Bit of Sleep

Proverbs 24:33-34: A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest--and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man.

The Bible says that we will be judged according to our deeds. So what will become of believers who fail to do God's work because of laziness? I believe his fate is recorded in 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 which concludes by saying "If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames."

7/9 - Humiliated by a King

Proverbs 25:6-7: Do not exalt yourself in the king's presence, and do not claim a place among great men; it is better for him to say to you, "Come up here," than for him to humiliate you before a

nobleman.

This is exactly the same point that Jesus made in Luke 14:7-11 when he talked about not choosing the seats of honor at a feast. He ended by stating that "everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

7/10 - Apples of Gold

Proverbs 25:11-12: A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver. Like an earring of gold or an ornament of fine gold is a wise man's rebuke to a listening ear.

We should never be afraid to rebuke or encourage, because such words, when well timed, will be of immense value to the hearer.

7/11 - Coolness of Snow

Proverbs 25:13 Like the coolness of snow at harvest time is a trustworthy messenger to those who send him; he refreshes the spirit of his masters.

Two thoughts here: First, it is always praiseworthy to be faithful in whatever tasks we undertake. Second, we should work hard to be a trustworthy messenger of the gospel to an unbelieving world.

7/12 - Burning Coals

Proverbs 25:21-22: If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the Lord will reward you.

If we love our enemies, either we will win them to the Lord, or they will have to answer to God for the way they treated us. Either way, God will reward us.

7/13 - More Hope for a Fool

Proverbs 26:12 Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

Arrogance makes one into a fool who does not know that he is a fool.

7/14 - Excuses, Excuses

Proverbs 26:13-16: The sluggard says, "There is a lion in the road, a fierce lion roaming the streets!" As a door turns on its hinges, so a sluggard turns on his bed. The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; he is too lazy to bring it back to his mouth. The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who answer discreetly.

I believe that these verses, which directly rebuke a lazy person, are meant to warn Christians against getting spiritually lazy.

7/15 - Poor Taste in Jokes

Proverbs 26:18-19: Like a madman shooting firebrands or deadly arrows is a man who deceives his

neighbor and says, "I was only joking!"

When we use deception to play jokes, even if we only mean it in fun, we often harm in ways that we have not intended. Thus it is like a madman firing arrows at random. Who knows what target he will hit? It is always better to live in truth, even in the area of humor.

7/16 - Gossip Running Its Course

Proverbs 26:22 The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to a man's inmost parts.

Gossip, once begun, must run its course, there is no way to stop it. It is a terrible sin that should never start.

7/17 - Falling in Your Own Pit

Proverbs 26:27 If a man digs a pit, he will fall into it; if a man rolls a stone, it will roll back on him.

This is another way of saying that a man will reap what he sows. We must live with the consequences of the things we do.

7/18 - The Folly of Plans

Proverbs 27:1 Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth.

James interprets for us in this way: "Now listen, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.' Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.'" --James 4:13-15

7/19 - Praising Yourself

Proverbs 27:2 Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; someone else, and not your own lips.

We should never seek our own honor. And it would be best if it is God who praises us, and not man.

7/20 - A Faithful Friend

Proverbs 27:5-6: Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.

Proverbs 27:9 Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of one's friend springs from his earnest counsel.

Proverbs 27:17 As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.

We should all seek friends who love us enough to rebuke us when we are wrong. Such a friend will guarantee our growth in the Lord, and be a faithful guide through any situation.

7/21 - Watching Out for Danger

Proverbs 27:12: The prudent see danger and take refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it.

No where is this more true than looking at our eternal destinies. The wise can see the possible outcomes of eternal life with God and eternal punishment. We must not ignore the danger.

7/22 - Tending Your Fig Tree

Proverbs 27:18 He who tends a fig tree will eat its fruit, and he who looks after his master will be honored.

In other words, we will be blessed if we are diligent at our Master's work.

7/23 - A Mirror for a Man

Proverbs 27:19 As water reflects a face, so a man's heart reflects the man.

You cannot hide what is in your heart. It shows in the things you say and do. Jesus said "Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks." --Matthew 12:33-34

7/24 - Never Satisfied

Proverbs 27:20 Death and Destruction are never satisfied, and neither are the eyes of man.

It is human nature that we are never satisfied, no matter how much we accomplish or how much we gain. Satisfaction is found only in submission to God's will.

7/25 - Running from Shadows

Proverbs 28:1 The wicked man flees, though no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion.

When we fully understand our God and his power, we know that nothing can touch us in any way that will bring eternal harm. The wicked have no such guarantees, and even have to think that God Himself might be against them.

7/26 - Poor Can be Better than Rich

Proverbs 28:6 Better a poor man whose walk is blameless than a rich man whose ways are perverse.

It is better to be such a poor man. The permanent rewards of the blameless far outweigh poverty in this world. Also the punishment of the perverse will be far worse than the poverty of the poor.

7/27 - Detestable Prayers

Proverbs 28:9 If anyone turns a deaf ear to the law, even his prayers are detestable.

If we refuse to obey God, we should not expect Him to give us the things we pray for. He may, in His mercy, choose to discipline us or turn us back to His will, but we have no right to expect any good thing from Him.

7/28 - Falling Into Your Own Trap

Proverbs 28:10 He who leads the upright along an evil path will fall into his own trap, but the blameless will receive a good inheritance.

Beware the example that you set for other believers. It is best to be among the blameless.

7/29 - Hiding Sin

Proverbs 28:13 He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

Or as it says in 1 John 1:8-9: "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

7/30 - Losing Fear

Proverbs 28:14 Blessed is the man who always fears the LORD, but he who hardens his heart falls into trouble.

If we lose the fear of the Lord, we walk a dangerous line. Whenever we sin, our hearts become harder and we stray further from God and closer toward judgment.

7/31 - The Safety in Being Blameless

Proverbs 28:18 He whose walk is blameless is kept safe, but he whose ways are perverse will suddenly fall.

This Proverb is ultimately fulfilled on the day when Christ returns. What wonderful blessings await those who have washed themselves in the blood of Christ.

8/1 - Trusting in Yourself

Proverbs 28:26 He who trusts in himself is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom is kept safe.

Trusting in yourself and walking in wisdom are opposites. Trusting in yourself means that you do not rely on God, and that is a foolish choice.

8/2 - How to Receive Curses

Proverbs 28:27 He who gives to the poor will lack nothing, but he who closes his eyes to them receives many curses.

A believer who has been helped by the Lord should respond by being generous with the needy. God Himself has chosen to be their defender.

8/3 - Response to Rebuke

Proverbs 29:1 A man who remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed--without remedy.

The lesson to be learned from this Proverb is that we should respond to rebukes. Too often a rebuke is something that is not given in the name of keeping peace. This is all the more reason that we should learn quickly rather than claiming that the rebuker is wrong.

8/4 - Snared by Sin

Proverbs 29:6 An evil man is snared by his own sin, but a righteous one can sing and be glad.

We reap what we sow, and those sins we commit, even in secret, will bounce back at us to our ruin. It is best then to live without sin, or to confess our sin quickly.

8/5 - Concern for Justice

Proverbs 29:7 The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern.

Caring for the poor should be one of the things that defines the righteous.

8/6 - A bad tempered Fool

Proverbs 29:8 Mockers stir up a city, but wise men turn away anger.

Proverbs 29:11 A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control.

Proverbs 29:22 An angry man stirs up dissension, and a hot-tempered one commits many sins.

Three different Proverbs here prove that God desires us to control our tempers and keep our anger in check.

8/7 - The Rod of Correction

Proverbs 29:15 The rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to himself disgraces his mother.

Proverbs 29:17 Discipline your son, and he will give you peace; he will bring delight to your soul.

Here we find instruction to parents to correct their children. But we also find comfort when God disciplines us, for we can see that wisdom and peace are His goals.

8/8 - Wicked People Who Thrive

Proverbs 29:16 When the wicked thrive, so does sin, but the righteous will see their downfall.

Our society is full of wicked people who thrive, and so the first half of the Proverb is easily seen to be true. But we may also rest assured that the Day of the Lord will come when every knee will have to bow to Him.

8/9 - Casting Off Restraint

Proverbs 29:18 Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but blessed is he who keeps

the law.

It is important then for those of us who have chosen to obey Christ to be active in God's Word. The Bible is the source of God's revelation to us, and if we don't hear it, we can't obey it.

8/10 - The Opposite of Pride

Proverbs 29:23: A man's pride brings him low, but a man of lowly spirit gains honor.

It is amazing that the opposite of pride seems to be honor.

8/11 - A Snare to Beware

Proverbs 29:25 Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.

This is a good verse to remember for those who are influenced by peer pressure. If we become so fearful of what people will say and do to us that we compromise our obedience to God, we have fallen into this snare.

8/12 - An Ignorant Man

Proverbs 30:1-4: The sayings of Agur son of Jakeh: "I am the most ignorant of men; I do not have a man's understanding. I have not learned wisdom, nor have I knowledge of the Holy One. Who has gone up to heaven and come down? Who has gathered up the wind in the hollow of his hands? Who has wrapped up the waters in his cloak? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and the name of his son? Tell me if you know!

These purpose of this dialogue is to remind us that God's knowledge, wisdom and understanding far exceeds ours, so we should trust Him instead of relying on ourselves.

8/13 - Flawless Words

Proverbs 30:5-6: "Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.

God's faithfulness is absolute. Whatever He says is true, so we can trust Him in any situation.

8/14 - Neither Poverty Nor Riches

Proverbs 30:7-9: "Two things I ask of you, O LORD; do not refuse me before I die: Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the LORD?' Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.

Poverty and riches can be stumbling blocks to the believer. Especially riches, for they tend to make one become proud and independent.

8/15 - Cursing Your Parents

Proverbs 30:11 There are those who curse their fathers and do not bless their mothers.

The obvious implication here is that this should never be. Those who brought you life and have struggled long in love to raise and protect you deserve your respect and blessing, however many imperfections they may have.

8/16 - Pure, but Filthy

Proverbs 30:12 [There are] those who are pure in their own eyes and yet are not cleansed of their filth.

This reminds of Revelation 3:17 where Christ says to Laodicea: "You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked." May God protect us from such pride that we do not see our need.

8/17 - Small, but Wise

Proverbs 30:24-28 Four things on earth are small, yet they are extremely wise: Ants are creatures of little strength, yet they store up their food in the summer; conies are creatures of little power, yet they make their home in the crags; locusts have no king, yet they advance together in ranks; a lizard can be caught with the hand, yet it is found in kings' palaces.

From this we should learn that wisdom can come to the humble or those society might deem insignificant. We should not overlook them, nor despise ourselves if we are one of them.

8/18 - Playing the Fool

Proverbs 30:32-33 "If you have played the fool and exalted yourself, or if you have planned evil, clap your hand over your mouth! For as churning the milk produces butter, and as twisting the nose produces blood, so stirring up anger produces strife."

Clapping your hand over your mouth means to be ashamed. It is shameful to cause strife through evil deeds or pride.

8/19 - The Rights of the Helpless

Proverbs 31:8-9 "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."

These instructions were given to a king, but in a government ruled by the people, it is important that we all care about justice. Also, in a social context, the believer should always be willing to be the champion of the unlovable.

8 /20 - Searching for a Woman

Proverbs 31:10-12: A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies. Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.

In all our relationships, and especially in marriage, this last sentence should be our goal: that we bring

good, not harm, all the days of our lives.

8/21 - Praising a Woman

Proverbs 31:30-31: Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised. Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.

We should not take pride in our social graces, but in our relationship with God. Looks and charms will all pass away, but pleasing God brings fruit forever.

8/22 - The Accounts of the Eyewitnesses

Luke 1:1-4 Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

One of the amazing things about the gospel accounts is that they are all true, and confirmed so by contemporary witnesses.

8/23 - A Long Awaited Answer

Luke 1:5-13 In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. Both of them were righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commands and decrees blamelessly. But they were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both very old... Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John.

Zechariah and Elizabeth were both faithful to God, and they had prayed for a child for many years. It was not until they were "very old" that God answered. We must remember that God answers prayers in His own time, and for His own reasons, but He surely does hear our prayers.

8/24 - A Turning Point

Luke 1:14-18: He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born. He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

John's purpose was to announce the arrival of the Messiah, and to begin the work of turning the hearts toward repentance. He also fulfilled several Old Testament prophecies, and so is another proof of the truth of the gospel accounts.

8/25 - Someone Really Special

Luke 1:30-35 But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”

“How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”

The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.

Jesus is not just a man born of a virgin. He was conceived by the power of the Most High, and truly is the Son of God.

8/26 - Mary's Song

Luke 1:46-49 And Mary said:

“My soul glorifies the Lord
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has been mindful
of the humble state of his servant.
From now on all generations will call me blessed,
for the Mighty One has done great things for me—
holy is his name.

Mary was truly thankful for being chosen by God, even though it meant hardships and embarrassment. It was both more painful and more wonderful than she could ever have imagined, watching this baby grow into a man who was crucified and rose again. But it is always worth it all to do God's will.

8/27 - Zechariah's Prophecy

Luke 1:76-79: And you [John the Baptist], my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High;
for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him,
to give his people the knowledge of salvation
through the forgiveness of their sins,
because of the tender mercy of our God,
by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven
to shine on those living in darkness
and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the path of peace.

Here is the gospel in a nutshell: salvation through the forgiveness of sins because of the mercy of God. All of this is through the work of the "rising sun," Jesus Christ.

8/28 - Augustus Caesar and Baby Jesus

Luke 2:2-4: In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while[a] Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.

It had been prophesied that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, but Mary and Joseph lived in Nazareth. The prophecy was fulfilled when Augustus Caesar issued a decree for a tax census. God used a world leader to see that a baby was born and laid in a manger in Bethlehem.

8/29/29 - The Birth of a King

Luke 2:4-7: So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

The King of kings and Lord of lords was born outdoors or in a barn, and rested in an animal's feeding trough. What an amazing example of humility and grace.

8/30 - Good News for Everyone

Luke 2:8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

The angels proclaimed this to the common shepherds near Bethlehem, but they proclaimed it to be a reason for joy for all people. Through the life of the baby in a manger, the whole world could find salvation.

8/31 - The favor of God

Luke 2:13-14: Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

God provides peace to those on whom His favor rests.

9/1 - An Awesome Moment

Luke 2:16-19: So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

What an awesome moment that was, when the shepherds looked in on the newborn King with His mother. It was a moment for the ages.

9/2 - The prophecy of Simeon

Luke 2:34-35: Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

Jesus came to separate wheat from chaff, so his message was extremely divisive. Many would hate Him, and eventually he would be killed, and Mary's heart would be broken.

9/3 - The testimony of Anna

Luke 2:36-38 There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

The coming of the Messiah into the world was proclaimed in many ways: Through the Old Testament prophecies, through the message of angels, through signs in the skies, and through the testimonies of people like Simeon and Anna. This is another proof of the authenticity of Christ.

9/4 - Obey Your Parents

Luke 2:51 Then [Jesus] went down to Nazareth with [Mary and Joseph] and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, yet when He was growing up, He submitted Himself to His flawed human parents. It is an example to all of us, that we should obey those in authority to us.

9/5 - A Brood of Vipers

Luke 3:7-9: John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."

When hypocrites came to John, he told them to produce fruit in keeping with repentance. It was not enough to repent, it was necessary to change their behavior.

9/6 - Water and Fire

Luke 3:16-18: John answered them all, "I baptize you within water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

We must remember that Christ will separate the wheat from the chaff. Which will we be?

9/7 - A Meeting with the Devil

Luke 4:1-4: Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry. The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone.'"

We learn from Christ that obedience to God is more important than even our basest needs. We must challenge ourselves and ask: Do we really obey God?

9/8 - Authority from the Devil

Luke 4:5-8: The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'"

The world offers many delights to those who partake of them on Satan's terms, but if we trust in God, we will await better rewards from His hand.

9/9 - Testing God

Luke 4:9-12: The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down from here. For it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" Jesus answered, "It says: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

Putting God to the test is when we deliberately put ourselves in danger and expect God to deliver us. This is what the children of Israel did when they sinned and expected forgiveness. Do we do the same thing? It is easy to sin willfully and then expect God will come through with forgiveness. It would be better not to put God to the test.

9/10 - Teaching with Authority

Luke 4:36-37 All the people were amazed and said to each other, "What is this teaching? With authority and power he gives orders to evil spirits and they come out!" And the news about him spread throughout the surrounding area.

The teaching of Jesus is not just words, but the living Word of God. The things Jesus said were spoken with the authority of the living God. And the price Jesus paid was the ultimate cost of love. If these are all true, then we should be all the more willing to obey them.

9/11 - A Convincing Truth

Luke 4:40: When the sun was setting, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them.

Jesus came not just with words, but with power. His miracles, which were witnessed by many, are a testimony of His authority and His authenticity. Therefore we can trust that Jesus really is who He says He is.

9/12 - Withdrawing Like Christ

Luke 4:42 At daybreak Jesus went out to a solitary place.

Luke 5:16 But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

Luke 6:12 One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.

These are just a few of the examples of many which lead us to believe that Jesus often withdrew to pray. If even Christ needed this kind of relationship with the Father, how much more should those of us who have a sinful nature pursue it.

9/13 - Going to Deep Water

Luke 5:4-6: When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break.

Peter's simple act of faith should be mirrored by all believers. What Christ was asking him to do did not make sense. But Peter knew who was asking so he decided to do it anyway. Abraham faced the same problem when God asked him to sacrifice his son Isaac on the altar, even though Abraham had been promised offspring through Isaac. Can we believe and obey God, even if what he says does not seem to make sense to us?

9/14 - Breaking Nets

Luke 5:6-8: They caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!"

When Peter recognized Christ's power, he became aware of his own unworthiness before God. No one can have a close encounter with God without this understanding. And yet our compassionate Lord is moved by such humility, and promises that the humble will be lifted up.

9/15 - Astonishing Fisherman

Luke 5:9-11: For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men." So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

This is a most amazing (and yet logical) act of faith. The fishermen saw proof of Christ's power, and were therefore willing to leave their livelihood and their only source of income to follow him.

Following Christ is most logical if we have all the facts, but still sometimes difficult to do.

9/16 - The Faith of a Leper

Luke 5:12-13: While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the ground and begged him, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."

Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" And immediately the leprosy left him.

The leper's act of faith was in seeking Jesus and believing that Jesus could heal him. We should bring our troubles to Christ with the same kind of confidence.

9/17 - Whatever it Takes

Luke 5:17-19: One day as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law, who had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem, were sitting there. And the power of the Lord was present for him to heal the sick. Some men came carrying a paralytic on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus.

These men cared enough about the paralytic to do whatever it took to get him to Jesus. Do we care about our loved ones to do the same thing?

9/18 - A Bigger Need

Luke 5:20-21: When Jesus saw [the faith of the men who lowered the paralytic through the roof to Jesus for healing], he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven." The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, "Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

Their faith was seen in their deeds. They believed in the power of Christ and so they took action to bring the paralytic man to Jesus. Christ's response was to see that the paralytic's most urgent need was not for healing, but for forgiveness. What a wonderful thing to know that the God we have faith in sees our deepest needs.

9/19 - Forgiven Beyond Doubt

Luke 5:22-25 Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, "Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. . . ." He said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God.

The same power and authority that allowed the creation of the universe and the miracles of Jesus is behind Jesus' ability to proclaim us forgiven. And if He proclaims us forgiven, who can argue? "Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? 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 8:33-34

9/20 - Leaving it All Behind

Luke 5:27-28: After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. "Follow me," Jesus said to him, and Levi got up, left everything and followed him.

The tax collector was considered in that age to be one of the greatest sinners (because they often cheated people, and they did it in the name of Rome). But this man heard of Jesus and believed, and was willing to leave everything in pursuit of God. Jesus made him one of the 12 disciples.

9/21 - Hanging Out With Sinners

Luke 5:29-32: Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and 'sinners'?" Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Two important points can be found here: If Jesus was willing to love the most sinful, he can love anyone. If Jesus was willing to love the unlovable, how much more should we follow his example.

9/22 - The Blessing of Poverty

Luke 6:20: Looking at his disciples, he said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God."

Poverty in this world is not a curse, it is a blessing, for it leads one more easily to our Lord. Poverty in this world is temporary, and heavenly rewards last forever.

9/23 - He Who Laughs Last

Luke 6:21: Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.

The old saying "He who laughs last laughs best," is a huge understatement compared to eternity. Romans 8:18 teaches us that "our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."

9/24 - Blessed for Being Hated

Luke 6:22-23: Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man. "Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven."

Identifying with Jesus Christ will bring persecution. But God promises that in heaven He will richly reward those who are persecuted for Him on Earth.

9/25 - Utterly Contrary to Nature

Luke 6:27-28: But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

This is utterly contrary to our human nature, but it is very much like the nature of Christ. Nowhere can we better demonstrate our Christianity than in our ability to love those who hate us.

9/26 - The Other Cheek

Luke 6:29-30: If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back.

These words have often been read, but not often lived. This passage describes a very bold meekness that must be willing to suffer wrong without offense. Are we up to it?

9/27 - The Whole Old Testament

Luke 6:31 Do to others as you would have them do to you.

The golden rule sums up all of the Old Testament commandments (Matt 7:12). It is the ultimate fulfillment of God's plan for how we should treat each other. But it does not come without a conscious effort, and we need to make that effort.

9/28 - Loving the Unlovable

Luke 6:32-35: If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' lend to 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.

We are promised a special reward if we love the unlovable. And we also take a giant step toward being like our creator. If you've ever wished you were a better Christian, this is the best place to start.

9/29 - By Our Own Standards

Luke 6:37-38: "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

This is a very graphic way of explaining that we should watch how we treat people, because God will reward or punish us by our own standards of love toward others.

9/30 - Falling Into a Pit

Luke 6:39-40: He also told them this parable: "Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both

fall into a pit? . . . "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,' when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

Our first priority in confronting sin should be to worry about the sin in our own lives. We cannot be a leader and helper of others till we take care of our own relationship before God.

10/1 - Figs on a Thornbush

Luke 6:43-44: "No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks."

Let us carefully guard our hearts then, for nothing can be truly hidden there.

10/2 - All Words and No Action

Luke 6:46-49: "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete."

We all understand that we should obey Christ. Yet Christ declares that there are many who claim to serve Him, and yet who do not obey His most basic teachings (like forgiveness and love). Let us take care that we are not numbered among them.

10/3 - The Compassion of the Christ

Luke 7:11-13: Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out--the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, "Don't cry."

Jesus is overwhelmed by compassion here. He knew that her son would live again, but his heart was moved by her suffering. In the same way, Jesus knows that some day all suffering will be past for us. But He also cares about all our current sorrows.

10/4 - A Dead Man Talks

Luke 7:14-16: Then he went up and touched the coffin, and those carrying it stood still. He said, "Young man, I say to you, get up!" The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother. They were all filled with awe and praised God. "A great prophet has appeared among us," they said. "God has come to help his people."

The power of God in Christ was overwhelming, and there were many witnesses. That power is still at

work on our behalf today. What a marvelous comfort!

10/5 - The Bigger Debtor

Luke 7:41-47: "Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?"

Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled."

"You have judged correctly," Jesus said. . . "Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven--for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little."

Let us pray that we can see ourselves through the eyes of Christ. Then we will truly see that we have been forgiven much, and we will love the one who forgave us even more.

10/6 - The Devil and the Word

Luke 8:11-12: "This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God. Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved.

Hearing is not believing, unless there is a decision to respond. Also, note that Satan is actively alive in this world. We must be on our guard against him.

10/7 - Without a Firm Root

Luke 8:13 Those on the rock are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away.

The root which is needed here is a firm foundation of faith in God and in His word. And the best way to develop such faith is to spend more time in His word. Let us remember this thought, both, for ourselves and to encourage it in others.

10/8 - Choked by Worries and Pleasures

Luke 8:14 The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature.

The things of this Earth are so temporary, yet so imposing, that they can strangle spiritual growth. This is why it is so important to "set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things." --Colossians 3:1-2

10/9 - Good Seed on Good Soil

Luke 8:15 But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.

The correct formula is to hear the Word, retain it, and persevere in it. Are all of these things happening in your life?

10/10 - This Little Light of Mine

Luke 8:16-17: "No one lights a lamp and hides it in a jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, he puts it on a stand, so that those who come in can see the light. For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open.

Since we know that all will be made known, we should live our lives like an open book--an open Bible--so others can see Christ in us, and so we will have no shame on the day he returns.

10/11 - How to Listen to God's Word

Luke 8:18 Therefore consider carefully how you listen. Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken from him."

This doesn't mean we should listen less to avoid judgment. It means we should respond quickly to what God says.

10/12 - The Weather Master

Luke 8:22-25: One day Jesus said to his disciples, "Let's go over to the other side of the lake." So they got into a boat and set out. As they sailed, he fell asleep. A squall came down on the lake, so that the boat was being swamped, and they were in great danger.

The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we're going to drown!"

He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm.

"Where is your faith?" he asked his disciples.

In fear and amazement they asked one another, "Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him."

Jesus is master of the winds and the water, but is He master of your life?

10/13 - Little Food, Big Meal

Luke 9:13-17: He replied, "You give them something to eat."

They answered, "We have only five loaves of bread and two fish--unless we go and buy food for all this crowd." (About five thousand men were there.)

But he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each." The disciples did so, and everybody sat down. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to set before the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.

If Christ had such power to meet the needs of these people, we should be able to trust Him to provide for all our needs.

10/14 - No One Like Him

Luke 9:18-20: Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, "Who do the crowds say I am?"

They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life."

"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"
Peter answered, "The Christ of God."

Jesus explained to Peter that God Himself had revealed this to him. Jesus is not just a great teacher or prophet. He is the hope of all mankind. There is no one like Him, nor will there ever be. He alone gave His life as a ransom for all mankind.

10/15 - Declaration of Purpose

Luke 9:22 And [Jesus] said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life."

Jesus declared that this must happen. He had come for the purpose of giving up His life. It was required of Him, as a cure for mankind to the curse of sin. Galatians 3:10 says "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us."

10/16 - Cross Walks

Luke 9:23-24: Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it."

Jesus came into the world for one purpose, and that was to do His Father's will. He desires that we should have such single mindedness in our lives as well. This means giving our lives away, and taking up our own particular tasks and ministries.

10/17 - A Loser With Everything

Luke 9:25-26 What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

Having the world and everything in it would be a useless and meaningless gain for someone who will spend eternity in hell. It is much wiser to forfeit our lives now in hope of the eternal promises of God.

10/18 - The Small and the Great

Luke 9:46-48: An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and had him stand beside him. Then he said to them, "Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For he who is least among you all--he is the greatest."

Jesus is the very greatest of all, but He came into the world to give His life to redeem us. He desires that those who would lead His people should have the same attitude. A Christian leader is one who gives His life for those he leads.

10/19 - Don't Stop Him!

Luke 9:49-50: "Master," said John, "we saw a man driving out demons in your name and we tried to

stop him, because he is not one of us."

"Do not stop him," Jesus said, "for whoever is not against you is for you."

How often Christians contend with each other, and even put roadblocks to ministry in front of other believers, because of jealousy or misunderstanding. All who work in Christ's name will have to answer to Christ for their work, but let us not be guilty of obstructing another's efforts for our Lord.

10/20 - No Fire From Heaven

Luke 9:51-16: Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?" But Jesus turned and rebuked them, and they went to another village.

The disciples wanted instant justice, but Christ wanted their salvation. It may be that these Samaritans were the same who repented at the preaching of Philip. Christ has more pleasure in the repentance of the guilty than in their punishment. And be assured that there will be a day when all will stand before God to give an account of their deeds.

10/21 - Rejecting You, Rejecting Me

Luke 10:16 "He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me."

Our job is to share the love and Word of God with others. Their response to that message is not our responsibility. This is because it is His message and not ours. Let us be faithful in our job, and trust the creator of the universe to worry about the rest.

10/22 - Stepping on Snakes

Luke 10:18-20: He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

Even the greatest gifts of God in this world are as nothing compared to the things He has in store for us in heaven.

10/23 - Secrets for Children

Luke 10:21 At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.

It is a remarkable thing about our Lord, that His chosen instruments are often those that we would think least useable. It is also interesting that this thought inspired joy in Christ.

10/24 - A Unique Son

Luke 10:22 "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

See how remarkable Jesus Christ is. Those who would say that all religions lead to God do not begin to understand His uniqueness. Everything has been put under His authority, and no one can know God without Christ.

10/25 - Pointing to the Law

Luke 10:25-28: On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

"What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"

He answered: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

Jesus is trying to convince him that he falls short and needs forgiveness. In pointing to the law, He is using the law for its intended purpose, and that is to show people their need for forgiveness. But we must also recognize that Jesus, on another occasion, mentions these two commands as being the most important.

10/26 - Knowing Your Neighbor

Luke 10:29-37: But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

So who is your neighbor?

10/27 - Lost in Good Works

Luke 10:38-42: As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but only one

thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

We must remember to follow Mary's example and not be so busy with daily living that we forget to have time for Christ.

10/28 - Learning to Pray

Luke 11:1-4: One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."

He said to them, "When you pray, say: "Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation."

This shows us the importance of forgiveness. We should pray daily that we are able to forgive.

10/29 - Annoying Persistence

Luke 11:5-8 Then he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.' "Then the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.' I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man's boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs."

Because of the man's boldness and persistence he got what he wanted. Jesus told this parable to teach us to be persistent in prayer. Do you really believe in God, then you should be willing to pray.

10/30 - Aggressive Pursuit

Luke 11:9-10: So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

God has determined that this display of faith will be rewarded by Him with an answer. We should earnestly seek that all our needs are met by Him.

10/31 - A Fish and an Egg, Please

Luke 11:11-13: "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

We should be assured that nothing that comes from the hand of the Father will do His children harm, unless a greater good would come from it.

11/1 - A Sharp Dividing Line

Luke 11:23 "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me, scatters.

There is no middle ground when it comes to service to the Lord. We must choose to be with Him, or we will be against Him by default.

11/2 - The Truly Blessed

Luke 11:27-28: As Jesus was saying these things, a woman in the crowd called out, "Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you."

He replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it."

True blessing is the fruit of obedience to the Word of God.

11/3 - Greater Than Solomon

Luke 11:31-32: The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom, and now one greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here.

How then will it be for us? We have not only the wisdom of Solomon and Jonah and the teachings of Christ, but also the testimony of the apostles and the complete revelation of the Bible. What will we do with what we hear?

11/4 - Hiding a Lamp

Luke 11:33 No one lights a lamp and puts it in a place where it will be hidden, or under a bowl. Instead he puts it on its stand, so that those who come in may see the light.

Do we have a light that others need to see? What do we do with it?

11/5 - Perception Clouded by Darkness

Luke 11:34-36: Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are good, your whole body also is full of light. But when they are bad, your body also is full of darkness. See to it, then, that the light within you is not darkness. Therefore, if your whole body is full of light, and no part of it dark, it will be completely lighted, as when the light of a lamp shines on you."

It all depends on how you see things. If you look single mindedly for the truth, you will find it. If you choose to ignore some of the truth, everything you perceive will be clouded by darkness.

11/6 - Dirty Hands and Clean Hearts

Luke 11:37 When Jesus had finished speaking, a Pharisee invited him to eat with him; so he went in and reclined at the table. But the Pharisee, noticing that Jesus did not first wash before the meal, was surprised.

Jesus could have washed and made the Pharisee happy, but he was more interested in getting to the heart of a bigger problem. The Pharisees had made themselves clean to outward appearances, but their hearts were not right.

11/7 - Washing Cups on the Outside

Luke 11:39-41: Then the Lord said to him, "Now then, you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. You foolish people! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also? But give what is inside the dish to the poor, and everything will be clean for you.

They worked hard outwardly to look so pure, but they had pride in place of love. Are there any today that live this way?

11/8 - A tenth of their herbs

Luke 11:42-44 "Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone. Woe to you Pharisees, because you love the most important seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces. Woe to you, because you are like unmarked graves, which men walk over without knowing it."

And woe to us, if, like the Pharisees we walk in pride while hiding secret sin.

11/9 - Secrets Shouted from the Rooftops

Luke 12:1-3: Meanwhile, when a crowd of many thousands had gathered, so that they were trampling on one another, Jesus began to speak first to his disciples, saying: "Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs.

If every thought and action will be brought into common knowledge, we should be very careful about what we think and do. If they will be brought to light on the day of judgment, we should fear to do anything of which we will be ashamed.

11/10 - Who Do We Fear

Luke 12:4-5: I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.

Nothing that humans can do to you will last forever, and nothing that God plans will fail. So it makes a whole lot more sense to work to please God in everything we do.

11/11 - How Much Hair Do You Have

Luke 12:6-7: Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

If we please God, we put ourselves in the hands of a loving Father who will allow nothing to hurt us

that is not for our best good.

11/12 - Bigger Consequences

Luke 12:8-9: "I tell you, whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God. But he who disowns me before men will be disowned before the angels of God.

This is all to say that our actions in this world have bigger consequences in the next one.

11/13 - Quality of Life

Luke 12:15 Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

It is easy, living in this world and never having seen heaven, to be tempted by things. We must remember that real quality of life has more to do with eternity than with possessions.

11/14 - Foolish Pursuit

Luke 12:16-21: And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry." '

But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'

"This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God."

We can take nothing out of this world, so we would be foolish to pursue wealth in it.

11/15 - Thinking About Ravens

Luke 12:22-25: Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?"

The truth is that all these things are in the hands of God, and if we seek Him, He will provide for us.

11/16 - Where Is Your Heart

Luke 12:27-31: "Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well."

The key question is: "Where will you set your heart?"

11/17 - Inexhaustible Treasure

Luke 12:32-34: "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

If our hearts are set on things above, then our resources will be spent on things that make an eternal difference. And if this is the case, we will receive an eternal reward.

11/18 - Dressed and Ready

Luke 12:35-38: "Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the second or third watch of the night."

Are you diligent at doing your Master's work? Will He be pleased with you when He returns?

11/19 - A Thief in the Night

Luke 12:39-40: But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."

Jesus clearly intended this as a warning that we need to expect and be prepared for the return of Jesus Christ.

11/20 - A Message for the Servants

Luke 12:41-46: Peter asked, "Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?" The Lord answered, "Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But suppose the servant says to himself, 'My master is taking a long time in coming,' and he then begins to beat the menservants and maidservants and to eat and drink and get drunk. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers."

Peter had been astonished at the harsh words of Christ towards those who are not ready for His return, so he asks if the statements are directed toward the disciples or to the crowd. Jesus answers that it is the servants who are expected to carry through on their assigned tasks.

11/21 - Entrusted With Much

Luke 12:47-48: "That servant who knows his master's will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many blows. But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked."

How much has God given you? How much will he require of you?

11/22 - Best to Reconcile Now

Luke 12:57-59: "Why don't you judge for yourselves what is right? As you are going with your adversary to the magistrate, try hard to be reconciled to him on the way, or he may drag you off to the judge, and the judge turn you over to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison. I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny. "

It will be better for us to make things right here now, today, rather than to be brought before the throne of God without having done so.

11/23 - Change Your Ways or Share Their Fate

Luke 13:1-5: Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. Jesus answered, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them--do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish."

We are all deserving of such judgment, unless we come to the Lord with repentance for forgiveness.

11/24 - Cut It Down

Luke 13:6-9: Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree, planted in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it, but did not find any. So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, 'For three years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?'

'Sir,' the man replied, 'leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilize it. If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.'"

The thought of this verse is well summarized by 2 Peter 3:9: The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

11/25 - A Narrow Door

Luke 13:22-27: Then Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem. Someone asked him, "Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?"

He said to them, "Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to. Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and pleading, 'Sir, open the door for us.'"

"But he will answer, 'I don't know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evildoers!'"

It is a narrow door through which we must pass. We must pass through based on the grace and forgiveness of Jesus Christ. No other road leads to salvation.

11/26 - Quite a Feast

Luke 13:28-30 "There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out. People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God. Indeed there are those who are last who will be first, and first who will be last."

What a day that will be, when the mysteries of people's hearts are revealed and the truly righteous will shine like the stars.

11/27 - Longing For Children

Luke 13:34 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!"

Jesus uttered these words over Jerusalem, but may has well have said them about us today. Note the broken heart of the one who loves those who are so unwilling to receive that love. Do you respond to Christ's love?

11/28 - Avoiding Humiliation

Luke 14:8-11: "When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, 'Give this man your seat.' Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all your fellow guests. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

This is a fundamental principle of godliness. God will honor the one who humbles himself.

11/29 - Dinner with the Poor, the Crippled, the Lame, the Blind

Luke 14:12-14 Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

To love the unlovable is one of God's biggest desires for us.

11/30 - How to Come to Christ

Luke 14:25-27 Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters--yes, even his own life--he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

The expression "does not hate" is an idiom [an expression which expresses a thought other than what the words convey, like "barking up the wrong tree"]. We are not told that we should hate father, mother, wife or children, but that our love for Christ should far exceed the love we have for others.

12/1 - Strategies of War

Luke 14:31-33 Suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.

Count the cost carefully. Christ wants your all. How much can you give Him?

12/2 - Eating With Sinners

Luke 15:1-2: Now the tax collectors and "sinners" were all gathering around to hear him. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

Let us never lose our compassion for the sinner, nor the desire to see them come to repentance.

12/3 - Losing a Sheep

Luke 15:3-7: Then Jesus told them this parable: "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent."

Do not doubt it, Christ cares for the lost.

12/4 - Coming Back to His Senses

Luke 15:11-20 Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them. Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

"When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have

sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.' So he got up and went to his father.

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

See how God would care for us, no matter what we may have done.

12/5 - A Short Thought from God's Word

Luke 16:1-9: Jesus told his disciples: "There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. So he called him in and asked him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer.'

"The manager said to himself, 'What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job. I'm not strong enough to dig, and I'm ashamed to beg-- I know what I'll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses.'

"So he called in each one of his master's debtors. He asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?'

"'Eight hundred gallons of olive oil,' he replied.

"The manager told him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred.'

"Then he asked the second, 'And how much do you owe?'

"'A thousand bushels of wheat,' he replied.

"He told him, 'Take your bill and make it eight hundred.'

"The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light. I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.

He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.

12/6 - Property of Your Own

Luke 16:10-12: "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?

The time, money and abilities that we have in this world are the "someone else's property" that is mentioned. We should think of ourselves as stewards of these things (owned by God). We should use them in such a way as to have eternal significance.

12/7 - Serving God or Serving Money

Luke 16:13 "No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money."

The significance of the context of this passage shows that we need to be heavenly minded in the use of our earthly money. In this way we show that God is our master.

12/8 - Highly Valued and Detestable

Luke 16:14-15: The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight."

We honor those with fame, money, or power, but God honors those with a pure heart. So which is more important to pursue?

12/9 - The Stroke of a Pen

Luke 16:17 It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law.

If the Word of God stands so strong, why are we so quick to interpret it with modern science or psychology? Wouldn't it be better to start with God's Word as truth as we pursue knowledge in other areas?

12/10 - A Rich Man in Agony

Luke 16:19-24: "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

"The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.'

The eternal consequences of this life are extreme.

12/11 - Shaming the Wise

Luke 16:25-26: "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'"

This demonstrates clearly how God chose "the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong." --1 Corinthians 1:27

12/12 - Suppression of Truth

Luke 16:27-31: "He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'

"Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.'

"'No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.'

"He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.' "

It is not lack of evidence, but suppression of truth that causes disbelief (Romans 1:18-21).

12/13 - Thrown into the Sea

Luke 17:1-3: Jesus said to his disciples: "Things that cause people to sin are bound to come, but woe to that person through whom they come. It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin. So watch yourselves."

Is there anything in your life that might cause others to sin?

12/14 - Seven Times in a Day

Luke 17:3-4: "If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, 'I repent,' forgive him."

This idea is well known, well understood, and seldom followed. We must, like our Lord, be diligent in forgiveness.

12/15 - Unworthy Servants

Luke 17:7-10: "Suppose one of you had a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Would he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, 'Come along now and sit down to eat'? Would he not rather say, 'Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink'? Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.' "

There is no room here for arrogance or pride. Whatever we do for the Lord cannot begin to compare with what He has done for us.

12/16 - A Thankful Samaritan

Luke 17:15-19: One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him--and he was a Samaritan.

Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."

If gratitude is desired for healing of merely physical ills, don't you think salvation from our sin and its punishment should inspire even more?

12/17 - Where is the Kingdom of God

Luke 17:20-21: Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you."

Is the kingdom of God a reality in you? Does Christ rule in your inner being?

12/18 - Lighting Up the Sky

Luke 17:22-25: Then he said to his disciples, "The time is coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it. Men will tell you, 'There he is!' or 'Here he is!' Do not go running off after them. For the Son of Man in his day will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other. But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation."

On that glorious day of Christ's coming, there will be no doubt of this event. Anything else is just a cheat.

12/19 - On the Day the Flood Came

Luke 17:26-29: "Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all.

We should live each day as if we believed that Christ's coming was imminent. If we do this, we need have no fear of that day.

12/20 - The Pain in Finding Favor

Luke 1:26-33: In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

It is most amazing that the angel told Mary that she had found favor with God. This "favor" meant that Mary had to suffer many things. The embarrassment of being unwed and pregnant, the frustration of seeing her other children struggle with their belief in Jesus, and, especially, the pain of watching Him being crucified. In this world, favor with God can mean many trials, but there will be many more rewards in the next world.

12/21 - The Creator in the Manger

Luke 2:4-7: So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

How magnificent, that the God who created the universe should choose to identify with the poor and the needy, even in this weakest moment.

12/22 - Choosing Humility

Luke 2:8-11: And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

If the creator of the world can choose such humility for Himself, shouldn't we imitate His example and humbly take up our crosses and follow Him? Let us make that our challenge for the coming millenium, and for the rest of our lives.

12/23 - A season for Praise

Luke 2:13-14: Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

Let us not forget to praise God for that event which was so glorious that even the angels sang.

12/24 - Pursuing Truth

Luke 2:15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

There was no questioning the faith of these men. What was told them by the angel was true and was worth pursuing.

12/25 - Great Events and a Small Child

Luke 2:16-20: So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Today, let us join the shepherds, and stand in awe at the manger, and glorify God for His love to us.

12/26/19 - Quick Justice

Luke 18:6-8: And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly.

We can be assured that those who oppress or oppose the needy or the believer will have to answer to the Lord. It is a sign of our faith that we trust God with justice.

12/27 - Babies for Jesus

Luke 18:15-17: People were also bringing babies to Jesus to have him touch them. When the disciples

saw this, they rebuked them. But Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

Cling to the humility and simplicity of the faith of a child. Also, follow the advice of Christ, and never despise the young or the weak.

12/28 - Lacking One Thing

Luke 18:22-25: When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was a man of great wealth. Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

We must not treasure anything above our Lord.

12/29 - Many Times as Much

Luke 18:28-30: Peter said to him, "We have left all we had to follow you!"

"I tell you the truth," Jesus said to them, "no one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will fail to receive many times as much in this age and, in the age to come, eternal life."

There is no doubt that choosing to follow Christ can be costly in terms of relationships. But the family of God is a greater benefit, and even greater is the eternal relationship we will have with others and with our Lord.

12/30 - Astonishing Revelation

Luke 18:31-33: Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. He will be handed over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him and kill him. On the third day he will rise again."

Jesus came into the world to suffer such things. They were not an accident that might have been avoided. It was necessary that Christ suffer and die to redeem a lost world. In the same way, it is also sometimes necessary for us to suffer in order to fulfill God's plan and glorify His name.

12/31 - A Tutorial on Faith

Luke 18:35-43 As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard the crowd going by, he asked what was happening. They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by."

He called out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. When he came near, Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?"

"Lord, I want to see," he replied.

Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. When all the people saw it, they also praised God.

This is a remarkable example of the meaning of faith. The blind man believed in Christ's power to heal. He acted on that belief, and received that which he had faith would happen. Saving faith should be the same.