



08/2016

---

DEVOTIONAL JOURNAL

---

...eager to maintain the unity of  
the Spirit in the bond of peace.

EPHESIANS 4:3 (ESV)

---

08/2016  
DEVOTIONAL JOURNAL

---

...eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit  
in the bond of peace.

EPHESIANS 4:3 (ESV)

*Also available online at [www.cefc.org.sg](http://www.cefc.org.sg)*



# MEMORY FOCUS

FROM EPHESIANS (ESV)

2016

## JANUARY

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who has blessed us in Christ with every  
spiritual blessing in the heavenly places...

**EPHESIANS 1:3**

## FEBRUARY

...even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that  
we should be holy and blameless before Him.

**EPHESIANS 1:4**

## MARCH

In love He predestined us for adoption as sons  
through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will.

**EPHESIANS 1:5**

## APRIL

For by grace you have been saved through faith.  
And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,  
not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

**EPHESIANS 2:8-9**

## MAY

Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than  
all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us,  
to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all  
generations, forever and ever. Amen.

**EPHESIANS 3:20-21**

## JUNE

I, therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner  
worthy of the calling to which you have been called...

**EPHESIANS 4:1**

## JULY

...with all humility and gentleness, with patience,  
bearing with one another in love...

**EPHESIANS 4:2**

## AUGUST

...eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

**EPHESIANS 4:3**

## SEPTEMBER

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.

**EPHESIANS 6:10**

## OCTOBER

Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able  
to stand against the schemes of the devil.

**EPHESIANS 6:11**

## NOVEMBER

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood,  
but against the rulers, against the authorities,  
against the cosmic powers over this present darkness,  
against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

**EPHESIANS 6:12**

## DECEMBER

...praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer  
and supplication. To that end keep alert with  
all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints...

**EPHESIANS 6:18**

# FORE BY SENIOR PASTORS 2016 WORD

BACK TO THE ESSENTIALS IN 2016!



The more you grow as a Christian, the more you realise you have to return to the bare essentials of Christian living. Perhaps it is the discipline of **starting again**, the devotion to **persevere** or the decision to **stop doing something** so that we can start doing something.

Spiritual Growth is a choice!

This year, the Lord gave us Acts 20:28 as a spiritual anchor towards Covenant EFC's Golden Jubilee in 2028.

*“Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which He obtained with His own blood.” (Acts 20:28)*

**T**hese are the bare essentials God wants us to return to in the midst of increasing messiness in the world and the glaring weaknesses within the Church:

- **Pay Attention to Yourself.** We seem to have grown up thinking in this order: Jesus first, others second and yourself last! While there is some validity in this order of living, there is also a flaw. If we do not take care of ourselves, we cannot take care of others. Our mission as a Church is clear: To raise authentic disciples and intentional disciplemakers of *A Certain Kind*. This is why we led the *Covenant Groups* to do a spiritual audit on their *Authentic Discipleship and Intentional Disciplemaking (A.D.I.D.)* growth journey and action plan – to find out where we are spiritually so that we can chart our growth intentionally. It is not only to grow as an individual but to grow as a community. There is rampant nominalism and powerlessness within the Church! It's time to let the Spirit break those chains over our lives and let the Word of God bring forth newness. Pay attention to yourself – not selfish narcissism but spiritual realism!
- **Pay Attention to Your Family.** The family institution is under attack. No one can take better care of your family than you. You are the 24/7-best-children-and-youth disciplemaker. The Church will complement and support you. The truths of God must be taught, caught and made real in times of distraught. So use this journal in family devotions and take proactive steps and establish a household of faith!
- **Pay Attention to Others.** Your spiritual growth will be capped until you give of yourself to care for others. In the process, you will discover what God is saying through the Word. And the ultimate test is: **What are you going to do about it?** Without obedience, there is no growth. Without growth, you cannot impart. Without impartation, there is no legacy. Would you want to be remembered as someone who lived for himself or lived for others?

For 2016, the book of Ephesians is the overarching frame for the daily devotional. This Epistle was written a few years after the account in Acts 20. It points us to the essential Doctrines (Eph 1-3) and Discipleship (Eph 4-6) of our lives. As we plough through this fascinating Epistle, we will be challenged to anchor our lives in Jesus as the only Lord and Saviour and to pay allegiance to the only Master and King of our lives. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ! (Eph 1:2)

Rev Tony Yeo and Rev Tan Kay Kiong

# GUIDE TO USING THIS DEVOTIONAL JOURNAL

## 1 Prepare your heart in God's presence

- Select a fixed time (preferably in the morning before you begin your day) and a quiet place where you can be alone and undisturbed.
- Observe a moment of silence as you acknowledge God's presence. Centre down.
- Begin with a song of worship. Meditate on the lyrics even if you are unfamiliar with the tune. (Refer to the list of worship songs provided.)
- Ask God to open your heart to hear Him.

*The English Standard Version (ESV) is the default Bible version translation unless otherwise specified.*

## 2 Allow God to S.O.A.P. you with His Word and Spirit

- Scripture – Take your time to meditate on the Scripture passage for the day. Pause and mull over words and phrases that stand out to you.

- **Observation** – Jot down significant insights and reflections from the passage you have read. You could use the guiding questions provided. *The “Deeper Reflection” section is to aid your contemplation of the Scripture. It is not to replace your own observation, for the Holy Spirit illuminates the Scripture to you as you seek Him earnestly.*
- **Application** – Note down a specific and practical commitment to God's Word for you. Is there a command to obey, a sin to avoid, an example to follow, or a principle to live out? Where appropriate, share your devotional entry with someone.
- **Prayer** – Bring your heartfelt response to God in prayer.

### WHAT'S NEW IN 2016?

Suggested prayers are included twice weekly on Mondays and Wednesdays, to serve as an aid to those who may find them helpful in their prayer response. On each Friday, there is a prayer pointer for the leaders (Covenant Group leaders, ministry leaders, Board and staff) whom God brings to your mind to pray for.

*Examining your life is essential in your faith journey. Your redeemed life as a disciple of Christ deserves careful examining. May you take root and bear fruit in Him!*



# WORSHIP SONGS

## JULY/AUGUST

### MY HEART IS FILLED WITH THANKFULNESS

#### Verse 1

My heart is filled with thankfulness  
 To Him who bore my pain  
 Who plumbed the depths of my disgrace  
 And gave me life again  
 Who crushed my curse of sinfulness  
 And clothed me with His light  
 And wrote His law of righteousness  
 With pow'r upon my heart

#### Verse 2

My heart is filled with thankfulness  
 To Him who walks beside  
 Who floods my weaknesses with strength  
 And causes fears to fly  
 Whose every promise is enough  
 For every step I take  
 Sustaining me with arms of love  
 And crowning me with grace

#### Verse 3

My heart is filled with thankfulness  
 To Him who reigns above  
 Whose wisdom is my perfect peace  
 Whose every thought is love  
 For every day I have on earth  
 Is given by the King  
 So I will give my life my all  
 To love and follow Him

### 10,000 REASONS (BLESS THE LORD)

#### Chorus

Bless the Lord O my soul  
 O my soul  
 Worship His holy name  
 Sing like never before  
 O my soul  
 I'll worship Your holy name

#### Verse 1

The sun comes up it's a new day dawning  
 It's time to sing Your song again  
 Whatever may pass and whatever lies before me  
 Let me be singing when the evening comes

#### Verse 2

You're rich in love and You're slow to anger  
 Your name is great and Your heart is kind  
 For all Your goodness I will keep on singing  
 Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find

#### Verse 3

And on that day when my strength is failing  
 The end draws near and my time has come  
 Still my soul will sing Your praise unending  
 Ten thousand years and then forevermore

#### Ending

I'll worship Your holy name  
 Worship Your holy name  
 Worship Your holy name

## BEFORE THE THRONE OF GOD (FESTUS)

### Verse 1

Before the Throne of God above  
 I have a strong and perfect plea  
 A great High Priest Whose Name is Love  
 Who ever lives and pleads for me  
 My name is graven on His Hands  
 My name is written on His Heart  
 I know that while in Heaven He stands  
 No tongue can bid me thence depart  
 No tongue can bid me thence depart

### Verse 2

When Satan tempts me to despair  
 And tells me of the guilt within  
 Upward I look and see Him there  
 Who made an end to all my sin  
 Because the sinless Saviour died  
 My sinful soul is counted free  
 For God the just is satisfied  
 To look on Him and pardon me  
 To look on Him and pardon me

### Chorus

Hallelujah Hallelujah  
 Praise the One  
 Risen Son of God

### Verse 3

Behold Him there the Risen Lamb  
 My perfect spotless righteousness  
 The great unchangeable I am  
 The King of glory and of grace  
 One in Himself I cannot die  
 My soul is purchased by His blood  
 My life is hid with Christ on high  
 With Christ my Saviour and my God  
 With Christ my Saviour and my God

Charitie Lees Bancroft  
 © Words: Public Domain  
 Music: Public Domain

*For use solely with the SongSelect Terms of Use. All rights reserved. www.ccli.com*  
 CCLI License # 324618

## HOW GREAT THOU ART

### Verse 1

O Lord my God when I in awesome wonder  
 Consider all the works Thy hand hath made  
 I see the stars I hear the mighty thunder  
 Thy pow'r throughout the universe displayed

### Chorus

Then sings my soul my Saviour God to Thee  
 How great Thou art how great Thou art  
 Then sings my soul my Saviour God to Thee  
 How great Thou art how great Thou art

### Verse 2

When through the woods and forest glades I wander  
 And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees  
 When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur  
 And hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze

### Verse 3

And when I think that God His Son not sparing  
 Sent Him to die I scarce can take it in  
 That on the Cross my burden gladly bearing  
 He bled and died to take away my sin

### Verse 4

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation  
 And take me home what joy shall fill my heart  
 Then shall I bow in humble adoration  
 And there proclaim my God how great Thou art

Stuart Wesley Keene Hine

© 1949 and 1953 Stuart K. Hine Trust (Admin. by Crossroad Distributors Pty. Ltd.)

*For use solely with the SongSelect Terms of Use. All rights reserved. www.ccli.com*

CCLI License # 324618

## WONDERFUL GOD

### Verse 1

There is no other God like You  
 Who made the heavens and the earth  
 And fills my heart with joy unending  
 All I can do is give my life  
 Offer to You a sacrifice  
 Here is my heart for You unending

### Bridge

All of my life, belongs to You alone  
 With every breath, my song will rise to You

### Chorus

You are the joy of every nation  
 The giver of salvation  
 Wonderful God  
 You are God throughout the ages  
 Enthroned upon our praises  
 Wonderful God

### Verse 2

Every morning when I rise  
 It is Your presence I desire  
 To see Your faithfulness unending

Mercy and goodness follow me  
 For in Your presence I am free  
 I put my trust in You unending

Denis Campos

© 2009 CFN Music [Admin. by CopyCare Asia Ltd (Singapore Branch)]

For use solely with the SongSelect Terms of Use. All rights reserved. [www.ccli.com](http://www.ccli.com)  
 CCLI License # 324618

## FOR ALL YOU'VE DONE

### Verse

My Saviour, Redeemer  
 Lifted me from the miry clay  
 Almighty forever  
 I'll never be the same

### Pre-chorus

'Cause You came near from the everlasting  
 To the world we live, the Father's only son

### Chorus

You lived, You died  
 You rose again on high  
 You opened the way  
 For the world to live again  
 Hallelujah for all You've done

Reuben Morgan

© 2004 Hillsong Music Publishing

For use solely with the SongSelect Terms of Use. All rights reserved. [www.ccli.com](http://www.ccli.com)  
 CCLI License # 324618

## EVERLASTING GOD

### Verse 1

Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord  
 We will wait upon the Lord  
 We will wait upon the Lord  
 Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord  
 We will wait upon the Lord  
 We will wait upon the Lord

### Pre-chorus

Our God You reign forever  
 Our Hope our strong Deliverer

### Chorus

You are the everlasting God  
 The everlasting God  
 You do not faint  
 You won't grow weary  
 You're the defender of the weak  
 You comfort those in need  
 You lift us up on wings like eagles

### Verse 2

Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord  
 We will wait upon the Lord  
 We will wait upon the Lord  
 Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord  
 We will wait upon the Lord  
 We will wait upon the Lord

Brenton Brown | Ken Riley

© 2005 Thankyou Music (Admin. by CopyCare Asia Ltd (Singapore Branch))  
 For use solely with the SongSelect Terms of Use. All rights reserved. [www.ccli.com](http://www.ccli.com)  
 CCLI License # 324618

## BEAUTIFUL SAVIOUR

### Verse 1

Jesus, beautiful Saviour  
 God of all majesty, risen King  
 (Lamb of God, holy and righteous)  
 (Blessed Redeemer, bright morning star)

### Pre-chorus

All the heavens shout Your praise  
 All creation bows to worship You

### Chorus

How wonderful, how beautiful  
 Name above ev'ry name exalted high  
 How wonderful how beautiful  
 Jesus, Your name, name above ev'ry name, Jesus

### Verse 2

Jesus, beautiful Saviour  
 God of all majesty, risen King  
 (Lamb of God, holy and righteous)  
 (Blessed Redeemer, bright morning star)

### Bridge 1

Saviour, Redeemer, You are God, You are God

### Bridge 2

I will sing forever  
 Jesus I love You  
 Jesus I love You

### End

Jesus Jesus

### Ending

Jesus beautiful Saviour  
 (Repeat)

Henry Seeley

© 2006 Planetshakers Ministries Int. Inc. [Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing (IM)]  
 For use solely with the SongSelect Terms of Use. All rights reserved. [www.ccli.com](http://www.ccli.com)  
 CCLI License # 324618

## EMPOWER ME

### Verse 1

Nobody knows how weak I am better than You  
 Nobody sees all of my needs better than You  
 And nobody has the power to change me  
 To what I was born to be  
 Jesus be strong in my weakness, empower me

### Chorus

Empower me like a rushing river flowing to the sea  
 Lord send Your Holy Spirit flowing now through me  
 Till I'm living as Your child victorious and free  
 Send the power of Your love, empower me

### Verse 2

Nobody's eyes see through my soul better than Yours  
 And nobody's love can make me whole  
 No love but Yours  
 And nobody has the power to lift me  
 To reach for eternity  
 Jesus break through all my defenses, empower me

### Ending

Send the power of Your love, empower me  
 Empower me, empower me  
 Send Your love and Lord empower me

Claire Cloninger | David T. Clydesdale

© 1983, 1984 New Spring [Admin. by CopyCare Asia Ltd (Singapore Branch)]

For use solely with the SongSelect Terms of Use. All rights reserved. [www.ccli.com](http://www.ccli.com)

CCLI License # 324618

## GIVE THANKS

### Verse

Give thanks with a grateful heart  
 Give thanks to the Holy One  
 Give thanks because He's given  
 Jesus Christ, His Son

### Chorus

And now let the weak say, "I am strong"  
 Let the poor say, "I am rich"  
 Because of what the Lord has done for us  
 And now let the weak say, "I am strong"  
 Let the poor say, "I am rich"  
 Because of what the Lord has done for us

### Ending

Give thanks

Henry Smith

© 1978 Integrity's Hosanna! Music [Admin. by CopyCare Asia Ltd (Singapore Branch)]

For use solely with the SongSelect Terms of Use. All rights reserved. [www.ccli.com](http://www.ccli.com)

CCLI License # 324618



# THE CHURCH BEYOND

## GROWING IN MISSIONS

BY A COVENANT MISSIONARY

*“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*  
 – John 13:34-35 (NIV)

2016 marks my 12<sup>th</sup> year of serving God in the field with my family. When I look back on my journey into missions, I see three empowering movements in my life.

1. *God engineered my life for missions even before I was aware of the call or felt capable of fulfilling it.* Missions is not about how capable or gifted I am; it is about how He connects the dots in my life in preparing me to answer the call to His mission for the world. This is holistic—from moving me in my choice of vocation, spouse and way of living my life, to developing me in serving people, walking with them in their strengths and weaknesses, their sufferings and pain.
2. *God expands my faith to trust Him in areas where I am most vulnerable.*

I am currently living in a sensitive country in which one has to be creative to gain access. It also has significant social security concerns and frequent health issues that are highlighted in the media. Subjecting my family to potential risks and scrutiny by authorities in order to reach the unreached was not my initial idea of missions. But God is faithful. Through the years, above all our precautionary measures, He has been our ultimate security.

*Missions is about how He connects the dots in my life in preparing me to answer the call to His mission for the world.*

3. *God enables me to do His work when I am most weak or when it seems most impossible.* In the field, I often stand in the middle of two great biblical truths: “Apart from Him I can do nothing” and “With Him, all things are possible”. Opposition and persecution from without, disunity and the lack of passion and compassion within the church all stifle church growth. But at her weakest, I often see God lifting up the Church to her greatest potential with His boundless love and grace.

## » PRAY

- For my family to end well in our remaining time in the field. With our kids nearing the ages for National Service and high school, we are preparing to enter a new season of our lives. Pray for our social-emotional and reverse-culture adjustments to be healthy as we prepare for our future re-entry to Singapore.
- For individuals and families seeking to answer God’s call in missions, that they may grow in their journey of faith in spite of their weaknesses or the obstacles standing between them and their calling into the field.
- For God to continue to raise Singapore up as a mission-sending nation. Pray that He will send His labourers out from our “little red dot” to Asia and beyond, to serve in an increasingly challenging world of hostility, brokenness and spiritual apathy.
- That God’s work be done through authentic disciples in the mission field as they bear witness in their homes, work and ministries. Pray for a great spiritual synergy arising out of a healthy unity and harmony of the different streams of Christianity as we love one another and let the world know that we are Christ’s disciples (Jn 13:34-35).



MONDAY, 1 AUGUST 2016

## Speech Integrity

### ■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 4:24-25

### ■ OBSERVATION

How does verse 25 progress from verse 24?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### DEEPER REFLECTION

Biblical discipleship is not about keeping a set of dos and don'ts. The ethical imperatives in Ephesians 4:25 to 5:2 are to be kept out of having “put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness” (v.24, NIV). It is therefore possible for us “to be imitators of God” (Eph 5:1), which is what keeping the ethical imperatives is all about. Paul “sees exertion of moral effort as worthless apart from the transforming work of Christ in one’s life that constitutes a new creation”<sup>1</sup>. Paul’s moral exhortation begins with “put away falsehood...speak the truth” (v.25). Be aware and alert to two kinds of lies. **Lie of speech:** This can be “sometimes deliberate and sometimes unconscious”<sup>2</sup>. Unconscious falsehood is “more from carelessness about the truth than from intentional lying”<sup>3</sup>. Upholding “truth demands a deliberate effort”<sup>4</sup> in order to guard against deviation from truth that comes very subtly. Consciously ask: “Is what I am saying really true?” **Lie of silence:** This is “the menace of things unsaid”<sup>5</sup>. It may be that “in some discussion a man by his silence gives approval to some course of action which he knows is wrong” or “withholds warning or rebuke when he knows quite well he should have given it”<sup>6</sup>.

### ■ APPLICATION

What are some challenges I face in speaking the truth that I need to pay particular attention to?

---

---

---

---

---

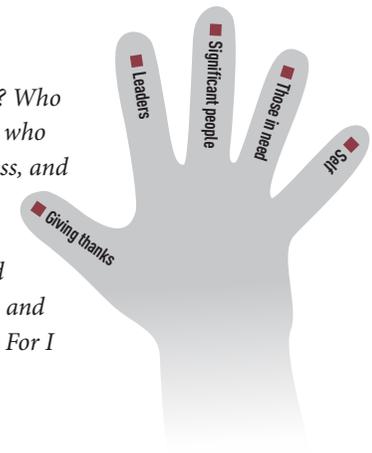
---

---

---

### ■ PRAYER

*O Lord, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? The one who walks with integrity and righteousness, and speaks truth in his heart.<sup>7</sup> Guard my heart, for what and how I speak come from and reflect my heart. And set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth, and keep watch over the door of my lips.<sup>8</sup> For I am weak, O Lord!*



<sup>1</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Zondervan, 2010), 295  
<sup>2</sup> William Barclay, *The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*, The Daily Study Bible (Saint Andrew Press, Theological Publications in India, 1976), 155  
<sup>3</sup> William Barclay, 155  
<sup>4</sup> William Barclay, 155  
<sup>5</sup> William Barclay, 155, citing Andre Maurois  
<sup>6</sup> William Barclay, 155  
<sup>7</sup> Psalm 15:1-2  
<sup>8</sup> Psalm 141:3



TUESDAY, 2 AUGUST 2016

## Theological Lying

### ■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 4:25 with 4:14-16

### ■ OBSERVATION

How is “speak truth” in verse 25 related to “speaking the truth” in Ephesians 4:15?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

### DEEPER REFLECTION

Paul’s moral exhortation (Eph 4:25–5:2) is very “one another” oriented, for its immediate context is keeping “the unity of the Spirit” as one body (Eph 4:1–6). Speaking truth with each other “as members of one another” (v.25) is “essential for mutual trust”<sup>9</sup>, which is “foundational and indispensable...for the unity of the community”<sup>10</sup>. Trust is built on truth. As followers of Jesus (in whom is truth, Eph 4:21), we “should be known...as honest, reliable people whose word can be trusted”<sup>11</sup>. Speaking truth here “recalls Eph 4:15-16, where speaking the truth in love is the antidote to the trickery of false teaching [Eph 4:14].”<sup>12</sup> Thus, while “laying aside falsehood” refers to lying in general, “Paul may have been thinking especially of theological lying—the sort of false teaching about God that leads to the bleak existence of unbelievers described in Ephesians 4:17–19 and that can even lead believers astray.”<sup>13</sup> It is imperative then to ground ourselves in the Word of truth, to grasp it, be gripped by it and grow in it. We do this personally and as a theological community, learning from and sharing with one another the Word of truth—deliberately and diligently.

### ■ APPLICATION

What are some theological lies I may have embraced that I need to do away with?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

### ■ PRAYER

*Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.*

### PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:

<sup>9</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 299

<sup>10</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 300

<sup>11</sup> John Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, The Bible Speaks Today (IVP, 1979), 185

<sup>12</sup> Frank Thielman, *Ephesians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Baker, 2010), 313

<sup>13</sup> Frank Thielman, 313



WEDNESDAY, 3 AUGUST 2016

## Appropriate Anger

### ■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 4:26; Mark 3:1-5

### ■ OBSERVATION

What does “be angry, but do not sin” (v.26, NRSV) mean?

---



---



---



---



---

### DEEPER REFLECTION

“Be angry” – “but be angry in such a way that your anger is not a sin”<sup>14</sup>. “Instead of prohibiting anger, Paul commands it using the present imperative verb.”<sup>15</sup> Paul “sees an appropriateness to anger. He regards it as a proper and even essential emotion. At the same time, however, he considers it as highly volatile and dangerous.”<sup>16</sup> “Be angry” is accompanied by three “do not’s” (Eph 4:26b-27). But Paul “does not specify the appropriate occasions for a display of anger here”<sup>17</sup>. James instructs us to be “slow to anger” (Jas 1:19-20). Paul’s exhortation to “patience” (Eph 4:2) “is based on the notion of being slow to anger”<sup>18</sup>. Jesus was “terribly and majestically angry”<sup>19</sup> when human lives were destroyed (Mk 3:5) and God’s name was desecrated (Jn 2:14-16). “The world would have lost much without the blazing anger of William Wilberforce against the slave trade or of Lord Shaftesbury against the labour conditions of the nineteenth century.”<sup>20</sup> “There is a need in the contemporary world for more Christian anger...In the face of blatant evil we should be indignant not tolerant, angry not apathetic. If God hates sin, His people should hate it, too. If evil arouses His anger, it should arouse ours also.”<sup>21</sup> This is God-centred anger.

### ■ APPLICATION

How can I distinguish between the right and wrong type of anger in my life?

---



---



---



---

### ■ PRAYER

*Righteous Lord, fill me with Your Spirit and teach me when and how to be angry with grief like You when evil is done to innocent people.<sup>22</sup> Humble and gentle Lord,<sup>23</sup> help me to grow in humility, gentleness, patience and loving forbearance,<sup>24</sup> that I may be slow to anger,<sup>25</sup> and not let even my righteous anger subtly become sinful. Amen.*

### PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:

<sup>14</sup> William Barclay, 154

<sup>15</sup> Clinton E. Arnold,

<sup>16</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 300

<sup>17</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 301

<sup>18</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 302

<sup>19</sup> William Barclay, 156

<sup>20</sup> William Barclay, 155

<sup>21</sup> John Stott, 186

<sup>22</sup> Mark 3:4-5

<sup>23</sup> Matthew 11:29

<sup>24</sup> Ephesians 4:2

<sup>25</sup> James 1:19



THURSDAY, 4 AUGUST 2016

## Controlling Anger

### ■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 4:26-27

### ■ OBSERVATION

What is the biblical understanding of anger that Paul presents in verses 26 and 27?

.....

.....

.....

.....

### DEEPER REFLECTION

“Be angry but do not sin” (v.26, NRSV). A reality is clearly underlined here: Anger is “an emotion that can quickly become sinful”<sup>26</sup>. We have to “make sure that our anger is free from injured pride, spite, malice, animosity and the spirit of revenge”<sup>27</sup>. If we become aware of some sinful or selfish element in our anger, then it is time for us to cease from it. Cultivate this self-awareness. “Do not let the sun go down on your anger” (v.26b) keeps anger from becoming sinful. It is a warning against nursing anger. It is dangerous to let anger “continue beyond a reasonable limit.”<sup>28</sup> While we cannot take the command too literally<sup>29</sup> (in Greenland, days last for more than three months!<sup>30</sup>), it is a good practical guide to keep anger in check. By allowing anger to fester and grow, we can surrender space to demonic intrusion and influence (v.27b). “An angry mind will necessarily think evil thoughts, as the devil desires. If the devil finds a mind ready for evil and slipping towards it, he deceives the person who was created for life. The thought, you see, is human. But the devil completes it.”<sup>31</sup> This is true not just in persistent anger, but “is equally applicable to any behaviour that is characteristic of the old self”<sup>32</sup>.

### ■ APPLICATION

What are the specific situations in my life that I need to practice the three “do not’s” in dealing with my anger?

.....

.....

.....

### ■ PRAYER

*Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.*

### PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:

<sup>26</sup> Frank Thielman, 314

<sup>27</sup> John Stott, 186

<sup>28</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 302

<sup>29</sup> John Stott, 186; Clinton E. Arnold, 302

<sup>30</sup> John Stott, 186

<sup>31</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 303, citing Ambrosiaster (4th century)

<sup>32</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 303



FRIDAY, 5 AUGUST 2016

## Wholesome Work

### ■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 4:28

### ■ OBSERVATION

How and why should Christians work according to verse 28?

---



---



---



---



---

### DEEPER REFLECTION

The stealing in verse 28a refers to “stealing secretly rather than to violent robbery”<sup>33</sup>. Paul “probably has in mind, then, the working poor whose income would fluctuate with the seasons in the agrarian economy of Roman Asia and who may have supplemented their income in difficult times by secretly stealing from their employers and others”<sup>34</sup>. Paul has in mind the eighth commandment (Ex 20:15), which has a wide application “to tax evasions and customs dodges which rob government of their dues, to employers who oppress their workers, and to employees who give poor service or work short time”<sup>35</sup>. Honest and hard work (“he must labour”) should characterise the way Christians work. As Christians, we work not just to support ourselves, but also “to share with the needy” (v.28b). “Here is a new idea and a new ideal: working in order to give away.”<sup>36</sup> This is in line with the biblical principle: “God will generously provide all you need...and plenty left over to share with others” (2 Co 9:8, NLT). “In modern society no man has overmuch to give away but we do well to remember the Christian ideal is that we work not to amass things, but to be able, if need be, to give them away.”<sup>37</sup>

### ■ APPLICATION

What changes do I need to make in my perspective and attitude towards work?

---



---



---



---

### ■ PRAYER

*Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.*

#### PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

To do hard and honest work  
with a giving spirit

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:

<sup>33</sup> Frank Thielman, 314

<sup>34</sup> Frank Thielman, 314

<sup>35</sup> John Stott, 187

<sup>36</sup> William Barclay, 158

<sup>37</sup> William Barclay, 158



SATURDAY, 6 AUGUST 2016

## Wholesome Words

### ■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 4:29

### ■ OBSERVATION

What should characterise Christian speech (v.29)?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### DEEPER REFLECTION

Words are very powerful: “Death and life are in the power of the tongue” (Pr 18:21). The very same mouth that at one moment blesses God can at the next curse man (Jas 3:9–10). It is critical that we are conscious of and careful in our words. **Restraint in speech** (What not to say): “No unwholesome word.” The Greek word for “unwholesome” means “bad, rotten, worthless; harmful, evil”<sup>38</sup>. Think before you speak. Speak with this warning in mind: “When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable” (Pr 10:19). **Content of speech** (What to say): Speak “only” what is “good for edification”. Otherwise, just keep quiet. **Timing of speech** (When to say): “According to the need of the moment” and “as fits the occasion” (v.29). **Manner of speech** (How to say): Speak to “give grace” to the hearers. Speak like Jesus: “gracious words falling from His lips” (Lk 4:22). In our speech, be “attentive to the emotional needs and concerns”<sup>39</sup> of the hearers, and focus comments on encouraging, affirming, comforting, helping, cheering and stimulating them. Our words reflect our hearts (Mt 15:18). When we pay attention to our hearts, we will pay attention to our words.

### ■ APPLICATION

How can I develop godly and gracious speech such that it becomes a part of my character?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### ■ PRAYER

*Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.*

#### PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:

<sup>38</sup> *The Greek New Testament, Fifth Revised Edition* (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2014), Dictionary, 162  
<sup>39</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 305



SUNDAY, 7 AUGUST 2016

■ SCRIPTURE

.....  
.....

■ OBSERVATION

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

■ APPLICATION

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

■ PRAYER

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

THE PAST WEEK

REVIEW

What was my high point and my low point for the week?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

What gave me life and what drained me?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

How was the Spirit of God at work?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**REFLECT**

What is one key thing that God said to me this week  
in light of what has happened?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**RESPOND**

What is one thing I need to do in light of what God is saying?

**COMMIT IN PRAYER**


---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**FAMILY DEVOTIONAL**

August 2016 – Week 1

**I AM ANGRY!**

**Don't let your anger cause you to sin.**

*Scripture: Ephesians 4:25–29*

**ACTIVITY BITE**

Get two pieces of papers and colour one yellow and the other red. The yellow one represents “a little angry” and the red means “very angry”. As you hold up the two pieces of paper, think of occasions when someone made you “a little angry” and “very angry”. How did you react in those situations?

**CHAT TIME**

Q1: How do you feel about the way you reacted when you were angry?

Q2: Did Jesus ever feel angry? Is it right or wrong to feel angry?

Q3: What are the wrong things we may do when we get angry?

**LEARNING POINT**

Joy, sadness and anger are some of the emotions that God gives to man. Many things can make you angry—it can be when you cannot get what you want, when somebody says bad things about you or when someone breaks your favourite toy. It is alright to be angry, but what you do when you are angry is what matters. Do you scream nasty words or hit the person who made you angry, or take revenge by doing the same things against them? God wants our attitude to be like Jesus. Firstly, refrain from reacting with wrong actions or words. Secondly, you can tell the person how hurt or angry you are and learn to forgive. Do something good in return. By this, you are exercising the love of Jesus.

**ACTION POINT**

On each of the two coloured pieces of paper, write one good thing you will do if someone makes you angry in future. Pin them up as a reminder of how you can respond positively in such moments.

**PRAYER POWER**

(Ask your children to pray after you.)

Dear God, I am sorry because I may get nasty when I am angry. Instead, please teach me how to love like Jesus did. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.



MONDAY, 8 AUGUST 2016

## Don't Grieve the Spirit (1)

### ■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 4:29-30

### ■ OBSERVATION

What does it mean to “grieve the Holy Spirit of God” (vv.29-30)?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

### DEEPER REFLECTION

In redeeming us in Christ, God “sealed” us with the Holy Spirit (v.30; Eph 1:13-14), “stamped us with His own character and guaranteed to protect us until He takes final possession of us on the ‘the day of redemption’”<sup>40</sup>, when our bodies will be redeemed (Ro 8:23). God sealed us by letting His Spirit dwell in us (Eph 2:22; 3:16-17; 1 Co 6:19). In this, God takes a loving risk with us: we can “grieve the Holy Spirit of God”. To “grieve” means “to cause sorrow, pain or distress”<sup>41</sup>. The Holy Spirit is especially grieved when we utter unedifying speech to one another (v.29), which tears down “the unity of the Spirit”. But the command not to grieve the Holy Spirit “has a secondary application to all the other warnings of the passage [Eph 4:25-32]”<sup>42</sup>. It is significant that Paul mentions two contrasting spirits in the context: “do not give the devil a place” through persistent anger (Eph 4:26-27) and “do not grieve the Holy Spirit” (v.30). “The sins that divide and thereby destroy the unity of the body come directly from Satan; to continue in any of them is to grieve the Spirit.”<sup>43</sup> And since the Spirit is characterised by holiness, “He is always grieved by unholiness”<sup>44</sup> of any kind.

### ■ APPLICATION

How does the command not to grieve the Holy Spirit affect my life as a disciple of Jesus?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

### ■ PRAYER

*Holy Spirit of God, I thank You for dwelling in my heart, taking the risk to be grieved by me. Until all my unholy thoughts, attitudes, words and acts have completely ceased, I will grieve You again and again. Forgive me for grieving You! I thank You for Your gracious patience and loving forbearance. Empower me to walk in holiness more and more! Amen.*

### PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:

<sup>40</sup> Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Apollos, 1999), 349

<sup>41</sup> John Stott, 189

<sup>42</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 306

<sup>43</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Hendrickson, 1994), 713

<sup>44</sup> John Stott, 189



TUESDAY, 9 AUGUST 2016

## Don't Grieve the Spirit (2)

### ■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 4:30-31

### ■ OBSERVATION

How does Paul show the seriousness of the spiritual condition described in verses 30 to 31?

---



---



---



---

### DEEPER REFLECTION

Verse 31 shows “five different aspects of anger”<sup>45</sup> in “a progression from an inner disposition of bitterness to a display of uncontrolled and hurtful speech”<sup>46</sup>. If unedifying speech grieves the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:29-30), how much more these sins of anger! It begins with us being wronged or hurt by others. But we can let ourselves be hurt without people actually hurting us. These are self-inflicted hurts. If we leave such hurts undealt with, we become bitter. “Bitterness” “indicates the hard-heartedness that harbours resentment about the past”<sup>47</sup> and “refuses to be reconciled”<sup>48</sup>. Bitterness leads to “wrath and anger”. “Wrath” “signifies an indignant outburst of rage”<sup>49</sup>, while “anger” refers to “a steady festering or seething anger”<sup>50</sup> and “a more settled and sullen hostility”<sup>51</sup>. Then deep-seated anger manifests itself in “clamour and slander”. “Clamour” describes people “who get excited, raise their voices in a quarrel, and start shouting, even screaming, at each other”<sup>52</sup>. “Slander” is “speaking evil of others, especially behind their backs, and so defaming and even destroying their reputation”<sup>53</sup>. Paul “regards all of this as malicious, mean-spirited or vicious”<sup>54</sup>. All these are so dangerous that they must be “rooted out comprehensively”<sup>55</sup>—“put away” “all” (v.31)!

### ■ APPLICATION

Which of the five aspects of anger do I need to deal with in my life?

---



---



---



---

### ■ PRAYER

*Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.*

#### PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:

<sup>45</sup> Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary (Word Books, 1990), 308

<sup>46</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 307

<sup>47</sup> Andrew T. Lincoln, 308

<sup>48</sup> John Stott, 190 – citing Armitage Robinson

<sup>49</sup> Peter T. O'Brien, 350

<sup>50</sup> Peter T. O'Brien, 350

<sup>51</sup> John Stott, 190

<sup>52</sup> John Stott, 190

<sup>53</sup> John Stott, 190

<sup>54</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 308

<sup>55</sup> Peter T. O'Brien, 350



WEDNESDAY, 10 AUGUST 2016

## Be Forgiving Like God (1)

### ■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 4:31-32; Micah 7:18

### ■ OBSERVATION

What do you observe about forgiveness in verses 31 and 32?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### DEEPER REFLECTION

How can the five aspects of anger with malice be “all” “put away” (v.31)—“rooted out comprehensively”<sup>56</sup>? Forgiveness—“forgiving each other” (v.32). Humanly speaking, it is hard at times, especially when we are deeply hurt by others. The starting point of forgiveness is not when we forgive others. It is when we ourselves are forgiven by God. We are to forgive “just as God in Christ also has forgiven you” (v.32). God is a forgiving God—“Who is a God like You who pardons sin and forgives rebellion?” (Mic 7:18). But that does not mean that God can just simply forgive at will without any condition. The holy and just God demands this: “without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Heb 9:22; cf. Lev 17:11). And only God Himself can meet His own demand. And there is only one way: “the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect” (1 Pe 1:19, NIV). God can forgive us **only “in Christ”** (v.32)—“in Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses” (Eph 1:7). And God cannot forgive us if we refuse to forgive others (Mt 6:12, 14-15). We are unforgiving because we do not know what it means to be forgiven by God.

### ■ APPLICATION

How can I develop a character of forgiveness regardless of how I may be hurt by people?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### ■ PRAYER

*Who is a God like You,  
pardoning iniquity and  
passing over rebellion?  
You do not retain Your  
anger forever, because  
You delight in steadfast  
love. You will again have  
compassion on us; You  
will tread our iniquities  
underfoot. You will  
cast all our sins into the  
depths of the sea. You  
will show faithfulness  
and steadfast love to Your  
covenant people.<sup>57</sup> Amen.*

### PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:

<sup>56</sup> Peter T. O'Brien, 350

<sup>57</sup> Micah 7:18-20



THURSDAY, 11 AUGUST 2016

## Be Forgiving Like God (2)

### ■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 4:31-32; Micah 7:19

### ■ OBSERVATION

How are kindness, tender-heartedness and forgiveness related (vv.31-32)?

---



---



---



---



---

### DEEPER REFLECTION

The word for “forgive” applied to God and us (v.32) is *charizomai*—the verb form of *charis*, or “grace”. Paul’s use of *charizomai* here “may have been intentionally designed to recall the language of God’s lavish grace (*charis*) in Christ”<sup>58</sup> (Eph 2:5, 7, 8). We are to forgive graciously. A forgiving heart is “kind” and “tender-hearted” (v.32)—the total contrast of bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander and malice (v.31). An unforgiving person is unkind and hard-hearted. Kindness and tender-heartedness are God’s attributes. We can be “kind” and “tender-hearted” because in Christ we have “the life of God” in us (Eph 4:18). We can and should be kind because we have tasted “the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ” (Eph 2:7). And God is “kind to ungrateful and evil men” (Lk 6:35). Kindness is “the disposition of mind which thinks as much of its neighbour’s affairs as it does its own” and is “looking outwards all the time, and not inwards”<sup>59</sup>. The “essence of compassion” or tender-heartedness is “being sympathetic to others’ needs”<sup>60</sup>. Kindness is what we do and say, and tender-heartedness is how we feel towards others. Both go together in giving and forgiving.

### ■ APPLICATION

How can I develop kindness and tenderness as my character?

---



---



---



---



---

### ■ PRAYER

*Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.*

#### PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:

<sup>58</sup> Frank Thielman, 320

<sup>59</sup> William Barclay, 160

<sup>60</sup> Andrew T. Lincoln, 309



FRIDAY, 12 AUGUST 2016

## Be Loving Like Christ (1)

### ■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 5:1-2

### ■ OBSERVATION

What is the significance of Paul's call to be imitators of God (vv.1-2) in the context of his moral exhortation in Ephesians 4:25-32?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

### DEEPER REFLECTION

In Christ we have “the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness” (Eph 4:24, NIV), and therefore, we are to “be imitators of God” (v.1). “Be imitators of God” is the climax and the sum of Paul's moral exhortation in Ephesians 4:25-32. It means in essence “walk in love” (v.2)—because “God is love” (1 Jn 4:8). What is your idea of the love of God? Is it a biblical idea or a me-centred consumeristic kind? We do well to contemplate deeply on and truly know God's love as revealed in manifold ways in Scripture. The Old Testament prophets show how gloomy the history of Israel's covenant relationship with God was. For centuries, Israel suffered the divine judgment of covenant curses for breaking the covenant (see Dt 28) until their exile to Babylon—the ultimate covenant curse (Dt 28:64-67). But, the climactic point of divine judgment was manifested on the cross. There “He who knew no sin became sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Co 5:21), and there He became “a curse for us” that we may be blessed in Him with every Spiritual blessing (Gal 3:13-14 with Eph 1:3). There God showed us His love in the most definitive way!

### ■ APPLICATION

What are some misconceptions about the love of God that I need to get rid of?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

### ■ PRAYER

*Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.*

### PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

To truly and deeply know God's love

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:



SATURDAY, 13 AUGUST 2016

## Be Loving Like Christ (2)

### ■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 5:1-2; John 13:34-35

### ■ OBSERVATION

What does it mean to love others just as Christ loved us (vv.1-2)?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### DEEPER REFLECTION

“Be imitators of God” (v.1) is theologically similar to maturing “to the fullness of Christ” (Eph 4:13) by “speaking the truth in love” (Eph 4:15) and “building up...in love” (Eph 4:16). **Expectation of love:** To imitate God is to “walk in love” (v.2)—“the epitome of what it means to be a Christian”<sup>61</sup>. **Experience of love:** We imitate God as His “dearly loved children” (v.1). We are not just God’s children, but God’s “dearly loved children”. We love out of God’s love for us and with His love, such that those we love may see His love. At our family dinner celebrating my 59<sup>th</sup> birthday, my wife asked the children to thank their father for one thing. My son said, “Papa, thank you for treating me as God treats me”. That was my best birthday gift. **Example of love:** We love “just as Christ also loved you” (v.2)—parallel to “just as God in Christ has forgiven you” (Eph 4:32). Love is giving oneself to others and forgiving others. Christ “loved us and gave Himself up for us” that God may forgive us our sins. Loving others is worship to God—“an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma”. It is “a striking truth that sacrificial love for others becomes a sacrifice acceptable to God”<sup>62</sup>.

### ■ APPLICATION

In what ways have I shown that I love as Christ loves?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### ■ PRAYER

*Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.*

#### PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:

<sup>61</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 309

<sup>62</sup> John Stott, 191



SUNDAY, 14 AUGUST 2016

■ SCRIPTURE

.....

■ OBSERVATION

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

■ APPLICATION

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

■ PRAYER

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

THE PAST WEEK

REVIEW

What was my high point and my low point for the week?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

What gave me life and what drained me?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

How was the Spirit of God at work?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**REFLECT**

What is one key thing that God said to me this week  
in light of what has happened?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**RESPOND**

What is one thing I need to do in light of what God is saying?

**COMMIT IN PRAYER**


---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**FAMILY DEVOTIONAL**

August 2016 – Week 2

**IMITATE JESUS**

**Follow the way Jesus loves others.**

*Scripture: Ephesians 4:30–5:2*

**ACTIVITY BITE**

Get a torchlight and some small objects. In a dark room, shine the light close to the objects and watch the shapes of the shadows form. You can also play a game where you guess the objects from their shadows.

**CHAT TIME**

Q1: What does the phrase “to imitate someone” mean?

Q2: Who would you like to imitate most—a person who has a bad attitude, is very unkind and likes to steal, or someone who is well mannered, honest and helpful? Why?

Q3: What are the characteristics of Jesus that we should imitate?

**LEARNING POINT**

To imitate someone is to copy what they do, just like how the shadows follow the shape of the objects. All of us learn how to behave by imitating others from the time we are born. We learn good and bad behaviour by observing people. The bad thing is that sometimes we are not aware or do not care about the bad behaviour we have adopted. God wants us to have good behaviour and the best person to imitate is Jesus Himself. He has no sin and is a perfect example for godly living. So it is good for us to imitate His way of life because this will help us change to be more like Him.

**ACTION POINT**

Think of one behaviour of Jesus that you would like to imitate. It can be showing kindness by encouraging or writing a card to someone. Try to do it within this week.

**PRAYER POWER**

(Ask your children to pray after you.)

Thank you, Jesus, for being my perfect example to imitate. I want to behave in a way that is pleasing to You always. So please help me do that all the time. Amen.



MONDAY, 15 AUGUST 2016

## Live as People of Holiness (1)

### ■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 5:3

### ■ OBSERVATION

What is the significance of “must not even be named among saints” in verse 3?

.....

.....

.....

### DEEPER REFLECTION

We must avoid “immorality”, “any kind of impurity” and “greed” “because these are improper among God’s holy people” (v.3, NIV). **Harsh Temptations:** Paul realistically recognises the moral dangers we face in the world and our susceptibility to compromise. He refers to these three vices thrice (Eph 4:19; 5:3, 5) for great emphasis. The “rampant immorality in Graeco-Roman society”<sup>63</sup> was not much different from today’s world. “Adulterous relationships, men sleeping with their slave girls, incest, prostitution, ‘sacred’ sexual encounters in the local temples and homosexuality were all part of everyday life. There was not an accepted social standard with regard to sexual relations.”<sup>64</sup> “Illicit sexual activity was an enormous problem for new Gentile Christians to overcome in the early church.”<sup>65</sup> “It was all too easy for Gentile converts to slip back into pre-conversion ways.”<sup>66</sup> **Holy Testimony:** These vices “must not even be named among saints”. “Saints” has “the qualitative note”<sup>67</sup>, underlining our “holiness as God’s people”<sup>68</sup>. And “an outsider who observes the daily behaviour of Christians should never have an opportunity ‘to name’ one of these vices as characterising the lifestyle of any member”<sup>69</sup> of the holy community.

### ■ APPLICATION

What are some great temptations relating to immorality and impurity that I face in my life and from the world, and how will I deal with them?

.....

.....

.....

.....

### ■ PRAYER

*Holy God, keep me from temptations that are too strong for me. Guard my eyes, my mind and my heart from sexual temptations from within me, from being carried away and enticed by my own lust<sup>70</sup>, and from without. When I fall into temptation and sin against You, forgive me, cleanse me, restore me and deliver me from evil. For I am weak, O gracious God!*

### PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:

<sup>63</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 320

<sup>64</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 320

<sup>65</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 320

<sup>66</sup> Peter T. O'Brien, 359

<sup>67</sup> Peter T. O'Brien, 360

<sup>68</sup> Peter T. O'Brien, 360

<sup>69</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 321

<sup>70</sup> James 1:14



TUESDAY, 16 AUGUST 2016

## Live as People of Holiness (2)

### ■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 5:3; Luke 12:13-15, 21, 33-34

### ■ OBSERVATION

What does Jesus teach us about greed in Luke 12:13-15, 21 and 33-34?

---



---



---



---



---

### DEEPER REFLECTION

In Ephesians 5:3-5, Paul uses three vice lists, each with three terms, to describe the sins we must avoid in holy living. **What we do (v.3):** “Immorality” “should be understood in the broadest possible sense of any kind of sexual activity outside a committed marriage relationship”<sup>71</sup> which “would include premarital sex, adultery (Mt 19:9), sex with a prostitute (1 Co 6:12-20), homosexual liaisons (Ro 1:27) and incestuous relationships (1 Co 5:1)”<sup>72</sup>. “Any kind of impurity” refers to all forms of “deviant”<sup>73</sup> and “unrestrained”<sup>74</sup> sexual behaviour. Jesus, in confronting the tradition of ritual impurity, “pointed to the deeper issue of the corruption in the hearts of individuals, which render them impure”<sup>75</sup> (Mk 7:1-2, 20-23). “Greed” “generally refers to acquiring and holding wealth”<sup>76</sup>. “Love of money”—rather than money itself—“is a root to all sorts of evil” (1 Ti 6:10). The greedy are “those with strong desire to acquire and keep for themselves more and more money and possessions, because they love, trust and obey wealth rather than God”<sup>77</sup>, and thus are idolaters (Eph 5:5). And “greed among the earliest Christians amounted to an unwillingness to share one’s possessions with the needy”<sup>78</sup> (cf. Lk 12:15, 21, 33-34).

### ■ APPLICATION

What form of covetousness in “every kind of coveting” (Ro 7:8) can I discern in my heart?

---



---



---

### ■ PRAYER

*Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.*

#### PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:

<sup>71</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 319

<sup>72</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 319

<sup>73</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 329

<sup>74</sup> Peter T. O'Brien, 359

<sup>75</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 320

<sup>76</sup> Frank Thielman, 329

<sup>77</sup> Frank Thielman, 329 – citing Brian S. Rosner

<sup>78</sup> Frank Thielman, 329



WEDNESDAY, 17 AUGUST 2016

## Live as People of Holiness (3)

### ■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 5:4-5

### ■ OBSERVATION

What is the significance of “giving of thanks” to God in verse 4?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

### DEEPER REFLECTION

The second of the trio of sins describes mainly **what we say (v.4)**. “Obscenity, foolish talk, coarse joking” refer to “a dirty mind expressing itself in vulgar conversation”<sup>79</sup>, “disgusting kinds of practical jokes”<sup>80</sup> and “some kind of inhumane or degrading jesting...often at somebody else’s expense”<sup>81</sup>. The immoral world has made sex a dirty thing. But sex is a pure gift from God to be received with thanksgiving in marriage. Thanksgiving “reflects a Christian attitude to sex”<sup>82</sup> which preserves the worth of the gift as a blessing of a loving Creator.<sup>83</sup> The third is **what we are (v.5)**: The behaviours described in Ephesians 5:3-4 are defined as immoral, unclean and greedy persons<sup>84</sup>, who are excluded from the kingdom of God. Paul “is not asserting that the believer who ever falls into these sins is automatically excluded from God’s kingdom”<sup>85</sup>, but rather those who have given themselves up to habitually practicing these sins without shame, guilt or repentance. These “persistent sinners”<sup>86</sup>, “even if they call themselves Christians, show that they are excluded from eternal life”<sup>87</sup>. Nevertheless, we “still need to be warned against such vices”<sup>88</sup>, because of our susceptibility to “slipping into sinful patterns of behaviour”<sup>89</sup>.

### ■ APPLICATION

How can I keep from living a lifestyle of falling into sin?

.....

.....

.....

.....

### ■ PRAYER

*O God my Redeemer, when I sin against You, convict my heart by Your Spirit, and help me to respond to You without delay in humble brokenness that You may forgive and cleanse me. Help me to keep short accounts of my sins with You. Create in me a clean heart and renew a steadfast spirit within me<sup>90</sup>, that my heart may not be hardened. For I am weak, O God!*

### PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:

<sup>79</sup> Peter T. O'Brien, 361

<sup>80</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 320

<sup>81</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 320 – citing Van der Horst

<sup>82</sup> Peter T. O'Brien, 361

<sup>83</sup> John Stott, 193

<sup>84</sup> Frank Thielman, 332

<sup>85</sup> Peter T. O'Brien, 363

<sup>86</sup> Peter T. O'Brien, 362

<sup>87</sup> Peter T. O'Brien, 363

<sup>88</sup> Peter T. O'Brien, 363

<sup>89</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 338

<sup>90</sup> Psalm 51:10



THURSDAY, 18 AUGUST 2016

## Live as People of Holiness (4)

### ■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 5:6-7

### ■ OBSERVATION

What is Paul referring to in his warning, “let no one deceive you with empty words” (v.6)?

.....

.....

.....

.....

### DEEPER REFLECTION

What are “empty words” and who are those who speak them (v.6)? Although Paul “is not explicit, he is probably talking about anyone, whether an erring believer or an unbeliever, who claims that no harm will come to those who are sexually active outside of marriage or who accumulate wealth for themselves”<sup>91</sup>. These “attempt to justify ungodly behaviours...on the basis of theological reasoning”<sup>92</sup> and “try to excuse these sins” (v.6, NLT). Paul warns us: “do not be deceived” (v.6) and “do not participate with them” in their sin (v.7), for “to participate with them in their sin will mean sharing their doom”<sup>93</sup>—“the wrath of God”. But we must recognise that we ourselves can be the ones deceiving ourselves. Self-deception begins when we rationalise and justify certain ungodly behaviours and practices; then very subtly we begin to think it is alright and feel comfortable with them. There is a teaching on “pure grace” going around today that insists that Christians are free from sin, condemnation and the requirement of the Law, and God can never judge or even be angry with Christians because of what Christ has accomplished on the cross (but see 1 Co 11:30-32). “Let no one deceive you with empty words.”

### ■ APPLICATION

What are some “empty words” that I have let myself be deceived by?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

### ■ PRAYER

*Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.*

#### PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:

<sup>91</sup> Frank Thielman, 327

<sup>92</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 326

<sup>93</sup> Frank Thielman, 327



FRIDAY, 19 AUGUST 2016

## Walk as Children of Light (1)

### ■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 5:7-10

### ■ OBSERVATION

What characterises “now you are light” in verses 7 to 10?

---



---



---



---



---

### DEEPER REFLECTION

Concerning a Christian’s pre-conversion state, Paul does not say “you were in darkness” or “you walked in darkness”, but “you **were** darkness” (v.8)—referring to “the core of our being”<sup>94</sup>, our “very nature”<sup>95</sup>. And “now you **are** light” (v.8) in the same vein. But we are light “in the Lord”—by virtue of our union with Christ who is “the Light” (Jn 12:35-36). So, we are to “walk” as who we are—“children of light” (v.8). Just as children share their parents’ nature, as “children of light” we share the nature of our “Father of lights” (Jas 1:17), who Himself “is Light” (1 Jn 1:5, 7). As we walk in the light, we bear “the fruit of the light”—“goodness and righteousness and truth” (v.9), and “try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord” (v.10, ESV). Why “discern”? “Discern”<sup>96</sup> refers to the “exercise of critical judgment”<sup>97</sup>. “Deciding what is benevolent, right, honest and therefore pleasing to the Lord in any given situation is often complicated.”<sup>98</sup> Through renewed thinking by God’s Word we exercise critical judgement to find out “what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Ro 12:2) to live out goodness, righteousness and truth in the specific pressures and circumstances of everyday life.

### ■ APPLICATION

How will I place a high premium on developing discernment of what is pleasing to the Lord?

---



---



---



---

### ■ PRAYER

*Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.*

### PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

To develop a discerning heart  
shaped by God’s Word

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:

<sup>94</sup> EClinton E. Arnold, 328

<sup>95</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 328

<sup>96</sup> The word in Greek

<sup>97</sup> Frank Thielman, 341

<sup>98</sup> Frank Thielman, 341



SATURDAY, 20 AUGUST 2016

## Walk as Children of Light (2)

### ■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 5:11-14

### ■ OBSERVATION

What does it mean to walk as “children of light” according to verses 11 to 14?

.....

.....

.....

.....

### DEEPER REFLECTION

Part of walking in the light is to “expose” the “deeds of darkness” (v.11). These works of darkness “should be understood in a broad way of any kind of behaviour that is displeasing to God”<sup>99</sup>. However, “there may be an emphasis on sexual sins...carried out in privacy and darkness”<sup>100</sup> (“done in secret”, v.12). The object of exposing these deeds is “not persons but works”<sup>101</sup>. **Expose darkness to edify:** It “appears that some believers were participating in the works of darkness, making the enjoinder necessary”<sup>102</sup>. The purpose of exposing the ungodly behaviour of fallen fellow believers is “not punitive but restorative”<sup>103</sup> — “to bring conviction and correction”<sup>104</sup> “so that they may ultimately be helped and restored by the risen Christ”<sup>105</sup>, who “will be present with them to help with His strength and direction”<sup>106</sup> (v.14). It must be done with gentleness (Gal 6:1), and privately at first (Mt 18:15-17). **Testify to expose darkness:** The “children of light” (vv.7-10) “will shine as a beacon to others, revealing evil deeds for what they are”<sup>107</sup> (v.13). It doesn’t mean Christians should remain silent or fail to speak out against evil, but “the particular point”<sup>108</sup> here is that of “living a godly lifestyle and showing evil to be evil”<sup>109</sup>.

### ■ APPLICATION

What does it mean for me to expose darkness to edify fellow Christians (bearing in mind Mt 7:1-5), and to testify to the world to expose its darkness?

.....

.....

.....

### ■ PRAYER

*Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.*

#### PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:

<sup>99</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 331

<sup>100</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 331

<sup>101</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians, An Exegetical Commentary* (Baker, 2002), 679

<sup>102</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, 679

<sup>103</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 331

<sup>104</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 331

<sup>105</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 330

<sup>106</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 334

<sup>107</sup> Peter T. O'Brien, 371

<sup>108</sup> Peter T. O'Brien, 371

<sup>109</sup> Peter T. O'Brien, 371



SUNDAY, 21 AUGUST 2016

■ SCRIPTURE

.....  
.....

■ OBSERVATION

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

■ APPLICATION

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

■ PRAYER

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

THE PAST WEEK

REVIEW

What was my high point and my low point for the week?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

What gave me life and what drained me?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

How was the Spirit of God at work?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**REFLECT**

What is one key thing that God said to me this week  
in light of what has happened?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**RESPOND**

What is one thing I need to do in light of what God is saying?

**COMMIT IN PRAYER**


---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**FAMILY DEVOTIONAL**

August 2016 – Week 3

**GREEDY FOR MORE**

**Being greedy is a selfish thing. Be generous instead.**

*Scripture: Ephesians 5:3-14; Acts 20:35*

**ACTIVITY BITE**

Sit in a circle with lots of toys placed in the centre. In the first round, try to grab as many toys as possible for yourself within 30 seconds. In the second round, do the same thing but this time give away all your toys to other people, including those from the previous round.

**CHAT TIME**

- Q1: How does it feel to give away toys instead of grabbing them for yourself?  
Q2: Why do we tend to keep things for ourselves instead of being generous in giving them away?  
Q3: In Acts 20:35, why does God say that “it is more blessed to give than to receive”?

**LEARNING POINT**

Most of us tend to get and keep things for ourselves rather than share with those in need. Some people are never satisfied with the riches they have and will try everything to get more money for themselves. That is why Jesus has to teach us not to store up treasures on earth where moth and rust will destroy, and where thieves will break in and steal (Mt 6:19-20). Being greedy is a very selfish thing. It will not make you happy. You can only experience the joy of Jesus when you learn how to be generous and give to the poor. So do not be greedy, but be generous.

**ACTION POINT**

Look through your storage cabinet or your own room. Are there things that you do not use nor need? Consider giving them away to friends who may need them or to charity.

**PRAYER POWER**

(Ask your children to pray after you.)

God, I have been rather selfish by keeping lots of good things for myself. Teach me how to be generous. Show me who I can bless with some of the things I have. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen



MONDAY, 22 AUGUST 2016

## Be Careful How You Walk

### ■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 2:1-3, 8-10; 4:1, 17-24; 5:1-2, 7-10, 15

### ■ OBSERVATION

How are the eight occurrences of the key word “walk” in Ephesians theologically connected to each other (Eph 2:1-3, 8-10; 4:1, 17-24; 5:1-2, 7-10, 15)?

.....

.....

.....

### DEEPER REFLECTION

“Walk” is a key word in Ephesians, occurring eight times. It begins with how we “formerly walked” under the dominance of sin, world, devil and flesh (Eph 2:1-3). But in Christ we are saved by God’s grace to “walk” in “good works” (Eph 2:8-10). As God’s redeemed people we are to “walk in a manner worthy of” His calling (Eph 4:1) and “walk no longer as the Gentiles walk” (Eph 4:17-19). We are to “put on the new self, created to be like God” (Eph 4:24, NIV), and “be imitators of God” and “walk in love” (Eph 5:1-2) and “walk as children of light” (Eph 5:7-10). And we are to “be careful how we walk” (Eph 5:15)—“to give attention to how we conduct our day-to-day lives”<sup>110</sup> so that we are “not lulled into moral complacency defined by the surrounding Gentile culture”<sup>111</sup>. “Be careful”—“strongly underscores the importance of engaging in intentional and focused moral introspection”<sup>112</sup>. Walking with watchfulness contrasts sharply with the state of believers who are “sleeping” and need to “awake” (Eph 5:14; cf. Rev 3:1-2). This solemnly warns us of “the dangers of a lack of moral vigilance”<sup>113</sup>. We cannot ignore Jesus’ repeated call to “be on guard” (four times!) in the difficult last days in Mark 13:5, 9, 23, 33<sup>114</sup>.

### ■ APPLICATION

In what areas of my life do I need to be particularly careful with regard to how I walk?

.....

.....

.....

.....

### ■ PRAYER

*Lord, I keep my eyes on You continually. With You at my right hand, I will not be shaken<sup>115</sup>. I trust in You with all my heart and lean not on my own understanding. In all my ways I acknowledge You and submit to You and You will make my path straight. I do not want to be wise in my own eyes. Lord, help me to fear You and shun evil<sup>116</sup>. Amen.*

### PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:

<sup>110</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 345

<sup>111</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 345

<sup>112</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 345

<sup>113</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 345

<sup>114</sup> The four Greek words in these four verses refer to the same word in Ephesians 5:15.

<sup>115</sup> Psalm 16:8

<sup>116</sup> Proverbs 3:5-7



TUESDAY, 23 AUGUST 2016

## Walk in Wisdom in Christ

### ■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 5:15; Jeremiah 8:8-9

### ■ OBSERVATION

What do you observe about wisdom in verse 15 and Jeremiah 8:8-9?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### DEEPER REFLECTION

To carefully watch our steps, we are to walk “not as unwise, but as wise” (v.15). Why does Paul state the negative “not as unwise” and state it first? The possibility of Christians being “unwise” and “foolish” (Eph 5:17) is very real. Fools hate knowledge (Pr 1:22) and despise wisdom (Pr 23:9). Fools are lazy (Pr 24:30-31), quick-tempered (Pr 29:11), quarrelsome (Pr 20:3), arrogant and careless (Pr 14:16), have uncontrolled tongues (Pr 29:20) and reject counsel and correction (Pr 12:1, 15). We can walk “as wise” only in Christ, because in Him “are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col 2:3). So, as we “learn Christ” (Eph 4:20) and follow Him, we grow in wisdom in Christ, being able to “distinguish culturally defined wisdom from God’s wisdom”<sup>117</sup> (cf. 1 Co 1:20-21), and to “walk through a mental minefield of ideas that, if we are not careful, will lead us to despair, shame and the wrath of God (Eph 4:19; 5:6, 12)”<sup>118</sup>. Wisdom is found in God’s Word (Jer 8:8-9). Wisdom from God is characterised by a godly brain and godly behaviour (Jas 3:13, 17). We need to constantly pray to be filled with “the Spirit of wisdom and revelation” (Eph 1:17). Ask yourself: Am I a wise or unwise person?

### ■ APPLICATION

Why do I think I am a wise or unwise person?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### ■ PRAYER

*Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.*

#### PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:

<sup>117</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 345

<sup>118</sup> Frank Thielman, 356



WEDNESDAY, 24 AUGUST 2016

## A Disciplined Use of Time

### ■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 5:15-16

### ■ OBSERVATION

What does it mean to make the best use of our time in verses 15 to 16?

.....

.....

.....

.....

### DEEPER REFLECTION

We walk “as wise” people by “making the best use of the time” (v.16, ESV). “Making the best use of the time” is the meaning of “an idiom, literally ‘to buy out the time’”<sup>119</sup>. “The days are evil” (v.16) and they have “a grip on the present time”<sup>120</sup>. So Paul calls us “to buy the present time out of its slavery to evil and use it instead in ways that are ‘pleasing to the Lord’ (Eph 5:10)”<sup>121</sup>. What does “making the best use of the time”—“a disciplined use of time”<sup>122</sup>—mean in practical terms in our everyday life? We cannot define “making the best use of the time” purely in terms of the kind of activities we occupy our time with. We cannot say that carrying out mundane but necessary things like doing housework or buying groceries, among other things, are not making the best use of our time. Or, are we making the best use of our time by sleeping less so that we can have more waking hours to do “important things”? One thing is clear: We should not spend time doing evil things. God has created life to have “a time for everything” with seasons and rhythms (Ecc 3:1-11), in which we seek to glorify Him in whatever we do, including eating and drinking (1 Co 10:31).

### ■ APPLICATION

What changes do I need to make in my life to make the best use of my time?

.....

.....

.....

.....

### ■ PRAYER

*Creator King, You have created life to have a time for everything. Fill me with the Holy Spirit and give me a heart of wisdom such that each day, everything I do is done in continual communion with You and as worship to You to Your glory—in small and big things, when time is in my control and when it is not. Amen.*

### PRAYER POINTERS

**Give thanks:**

**Pray for leaders:**

**Pray for significant people:**

**Pray for those in need:**

**Pray for self:**

<sup>119</sup> Johannes P. Louw & Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, Vol. 1 (United Bible Society, 1988, 1989), 65:42, 625

<sup>120</sup> Frank Thielman, 356

<sup>121</sup> Frank Thielman, 356

<sup>122</sup> John Stott, 202



THURSDAY, 25 AUGUST 2016

## Wise Life in Evil Days

### ■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 5:15-16; Daniel 12:1-13

### ■ OBSERVATION

How is walking in wisdom in evil days like according to Daniel 12:1-13?

---



---



---



---

### DEEPER REFLECTION

God calls us to “walk...as wise” “because the days are evil” (vv.15-16). The antithesis of “wise” is not just “unwise” (v.15) but also “evil”, which is associated with “foolish” (Eph 5:16-17), the synonym of “unwise”. The book of Daniel is divided into two parts (Da 1-6 and 7-12) with two significant theological contrasts in the context of suffering in evil days. The sovereignty of God is overtly shown in Daniel 1 to 6, but covertly revealed in Daniel 7 to 12. The emphasis in the former is on deliverance, but in the latter is on perseverance. In Daniel 12, the godly are people of insight and understanding (Da 12:3, 8-9, 10) who live in “a time of distress such as never occurred” (Da 12:1) where “the wicked will act wickedly” (v.10). Here the contrast of wickedness is wisdom (Da 12:10). The wise godly people are “the people who know their God” (Da 11:32-33). What characterises those “who know their God” in times of tribulations? They are **strong** people who “will display strength and take action” (Da 11:32). They are **shining** people who “will shine like the brightness of the heavens” (Da 12:3, NIV). They are **sanctified** people who “will be purged, purified and refined” (Da 12:10). They are a **steadfast** people “who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days!” (Da 12:12).

### ■ APPLICATION

What does it mean for me to walk in wisdom in facing evil challenges in the world?

---



---



---



---

### ■ PRAYER

*Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.*

### PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:



FRIDAY, 26 AUGUST 2016

## Understand the Will of God

### ■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 5:15-17

### ■ OBSERVATION

How do you relate “understanding the will of the Lord” to all that Paul says in verses 15 to 17?

.....

.....

.....

.....

### DEEPER REFLECTION

We live in the days of evil by walking in wisdom, making the best of our time according to our understanding of the will of the Lord (vv.15-17). What is “the will of the Lord”? It is all that God has revealed in Scripture. “To understand” is, with an emphasis on “the need for intellectual effort”<sup>123</sup>, to employ “one’s capacity for understanding and thus arriving at insight”<sup>124</sup>. But it “goes beyond simple cognitive awareness to applied knowledge”<sup>125</sup>. Understanding God’s will is “predicated on hearing from the Lord and giving heed to His words as revealed in Scripture”<sup>126</sup>. We grow in understanding God’s will as we grow in knowing and keeping God’s Word. There was a period in my early 20s when God was teaching me contentment. At one point, as I was trusting God to supply all my needs as He has promised in His Word (Php 4:19), I had only enough money to take the bus to work, but none for my lunch. I stared at God’s promise with discouragement. Then God spoke to me in His Word about contentment when undergoing suffering need (Php 4:11-12). I came to a broader and deeper understanding of God’s will. Both God supplying my needs and Him letting me suffer need can be God’s will.

### ■ APPLICATION

How do I want to grow in understanding the will of God?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

### ■ PRAYER

*Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.*

### PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

To have a renewed mind  
to understand God’s will

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:

<sup>123</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 347

<sup>124</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 347 – citing Johannes P. Louw & Eugene A. Nida

<sup>125</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 347

<sup>126</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, 347



SATURDAY, 27 AUGUST 2016

## “What’s God’s Will for Me?”

### ■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 5:17; Matthew 1:18-20

### ■ OBSERVATION

How does the story of Joseph illustrate divine guidance (Mt 1:18-20)?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### DEEPER REFLECTION

It is essential to distinguish between God’s **general will** and His **personal will** for us. God’s general will is revealed in Scripture, which is applicable to all people, but not His personal will for individuals. But God’s personal will for us is always within the framework of His general will. When we live our lives in conformity to God’s general will, His personal will for us will be taken care of. We can trust God to lead and guide us in particular areas of our lives as we walk with Him faithfully. And we need not fear that we will make wrong decisions and be out of God’s will. God knows that we do not know everything when we make decisions. When Joseph heard that Mary was pregnant, not knowing that it was God’s work, he thought she had committed immorality. He “planned to put her away secretly” “not wanting to disgrace her” (Mt 1:18-19). It was a decision of “a righteous man” (Mt 1:19). Right attitude, wrong action. But God who looks at the heart intervened (Mt 1:20). Oftentimes, we want to know God’s personal will for us because we want to have a sense of security. This is an anthropocentric motive, rather than the theocentric “so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord” (Col 1:9-10).

### ■ APPLICATION

What perspective and attitude do I need to change regarding God’s personal will for my life?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### ■ PRAYER

*Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.*

#### PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:



SUNDAY, 28 AUGUST 2016

■ SCRIPTURE

.....

■ OBSERVATION

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

■ APPLICATION

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

■ PRAYER

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

THE PAST WEEK

REVIEW

What was my high point and my low point for the week?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

What gave me life and what drained me?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

How was the Spirit of God at work?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**REFLECT**

What is one key thing that God said to me this week  
in light of what has happened?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**RESPOND**

What is one thing I need to do in light of what God is saying?

**COMMIT IN PRAYER**


---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**FAMILY DEVOTIONAL**

August 2016 – Week 4

**HOW TO BE WISE**

**Being wise in God begins by following God's ways.**

*Scripture: Ephesians 5:15-17; Proverbs 9:10*

**ACTIVITY BITE**

Look for simple Bible trivia on the Internet and test each other's Bible knowledge.

**CHAT TIME**

Q1: Does being wise mean being smart in schoolwork? What does it mean to be wise in God?

Q2: Proverbs 9:10 tells us that we get wisdom by fearing God. What does fearing God mean?

Q3: Name one wise thing that Jesus taught us in the New Testament.

**LEARNING POINT**

To be wise in God is not about being able to remember all the books of the Bible or being able to answer all the Bible trivia. It simply means to know and do what He says in the Bible. For example, it is not wise to keep storing all our riches in the bank for ourselves, thinking that we will be very happy in the years to come. The Bible tells us that while saving up for the future is good, it is also wise to be generous in helping others with our money. Jesus is full of wisdom and we can learn how to be wise from His Word. Following in God's ways is being wise. If we always do that, we will truly be happy.

**ACTION POINT**

Think of one wise thing that Jesus teaches us from the Bible. Practise doing it with your family members as well as your friends.

**PRAYER POWER**

(Ask your children to pray after you.)

Jesus, You are full of wisdom and I know You will teach me how to be wise when I ask. Show me how to apply Your wisdom at home and in school every day. Amen.

# FAITHFULLY KEEP WATCH



## COVENANT EFC IS 38 YEARS OLD!

Throughout the years, the Lord our God has been very gracious to us. As a church we have received from His hand abundant blessings that we may in turn be a blessing to others.

We believe the one thing that has helped us to know and align with God's will and to be ready to do as He directs is **prayer**. Over the years, our church leadership has been committed to continually praying for the church and for God's guidance and empowerment. In fact, the Church

Board has kept up the practice of a weekly Saturday dawn prayer for the past 21 years!

At our recent church camp in June this year, we had for the first time all three of our founding elders of the church—Elder Lim Hua Min, Elder Tan Lian Seng and Elder Lawrence Chua—in attendance together at the same camp! This historical occasion prompted our Senior Pastors, Rev Tony Yeo and Rev Tan Kay Kiong, to invite all three men on stage at our final camp session where they each shared certain key lessons they had learnt as churchmen over the years, in relation to our camp theme, “Watch Out!” From their authentic sharing of historical accounts of church-building, as well as their personal anecdotes, we noted several areas for Covenanters to keep watch over: **vision, commitment, effort, sacrifice, fruits and redemption.**

Over the course of this week, we will consider each of these areas in turn, in the light of relevant Bible passages. May we reflect deeply upon our own lives and pray earnestly for God's help to apply the biblical principles as we journey on as Christ's disciples called to build His Church for His glory alone!



MONDAY, 29 AUGUST 2016

## A Vision of God's Glory

### ■ SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 6:1-5; John 12:41

### ■ OBSERVATION

In what way is the glory of God seen in prophet Isaiah's vision?

---



---



---

### DEEPER REFLECTION

In the year that King Uzziah died (~740 BC), the prophet Isaiah saw a vision of the glory of Yahweh (“the **LORD** of hosts”, vv.3, 5). The God of Israel is also referred to here as “the Lord” (v.1) and “the King” (v.5). Many centuries later, the apostle John, inspired by the Holy Spirit, understood that vision as one which Isaiah had of Jesus Christ (see Jn 12:41 and its immediate context). The Lord was seated on a throne, in a high and exalted position. His majestic presence was everywhere (“the train of his robe filled the temple”, v.1). An unspecified number of angelic beings, the seraphim, were declaring aloud to one another that the Lord is absolutely holy and totally glorious (“Holy, holy, holy is the **LORD** of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” v.3). The earth shook at the Lord’s powerful voice, and the temple was filled with smoke, signifying His presence. It was such an awesome and terrifying sight that Isaiah, having seen the Lord, cried out in great fear and distress, “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips” (v.5). As Matthew Henry insightfully wrote in his commentary: “All vain-glory, ambition, ignorance and pride, would be done away by one view of Christ in his glory. This awful vision of the Divine Majesty overwhelmed the prophet with a sense of his own vileness. We are undone if there is not a Mediator between us and this holy God. A glimpse of heavenly glory is enough to convince us that all our righteousness is as filthy rags.”

### ■ APPLICATION

Having caught a glimpse of God’s glory, how would you go about all the activities and tasks of your Christian life and ministry?

---



---



---



---



---



---

### ■ PRAYER

*Lord God, You are holy and righteous! How could I, a sinner, ever approach You, if not for my Mediator, Jesus Christ, who bore all my sins on the cross and brought me peace with You? I was hopeless in living this life, until Christ came into my life. How could I live this life for myself? How could I serve seeking self-gain and self-glory? Please forgive me, and teach me to serve according to Your will and for Your glory alone. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

### PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:



TUESDAY, 30 AUGUST 2016

## A Commitment to God's Work

### ■ SCRIPTURE

John 4:31-38

### ■ OBSERVATION

What was Jesus so busy doing that His disciples were worried about Him missing meals (Jn 4:30, 39-42)?

.....

.....

### DEEPER REFLECTION

The surrounding context of this passage (Jn 4:1-43) tells us that the Lord Jesus made a very special effort to reach out to a Samaritan woman and other Samaritans from her town. On two counts, the Samaritan woman would have been someone with whom a Jewish rabbi like Jesus should do all in His power to avoid contact. Firstly, she is a Samaritan—a despised pariah race descended from non-deported Jews who intermarried with pagan colonists during the Assyrian exile of the Northern Kingdom. Samaritans were considered by the Jews as traitors, unclean and enemies. Secondly, she is a woman. Women had a low social status in that culture. En route to Galilee, Jesus chose a course that would take Him through Samaria and took a rest in the town of Sychar around noon by the well in order to encounter her there. As a result, she believed in Jesus, and through her testimony and Jesus' preaching, many other Samaritans also came to believe. When Jesus' disciples came to Him concerned that He would be hungry, they urged Him to eat. His reply to them showed clearly that His priority was soul-winning and reaping the harvest. **“My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to accomplish His work. Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, then comes the harvest’? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. (vv.34-36)”** The Lord's appetite was for doing the Father's will. Jesus was energised and sustained by doing God's work.

### ■ APPLICATION

What is your overriding appetite in life? What kind of work energises and sustains you?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

### ■ PRAYER

*Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.*

### PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:



WEDNESDAY, 31 AUGUST 2016

## My Effort for God's Church

### ■ SCRIPTURE

Romans 12:3-21

### ■ OBSERVATION

From the context of the passage, which group of people was the apostle Paul addressing?

.....

.....

### DEEPER REFLECTION

Just as the human body has many members with many different functions and yet is one body, so the church has many members with many different functions and yet is one body in Christ (vv.4-5). In the church family, all the members are connected to and belong to one another. When members think of themselves with sober judgement, they will realise that everyone is important and has a part to play. Each and every Christian has been given at least one spiritual gift (the Greek word for this is *charisma*, the plural form *charismata*); it is given by God according to His grace (v.6). Spiritual gifts are to be used by Christians in proportion to their faith (v.6). They must not be simply kept in storage somewhere in the warehouse, but must be diligently and enthusiastically used in service to God, for the sake of God's people. Paul says, "**Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.**" (v.11). Then the Christian community will experience care, growth, love, peace and harmony. The body of Christ will be built up, and unbelievers will be won to Christ. When every Christian faithfully does his or her part, the body as a whole will be blessed. Whenever one Christian neglects to make the effort to exercise his or her spiritual gift, the church as a whole is poorer for it. God has not intended for only a proportion of the church to be diligent and fervent in serving. If, in a local church, you only have 20% of the members actively serving, that is subnormal! God intends for all the members—100% of every local church—to be ministering to one another.

### ■ APPLICATION

In what ways, and with what attitudes, are you currently using your spiritual gift(s) in your church to serve the Lord Jesus?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

### ■ PRAYER

*Heavenly Father, I praise and thank You for the salvation I have in Jesus Christ, Your Son whom You sent into the world to save sinners like me. My salvation is a gift of Your grace; I know that I can't earn it. I'm not saved by good works, but I'm saved for good works. You have, by Your grace, given me one or more spiritual gifts. I want to use them for Your Church. Please guide and empower me to serve You. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

### PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:



**COVENANT** EFC

© 2016 COVENANT EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

Tel: (65) 6892 6811 • Email: [mail@cefc.org.sg](mailto:mail@cefc.org.sg) • Website: [www.cefc.org.sg](http://www.cefc.org.sg)