

*“Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?”*

■ GENESIS 18:25 ESV

*Reminder that*  
GOD IS THE  
righteous judge

**JUNE 2015**

*“Far be it from you to do such  
a thing, to put the righteous  
to death with the wicked, so  
that the righteous fare as the  
wicked! Far be that from you!  
Shall not the Judge of all the  
earth do what is just?”*

**GENESIS 18:25 ESV**

**COVENANT** EFC

# 2015 Memory Focus

FROM GENESIS (ESV)

## JANUARY

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

**Genesis 1:1**

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## FEBRUARY

So God created man in His own image, in the image of God  
He created him; male and female He created them.

**Genesis 1:27**

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## MARCH

And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

**Genesis 1:28**

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## APRIL

The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

**Genesis 6:5**

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## MAY

“I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonours you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

**Genesis 12:3**

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## JUNE

“Far be it from You to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?”

**Genesis 18:25**

## JULY

He said, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”

**Genesis 22:2**

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## AUGUST

“I am not worthy of the least of all the deeds of steadfast love and all the faithfulness that You have shown to Your servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two camps.”

**Genesis 32:10**

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## SEPTEMBER

And there he built an altar and called the place El-bethel, because there God had revealed Himself to him when he fled from his brother.

**Genesis 35:7**

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## OCTOBER

“He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?”

**Genesis 39:9**

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## NOVEMBER

The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

**Genesis 49:10**

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## DECEMBER

As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

**Genesis 50:20**

# Foreword

BY SENIOR  
PASTORS

# 2015

*marks our Jubilee Year as a nation. God is the ultimate reason for Singapore's 50 years of peace and prosperity, safety and security, shalom and success. Indeed God alone deserves all praise, honour and thanksgiving for all the blessings from above!*

Jubilee has been called a super-Sabbath. God is looking for devoted disciples who flee from *clamour, hurry and crowds* and cultivate the habit of abiding in God's Word, delighting in God's will and walking in God's way. Those who are intentional about a stronger foundation, a closer walk and a deeper life. Those who are tired of their hit-and-run, hide-and-see, touch-and-go relationship with Him. This Jubilee Year, will you intentionally and zealously commit yourself to be among the first fruits of this new Jubilee generation by scheduling personal time alone with God?

Psalm 1:2-3 speaks of the blessed person as one whose "delight is in the law of the LORD, and on His law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers".

The Psalmist finds great joy in relating to the Word of God...

He meditates upon the Word when day comes and when night falls...

Far beyond outward prosperity, the Psalmist desires the inward prosperity of his soul...

We invite you to take this year to grow deeper in faith and in His Word. Deal decisively with distractions in your life. Cut yourself off from habits and modern gadgets that displace communion with God. Fast from social media. Overhaul your schedule. Remove activities that desensitise you to the gentle promptings of the Spirit.

There is a dailyness in discipleship – soaking daily in His Word, applying His truth, reaping the fruits and passing them on.

Some years ago when Jerry Bridges was in Singapore, he talked about encountering God daily in the Word and especially the Gospel. When asked what it was like, Jerry said, "God always shows up."

What an assurance! This Jubilee Year 2015, draw near to Him. Linger in His presence. Allow Him to refresh you, renew you and restore you – a people prepared for the Day of His Visitation.

Jesus is Our Jubilee!

***Ps Tony Yeo and Ps Tan Kay Kiong***

God is looking for devoted disciples who flee from *clamour, hurry and crowds* and cultivate the habit of abiding in God's Word, delighting in God's will and walking in God's way.

# 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 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 can use the guiding questions provided.*

### What's New in 2015?

A "Deeper Reflection" section has been introduced 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 2015?

- Suggested prayers are included twice weekly to serve as an aid to those who may find them helpful in their prayer response.
- On Sundays, you may want to meditate on the Psalms, the Gospel or the Scripture passage of the sermon. This may be followed by reviewing and reflecting on the past week and then responding in prayer. Examining your life is essential in your faith journey as a redeemed disciple of Christ.

May/June  
2015

# Worship Songs

## BENEDICTION

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### Verse 1

May the Lord bless you and keep you  
May the Lord smile on you  
Shine His light upon you  
May the Lord lift you  
Turn His face towards you  
Give you His peace, give you His peace

### Verse 2

May the Lord bless us and keep us  
May the Lord smile on us  
Shine His light upon us  
May the Lord lift us  
Turn His face towards us  
Give us His peace, give us His peace

### Chorus

Blessed we came to this place today  
And blessed now we will go  
In the name of the Father, the Spirit and the Son  
(Repeat)

### Ending

Go now in peace  
Go now in peace

*Words & Music: Jonas Myrin | Matt Redman*

*Year & Publisher: © 2013 Said And Done Music (Admin. by CopyCare Asia Ltd (Singapore Branch))*

*sixsteps Music (Admin. by CopyCare Asia Ltd (Singapore Branch))*

*Thankyou Music (Admin. by CopyCare Asia Ltd (Singapore Branch))*

*worshiptogether.com songs (Admin. by CopyCare Asia Ltd (Singapore Branch))*

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## AMAZING GRACE MY CHAINS ARE GONE

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### Verse 1

Amazing grace how sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found  
Was blind but now I see

### Verse 2

T'was grace that taught my heart to fear  
And grace my fears relieved  
How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believed

### Chorus

My chains are gone, I've been set free  
My God my Saviour has ransomed me  
And like a flood His mercy rains  
Unending love, Amazing Grace

### Verse 3

The Lord has promised good to me  
His Word my hope secures  
He will my shield and portion be  
As long as life endures

### Verse 4

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow  
The sun forbear to shine  
But God, who call'd me here below  
Will be forever mine

*Words & Music: Chris Tomlin | John Newton | Louie Giglio*

*Year & Publisher: © 2006 sixsteps Music (Admin. by EMI Christian Music Publishing);*

*Vamos Publishing (Admin. by EMI Christian Music Publishing); worshiptogether.com songs*

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## MIGHTY TO SAVE

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### Verse 1

Everyone needs compassion  
 Love that's never failing  
 Let mercy fall on me  
 Everyone needs forgiveness  
 The kindness of a Saviour  
 The hope of nations

### Chorus

Saviour, He can move the mountains  
 My God is mighty to save  
 He is mighty to save  
 Forever, Author of salvation  
 He rose and conquered the grave  
 Jesus conquered the grave

### Verse 2

So take me as You find me  
 All my fears and failures  
 Fill my life again  
 I give my life to follow  
 Everything I believe in  
 Now I surrender

### Bridge

Shine your light and let the whole world see  
 We're singing  
 For the glory of the risen King Jesus  
 Shine your light and let the whole world see  
 We're singing  
 For the glory of the risen King

*Words & Music: Ben Fielding | Reuben Morgan*  
*Year & Publisher: © 2006 Hillsong Music Publishing*  
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## BEFORE THE THRONE OF GOD (HOUR OF PRAYER)

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### 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

### 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 of 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

### Verse 3

Before 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

*Words & Music: Charitie Lees Bancroft | William Batchelder Bradbury*

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## MY REDEEMER LIVES

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### Verse

I know He rescued my soul  
 His blood has covered my sin  
 I believe, I believe  
 My shame He's taken away  
 My pain is healed in His name  
 I believe, I believe

### Pre-Chorus

I'll raise a banner  
 'Cause my Lord has conquered the grave

### Chorus

My Redeemer lives  
 My Redeemer lives  
 My Redeemer lives  
 My Redeemer lives

### Bridge

You lift my burdens  
 I'll rise with You  
 I'm dancing on this mountaintop  
 To see Your Kingdom come

*Words and Music: Reuben Morgan*

*Year & Publisher: © 1998 Hillsong Music Publishing*

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## OUR GOD SAVES

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### Verse

In the name of the Father, in the name of the Son  
 In the name of the Spirit, Lord we come  
 We're gather'd together to lift up Your name  
 To call on our Saviour to fall on Your grace  
 Hear the joyful sound of our offering  
 As Your saints bow down, as Your people sing  
 We will rise with You, lifted on Your wings  
 And the world will see that

### Chorus

Our God saves, our God saves  
 There is hope in Your name  
 Mourning turns to songs of praise  
 Our God saves, our God saves

*Words & Music: Brenton Brown | Paul Baloche*

*Year & Publisher: © 2007 Integrity's Hosanna! Music (Admin. by Crossroad Distributors Pty. Ltd.); Leadworship Songs (Admin. by Crossroad Distributors Pty. Ltd.); Thankyou Music (Admin. by Crossroad Distributors Pty. Ltd.)*

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## CHRIST IS ENOUGH

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### Verse 1

Christ is my reward and all of my devotion  
 Now there's nothing in this world  
 That could ever satisfy  
 Through every trial my soul will sing  
 No turning back I've been set free

### Chorus

Christ is enough for me  
 Christ is enough for me  
 Everything I need is in You  
 Everything I need

### Verse 2

Christ, my all in all, the joy of my salvation  
 And this hope will never fail  
 Heaven is our home  
 Through every storm my soul will sing  
 Jesus is here, to God be the glory

### Bridge

I have decided to follow Jesus  
 No turning back no turning back  
 The cross before me the world behind me  
 No turning back no turning back

*Words & Music: Jonas Myrin | Reuben Morgan*  
*Year & Publisher: © 2012 Hillsong Music Publishing*  
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## AND CAN IT BE

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### Verse 1

And can it be that I should gain  
 An interest in the Savior's blood?  
 Died He for me who caused His pain –  
 For me, who Him to death pursued!

### Chorus

Amazing love! How can it be  
 That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?  
 Amazing love! How can it be  
 That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

### Verse 2

'Tis mystery all: th' Immortal dies!  
 Who can explore His strange design?  
 In vain the firstborn Seraph tries  
 To sound the depths of love divine  
 'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore  
 Let angel minds inquire no more  
 'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore  
 Let angel minds inquire no more

### Verse 3

He left his Father's throne above  
 (so free, so infinite his grace!)  
 Emptied himself of all but love  
 And bled for Adam's helpless race  
 'Tis mercy all, immense and free  
 For O my God, it found out me!  
 'Tis mercy all, immense and free  
 For O my God, it found out me!

## AND CAN IT BE (CONT'D)

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### Verse 4

Long my imprisoned spirit lay  
 Fast bound in sin and nature's night  
 thine eye diffused a quickening ray  
 I woke, the dungeon flamed with light  
 My chains fell off, my heart was free  
 I rose, went forth, and followed thee  
 My chains fell off, my heart was free  
 I rose, went forth, and followed thee

### Verse 5

No condemnation now I dread  
 Jesus, and all in Him, is mine  
 Alive in Him, my living Head  
 And clothed in righteousness divine  
 Bold I approach th' eternal throne  
 And claim the crown, through Christ my own  
 Bold I approach th' eternal throne  
 And claim the crown, through Christ my own

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## KEEP ON PRAYING

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### Chorus

Keep on praying in the Spirit  
 Keep on praying in the Spirit  
 At all times with all kinds of prayers  
 Ephesians six eighteen says  
 Keep on praying

### Verse

Keeping this in mind  
 Stay sharp in the Spirit  
 Praying all the time  
 For the people of God

*Words & Music: Ramon Pink*

*Year & Publisher: © 1989 Universal Music - Brentwood Benson Publishing (Admin. by CopyCare Asia Ltd (Singapore Branch))*

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## IN CHRIST ALONE

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### Verse 1

In Christ alone my hope is found  
 He is my light, my strength, my song  
 This Cornerstone, this solid Ground  
 Firm through the fiercest drought and storm  
 What heights of love, what depths of peace  
 When fears are stilled, when strivings cease  
 My Comforter, my All in All  
 Here in the love of Christ I stand

### Verse 2

In Christ alone who took on flesh  
 Fullness of God in helpless babe  
 This gift of love and righteousness  
 Scorned by the ones He came to save  
 Till on that cross as Jesus died  
 The wrath of God was satisfied  
 For every sin on Him was laid  
 Here in the death of Christ I live

### Verse 3

There in the ground His body lay  
 Light of the world by darkness slain  
 Then bursting forth in glorious Day  
 Up from the grave He rose again  
 And as He stands in victory  
 Sin's curse has lost its grip on me  
 For I am His and He is mine  
 Bought with the precious blood of Christ

### Verse 4

No guilt in life, no fear in death  
 This is the power of Christ in me  
 From life's first cry to final breath  
 Jesus commands my destiny  
 No power of hell, no scheme of man  
 Can ever pluck me from His hand  
 Till He returns or calls me home  
 Here in the power of Christ I'll stand

*Words & Music: Keith Getty | Stuart Townend*

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# The Church Beyond

## ■ FOCUS OF THE MONTH: **E-MISSIONS**

**T**he Internet marks a new era of communication comparable to the invention of the printing press during the time of Martin Luther. Around 40% of the world's population (3 billion) has access to the Internet today. Every second, on average, around 6,000 tweets are posted on Twitter, which corresponds to over 350,000 tweets per minute, 500 million tweets per day and around 200 billion tweets per year.<sup>1</sup>

Imagine what would happen if every Christian organisation harnessed the power of technology to make its unique impact in the world.

On 27 September, Bob Creson, President and Chief Executive Officer of Wycliffe Bible Translators, presented the 2014 Scripture Impact Award to Bobby Gruenewald, pastor and innovation leader at LifeChurch.tv. The award recognises the work Bobby and the YouVersion team have done to contribute to Scripture engagement and to bring an end to Bible illiteracy. Now installed on more than 155 million unique devices, the Bible App is what it is today only because millions of people all over the world use it every day to engage with the Bible — and with each other.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time, the potential for impact through our personal sphere of influence cannot be minimised. Let's see how God used one man to bring a Wiccan to Christ.

One evening, Rich Tatum, a project manager of Christianity Today, felt a tug to go through emails of a discussion group he rarely checked. He found a request for help. It was from Kathi, a dedicated Wiccan, who served a family of gods. Her request had been posted for weeks but no one had answered. Rich wanted to reply the next day, but he felt a strong tug to do so immediately.

It turns out that Rich's reply was God's answer to the "fleece" Kathi had put before Him.

Over the next two days, as Rich and her talked online, Rich was able to point her to God. Kathi acknowledges that Internet evangelism played a key role in her coming to Christ, filling a gap that local churches may find difficulty in providing, especially given her occultic background. (Adapted from NetCasters by Craig von Buseck).

Indeed the potential for Christians and churches to make use of technology to influence the world through their private and corporate lives – to sow, water and harvest – is great. Let's pray that we will observe the times and serve led by the Spirit so that we will take hold of the destiny that God has for us to make an impact on the lives of the people around us and beyond.

### PRAY

- For Christians and churches to harness the power of technology to connect, bless and reach the pre-believers within their private and corporate spheres of influence for Christ.
- For the various Internet ministries available online. Pray that new believers who have received Christ online will be willing to connect with a believer and grow in the Lord.
- For the establishment of an E-missions Core Team.<sup>3</sup> Pray for the core team members to have wisdom, unity and balance in their families, work and ministry. Pray that they will hear and obey the Lord as He leads the team to the people He wants them to reach out to.
- That the lessons learnt from the e-missions projects will be applicable in a cross-cultural context.

*“For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews.”*

**1 CORINTHIANS 9:19-20A**

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.internetlivestats.com/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://blogyouversion.com/2014/10/2014-scripture-impact-award-goes-to-lifechurch-tv-pastor/>

<sup>3</sup> David Phoo, Donn Koh, Esther Lim, Joel Tong, Justin Paul, Kit Lee, Mirzi Jao, Shawn Lau, Elder Johnny Tan (advisor) and Ada Chan (team leader)

June 1  
Monday  
2015

## Why Still Remain in Sodom?

### ■ Scripture

Genesis 19:1-5; 2 Peter 2:7-8

### ■ Observation

What do you observe about the inner tension of Lot in having chosen to settle in Sodom (Ge 13:10-11) according to verses 1 to 5 and 2 Peter 2:7-8?

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### Deeper Reflection

Lot in Sodom represents a life situation that God does not want us to be in. Such a situation could be a location, a vocation, a relationship, a partnership, a deal or a condition of our hearts – one that we are in and can run away from, one that we cannot say, “I can’t help it.” What led us to such a life situation could be something very attractive and valuable in worldly terms, just like Lot (Ge 13:10-11). Lot was so settled in Sodom that he had become “a man of standing in Sodom”<sup>1</sup>, possibly “a leader among them”<sup>2</sup>, as indicated by his “sitting in the gate of Sodom” (v. 1). The “gate” was “the physical symbol of collective authority and power”<sup>3</sup>. When Lot saw the two angels, he “urged them strongly” to stay in his house and not in the city square (vv. 2-3), because he knew “the peril of spending the night in the city square of the evil place”<sup>4</sup> (vv. 4-5). And Lot, “living among them day by day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard” (2 Pe 2:7-8, NIV). But why did Lot still remain in Sodom? Perhaps, we can answer that question ourselves.

### ■ Application

What will I do if I face a situation in my life which I know is not God’s will?

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### ■ Prayer

Merciful God, forgive me for being drawn to the physically attractive, but spiritually destructive, things of the world; that these worldly things have become so settled in my life that I hold on to them dearly. Gracious God, deliver me from the grasp of the world, and remove from my heart my love for the world. Amen.



<sup>1</sup> Derek Kidner, *Genesis*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (IVP, 1976), 134

<sup>2</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Zondervan, 2001), 275

<sup>3</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 275

<sup>4</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 275

June 2  
Tuesday  
2015

# The Patient Merciful God (1)

## ■ Scripture

Genesis 19:6-16

### ■ Observation

How did God through specific acts and words show His compassion towards Lot and his family in verses 6 to 16 (note v. 16)?

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### Deeper Reflection

God's deliverance of Lot and his family from His destruction of Sodom can be summed up as "the compassion of the LORD was upon him" (v. 16). Every divine act and word towards Lot, right from the start, is an expression of that divine compassion. We can see how great God's compassion is. First, "the two angels" representing God "came to Sodom" to look for Lot (Ge 19:1): a divine initiative of mercy and grace. Lot tried to protect his guests from Sodom's evil men by negotiating with them (Ge 19:4-8). When the negotiations failed, the men sought to treat Lot "worse than" his guests (v. 9). Just then, God rescued Lot by pulling him back into his house (v. 10). The angels warned Lot and sought to deliver him and "whomever you have in the city" (vv. 12-13). Lot seemed to lack the seriousness (as it appeared to his sons-in-law, v. 14) and the urgency. For the angels had to urge him into action, lest he "be swept away in the punishment of the city" (v. 15). Why did God bother to urge Lot? Even then, Lot "hesitated" (v. 16). Yet, God still "seized his hand", "brought him out and put him outside the city" (v. 16).

## ■ Application

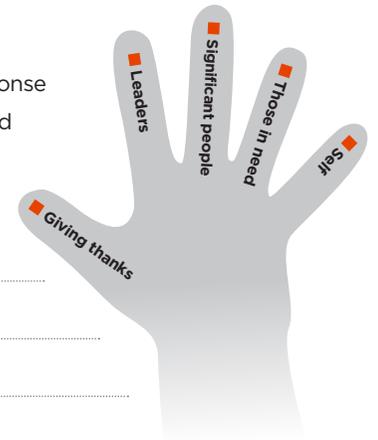
What does the compassion of God as shown to Lot mean to me personally?

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## ■ Prayer

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

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June 3  
Wednesday  
2015

# The Patient Merciful God (2)

## ■ Scripture

Genesis 19:17-22

## ■ Observation

How is God's compassion towards Lot demonstrated in verses 17 to 22?

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## Deeper Reflection

The greatness of God's "compassion" upon Lot is further demonstrated by God's concession to Lot. When Lot was outside the city, the angels gave him a fourfold urgent call (v. 17, NIV): "Flee for your life!" "Don't look back!" "Don't stop anywhere in the plain!" "Flee to the mountains!" But Lot's response was "No, my lords!" (v. 18), for he feared that the disaster would overtake him and he would die (v. 19). Lot's fear shows "the irrationality of unbelief"<sup>5</sup>: God sent His angels to rescue him and yet he felt unsafe. Lot pleaded with God to spare Bela (that is, Zoar, v. 22b; see Ge 14:2) so that he could escape there (v. 20). "Other motives"<sup>6</sup> lurked behind Lot's plea to God, for "he cannot face life apart from living in a city"<sup>7</sup>. Yet surprisingly, God granted him his request (v. 21). And it is incredible that God allowed Himself to be constrained by Lot: "Hurry, escape there, for I cannot do anything until you arrive there" (v. 22). Indeed, "God's grace to very imperfect people is amazing and accommodating"<sup>8</sup>. But we dare not be presumptuous.

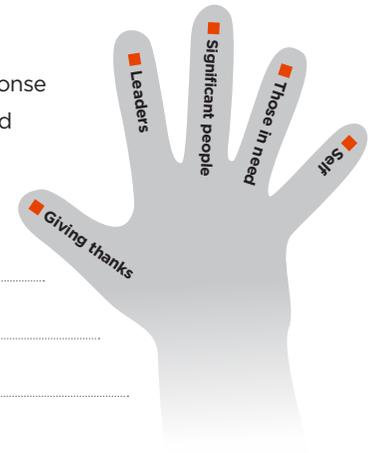
## ■ Application

Have I been presumptuous about God's mercy and grace to me, and how should I deal with it?

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## ■ Prayer

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



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<sup>5</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 278  
<sup>6</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 278  
<sup>7</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 278  
<sup>8</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 278



June 5  
Friday  
2015

# Are My Loved Ones Saved?

## ■ Scripture

Genesis 19:27-29

### ■ Observation

What is the significance of God remembering Abraham and rescuing Lot when He was about to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah (vv. 27-29)?

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### Deeper Reflection

In the morning after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham went “to the place where he had stood before the LORD” (v. 27), where he interceded for Sodom, which concluded with him acknowledging God’s just judgment on the city (Ge 18:22-33). Now Abraham “looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah” and “saw” the aftermath of the divine judgment (v. 28). What was going through Abraham’s mind? “Abraham had relatives there. What happened to them? The reader has been told, but Abraham was still unaware of Lot’s escape.”<sup>13</sup> Verse 29 “answers Abraham’s question”<sup>14</sup>. When God destroyed the wicked cities, “God remembered Abraham” – God’s covenant with Abraham to bless others redemptively in him (Ge 12:3), and his “intercession”<sup>15</sup> in Genesis 18:22-33 – and saved Lot. For some of us, our loved ones have died. They heard the Gospel and we prayed for their salvation, but they did not pray to receive Christ. We may be surprised to see them in heaven. It might be that just before they breathed their last, deep inside their hearts was a very faint unuttered desire to believe in Jesus, and at that point God saved them. God sees the heart, and it is God who saves (cf. Jn 2:23-25). We will not know for now.

## ■ Application

How should I deal with my sad or guilty feelings over my loved ones who died without praying to receive Christ, even though I did what I could to reach out to them and prayed for their salvation?

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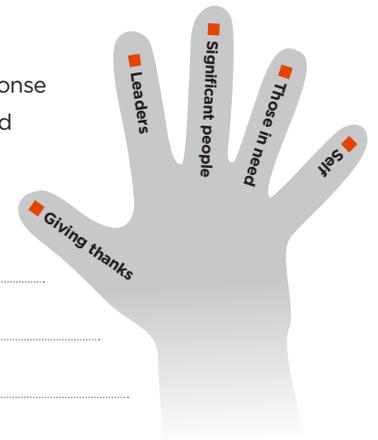
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## ■ Prayer

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



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<sup>13</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, Word Biblical Commentary (Word, 1994), Vol. 2, 59  
<sup>14</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, 59  
<sup>15</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, 59; Allen P. Ross, *Creation & Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis* (Baker, 1998, 1996), 362

June 6  
Saturday  
2015

# Reflecting on a Life Lived in Sodom

## ■ Scripture

Genesis 19:30-38

### ■ Observation

What is the significance of the narrator concluding his story of Lot with verses 30 to 38?

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### Deeper Reflection

“Sodom’s sin was overt in the midst of its attractive normalcy”<sup>16</sup> of eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting and building (Lk 17:28). The “gradual erosion of Lot’s life appears to be directly related to his time in Sodom. The city appeared to influence him more than he was able to influence the city”.<sup>17</sup> “Without succumbing to its grossest forms Lot had become imbued with the spirit of Sodom, his wife disregarded the command concerning looking back, and the daughters showed clearly that they had been deeply affected by the sexual laxity of the city in which they had done their growing up [vv. 30-36].”<sup>18</sup> Lot’s “legacy”, Moab and Ammon (vv. 37-38), “was destined to provide the worst carnal seduction in the history of Israel (that of Baal-Peor, Numbers 25)” and “the cruelest religious perversion”<sup>19</sup> – human sacrifice to “Molech the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon” (1 Ki 11:7; 2 Ki 23:10). “What had started out as a choice to live in comfort and pleasantness enjoying the fat of the land [Ge 13:10-11] had become a nightmare for Lot and his family.”<sup>20</sup> It is a sobering thought: God’s religious people can become Sodom and Gomorrah (Isa 1:10-15).

## ■ Application

How does the way Lot began and ended his life in Sodom challenge me in living my life?

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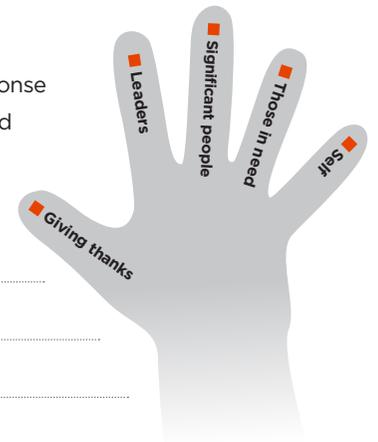
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## ■ Prayer

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



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<sup>16</sup> D. Stuart Briscoe, *Genesis, The Preacher’s Commentary* (Nelson, 1987), 165  
<sup>17</sup> D. Stuart Briscoe, 166  
<sup>18</sup> D. Stuart Briscoe, 165  
<sup>19</sup> Derek Kidner, 136  
<sup>20</sup> D. Stuart Briscoe, 165

June 7  
Sunday  
2015

■ **Scripture** .....

■ **Observation**  
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■ **Application**  
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■ **Prayer**  
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**The Past Week**

**REVIEW**

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

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*What gave me life and what drained me?*

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*How was the Spirit of God at work?*

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**REFLECT**

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

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**RESPOND**

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

COMMIT IN PRAYER

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**FAMILY DEVOTIONAL**  
**June 2015 – Week 1**
**GOD PROTECTS ME**

God is able to protect us from trouble at all times.

**Scripture - Genesis 19:1-29; Psalm 41:1-3**

**1. Activity Bite**

**Props:** Two balloons, clear adhesive tape, a pin

Blow up the first balloon and burst it with the pin. Blow up the second balloon and stick a one-inch long piece of tape on it. Now pierce the balloon at the spot where the tape is.

**2. Chat Time**

**Q1:** What prevents the second balloon from bursting?

**Q2:** According to Psalm 41:1-3, what does God protect us from?

**Q3:** Why does God want to protect us?

**3. Learning Point**

There are many troubles in this world. Some, like sicknesses or accidents, will harm you while others can make you sad. Too often these troubles are too big for you to handle. That is why God wants to protect you, especially when He knows that they will hurt you. He does it because you are His child and He loves you very much. If you choose not to trust in Him, you can get yourself into big trouble.

**4. Action Point**

Prayer is an act of trusting God that He will protect us. List down the things you want God to protect your family from, like sicknesses, school bullies or accidents. Pray together as a family.

**5. Prayer Power**

(Ask your children to pray after you.)

Dear God, thank You for watching over me all the time. I believe that You will protect me from all harm at all times. Please protect my family from [name the items]. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

June 8  
Monday  
2015

## Failing to Shine in the World: Deception

### ■ Scripture

Genesis 20:1-2 with Genesis 12:10-15

### ■ Observation

What does the comparative reading of Genesis 20:1-2 and Genesis 12:10-15 tell you about Abraham?

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### Deeper Reflection

God called Abraham to be a blessing to the nations by walking with Him faithfully and blamelessly (Ge 17:1; 18:17-19). As Abraham's children in Christ (Gal 3:6-9, 14), we all share the same calling: "be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world" (Php 2:15, ESV). Sojourning in Gerar, Abraham lied about his wife to protect his own life (vv. 1-2), and almost brought a curse on Abimelech and his nation (Ge 20:3). Abraham's failure is well summed up in Abimelech's words: "you have brought such great guilt on me and my kingdom" (Ge 20:9, NRSV). An unbeliever saying this to a believer! Abraham committed the same error at the beginning of his pilgrimage (Ge 12:10-15) "and now toward its climactic end"<sup>21</sup>. After more than 20 years<sup>22</sup> of walking with God, and growing into an intimate relationship and fellowship with God (Ge 18:17), Abraham relapsed and committed a faithless scheme. An old sin was repeated. "The evil nature remains in the believer"<sup>23</sup> (cf. Gal 5:16-17). We see Abraham in the mirror. This is not an excuse, but an encouragement in our imperfect walk with God, that even Abraham, the father of faith, also failed sometimes.

### ■ Application

How does Abraham's growth journey help me in my own growth journey?

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### ■ Prayer

My all-seeing and all-knowing God, how can I know all the sins lurking in my heart? Cleanse me from these hidden faults. Keep Your servant from deliberate sins! Don't let them control me. Then I will be free of guilt and innocent of great sin.<sup>24</sup> Help me to keep my eyes always on You, and be at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.<sup>25</sup> Amen.



<sup>21</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 283

<sup>22</sup> Abraham was in his seventies in Gen 12:10-15 (see 12:4), and now was 100 years old (17:1, 17).

<sup>23</sup> W. H. Griffith Thomas, *The Pentateuch: Chapter by Chapter* (Kregel, 1985), 48

<sup>24</sup> Psalm 19:12-13 (NLT)

<sup>25</sup> Psalm 16:8

June 9  
Tuesday  
2015

# Failing to Shine in the World: Intervention

## ■ Scripture

Genesis 20:1-6

### ■ Observation

What do you learn about God in verses 1 to 6?

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### Deeper Reflection

It was just before the birth of Isaac (Ge 21:1-3) that Abraham put God’s promise in jeopardy, “traded away for personal safety”<sup>26</sup>. God intervened: “But God came to Abimelech in a dream” (v. 3a). God did not rebuke Abraham for his faithlessness and folly, but He went after Abimelech instead. God’s first word to Abimelech was: “You are as good as dead” (“imminent death”<sup>27</sup>) – for taking Sarah, a married woman (v. 3b); that is, near committing “the crime of adultery”<sup>28</sup>. God does not seem to be acting rightly and logically. What do we see about God here? God is sovereign. He is free to act as He wills (Ps 115:3). Abimelech protested that he “was implicated in a guilty offence by Abraham’s deception”<sup>29</sup> (v. 5a). Abimelech was still wrong in taking a married woman, although no sexual offence was committed, but Abraham was in the greater wrong. Abraham started it all, but God “overlooked”<sup>30</sup> his failure and took Abimelech to task instead. However, the sovereign God is righteous. God acknowledged that Abimelech took Sarah with “a clear conscience and clean hands” (v. 5b, NIV): “Yes, I know that” (v. 6a). And God will not destroy an innocent nation, which was Abimelech’s concern (v. 4).

## ■ Application

What effect(s) does knowing God as He is revealed in verses 1 to 6 have on my relationship with Him?

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## ■ Prayer

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

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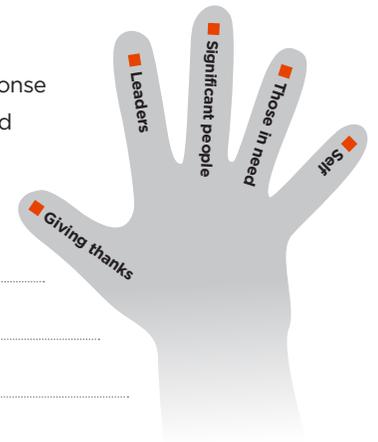
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<sup>26</sup> Derek Kidner, 137  
<sup>27</sup> Kenneth A. Matthews, *Genesis 11:27 – 50:26*, The New American Commentary (Broadman & Holman, 2005), Vol. 1B, 252  
<sup>28</sup> Kenneth A. Matthews, 1B, 252  
<sup>29</sup> Allen P. Ross, 371  
<sup>30</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 283

June 10  
Wednesday  
2015

# Failing to Shine in the World: Protection

## ■ Scripture

Genesis 20:6-8

### ■ Observation

What do you observe about God in verses 6 to 8?

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### Deeper Reflection

Genesis 20:1-6 shows a double protection in the divine intervention. God protected Abimelech from sinning against Him (v. 6b). God did so because Abimelech was a “God-fearing king”<sup>31</sup>, in whose eyes “adultery...was illegitimate”<sup>32</sup>. “Adultery was considered a ‘great sin’ [v. 9] among many Semite groups, as evidenced at Ugrit and in Egyptian marriage contracts”<sup>33</sup>. “God Himself was the one restraining Abimelech’s sexual appetite so that He did not permit the king to even ‘touch’ Sarah.”<sup>34</sup> The Hebrew word for “kept” (v. 6) “describes divine interference in the evil actions of humans (e.g. 1 Sa 25:39)”<sup>35</sup>. God protected Sarah from being defiled by Abimelech (v. 6b), even though she and Abraham caused trouble for Abimelech and his kingdom. One may argue that Abimelech deserved God’s protection, but not the covenant couple. God “extends justice to Abimelech but mercy to Abraham and Sarah”<sup>36</sup>. But we dare not be presumptuous about God’s mercy, while we live humbly at His mercy (Ro 12:1; Heb 4:15-16). We may ask: Why did God keep Abimelech from sinning, but not Abraham and Sarah from deception and save all the trouble? Only the wise God (Ro 16:27) alone knows why.

## ■ Application

How does learning about God’s intervention help me to grow in my faith in Him?

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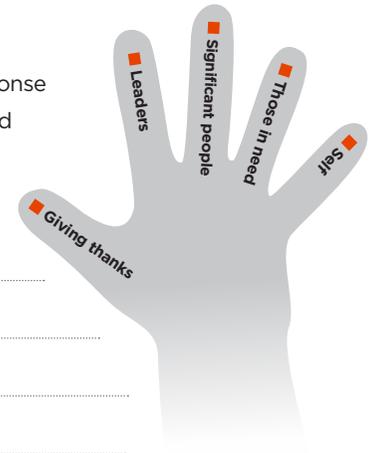
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## ■ Prayer

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



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<sup>31</sup> Bruce K. Walke, 283  
<sup>32</sup> Kenneth A. Matthews, 1B, 252  
<sup>33</sup> Bruce K. Walke, 286;  
<sup>34</sup> Kenneth A. Matthews, 1B, 253  
<sup>35</sup> Kenneth A. Matthews, 1B, 253  
<sup>36</sup> Bruce K. Walke, 288

June 11  
Thursday  
2015

## Failing to Shine in the World: Confrontation

### ■ Scripture

Genesis 20:9-13

### ■ Observation

What does the dialogue between Abimelech and Abraham in verses 9 to 13 tell us about Abraham who was called to be a blessing to the nations?

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### Deeper Reflection

Called to be a blessing to the nations, Abraham became a stumbling block instead of a shining light to Abimelech and his "nation" (Ge 20:4). What can we learn from Abraham's negative example in verses 9 to 13? **Believers putting self before God:** Abraham lied to protect his own life (Ge 20:2, 11). Here the shining light in the world began to dim and extinguish. **Believers bringing trouble to unbelievers:** "You have done to me things ought not to be done" (v. 9). Abraham's wrongdoing had adverse effects on unbelievers, which he did not expect or consider: "imminent death"<sup>37</sup> (Ge 20:3), barrenness (Ge 20:18) and everyone became "greatly frightened" (Ge 20:8). When we put self before God, naturally we put self before others. **Believers being rebuked by unbelievers (v. 9):** Abimelech's two questions and one accusation in confronting Abraham showed the weight of his rebuke. **Believers justifying the wrong done (vv. 10-13):** There was no apology. Instead, Abraham "tried to justify his conduct, but this was really a condemnation"<sup>38</sup>. "Through it all, Abimelech appeared more righteous than Abraham."<sup>39</sup> "But what a sad thing to see, the character of an unbeliever shining out in a superior way to that of a believer."<sup>40</sup>

### ■ Application

If I have been a stumbling block to others around me, what change(s) do I need to make?

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### ■ Prayer

God, I am an imperfect light in the world You have called me to be in. But help me to be a worthy one that still shines with the light and love of Jesus in me: in how I live my life authentically before people around me at home, in the church and in society; in how I relate with them redemptively; in how I serve them humbly, genuinely seeking their well-being. Amen.



<sup>37</sup> Kenneth A. Matthews, IB, 252

<sup>38</sup> W. H. Griffith Thomas, 48

<sup>39</sup> Allen P. Ross, 372

<sup>40</sup> W. H. Griffith Thomas, 48

June 12  
Friday  
2015

# Failing to Shine in the World: Restoration

## ■ Scripture

Genesis 20:14-16

### ■ Observation

What do you observe about God in Abimelech's dealings with Abraham in verses 14 to 16?

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### Deeper Reflection

After rightly rebuking Abraham (Ge 20:9-13), Abimelech "restored" his wife to him (v. 14) as God commanded (Ge 20:7). But God did more than just restore Sarah to Abraham – a rescue from a danger caused by their faithlessness and folly. God blessed them with "unexpected and undeserved riches"<sup>41</sup>. In Genesis 12:10-20, God blessed Abraham in Egypt despite his deceptive scheme, and now in Gerar, God again enriched him in spite of the same "sinful, unbelieving deception"<sup>42</sup> (v. 14). In Egypt, Pharaoh expelled Abraham after he had enriched him, but now in Gerar, Abimelech offered him the pick of his "royal pasturelands"<sup>43</sup> (v. 15), and added "a thousand shekels of silver" – "a fabulously large sum"<sup>44</sup> of money, "to restore" Sarah's "violated honour"<sup>45</sup> (v. 16). "A Babylonian labourer, usually paid a half shekel per month, would have to work 167 years to earn such a sum."<sup>46</sup> What Abimelech did to Abraham "reads almost sarcastically"<sup>47</sup>: "Abimelech is at his best, Abraham at his worst."<sup>48</sup> But it reflects God's unfathomable incredible grace! "In this history [Genesis 20], the Holy Spirit presents to us a remarkable instance, both of the infirmity of man, and the grace of God."<sup>49</sup>

## ■ Application

What does God's unfathomable incredible grace shown to Abraham mean to me personally?

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## ■ Prayer

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



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<sup>41</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 287  
<sup>42</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 283  
<sup>43</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 284  
<sup>44</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 287  
<sup>45</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 285  
<sup>46</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 287  
<sup>47</sup> W. H. Griffith Thomas, 48  
<sup>48</sup> W. H. Griffith Thomas, 48  
<sup>49</sup> John Calvin, *A Commentary on Genesis* (Banner of Truth, 1965), 521

June 13  
Saturday  
2015

# Failing to Shine in the World: Intercession

## ■ Scripture

Genesis 20:7, 17-18

### ■ Observation

What is the significance of Abraham as God's prophet interceding for Abimelech (vv. 7, 17-18) in the context of all that happened to Abraham, Sarah and Abimelech in Genesis 20?

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### Deeper Reflection

We must capture the theological significance of the ironies in Genesis 20. In "selfishness"<sup>50</sup>, Abraham faithlessly lied (again!), exposed his wife to potential sexual violation, put God's promise and purpose in jeopardy, and placed a man of integrity in a position to innocently commit "a great sin" and bring upon himself and his nation a divine curse. Then, rather strangely, God said to Abimelech: "he [Abraham] is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you will live" (vv. 7, 17-18). Abraham as a prophet was to be "a man of God, having received God's revelation, mediates God's word (Ex 4:15; 7:1)."<sup>51</sup> But "how far short of his title Abraham had just fallen in speaking to deceive"<sup>52</sup>. And to God, the key to Abimelech's deliverance from his troubles was the intercession of the very man who caused him to have these troubles! It doesn't seem to make sense. Abraham "prays as God's prophet, responsible to be a blessing to the nations"<sup>53</sup>. "Once again, though the human partner is unfaithful, God is faithful. He does not cast aside His flawed saint but restores him in order to work His elective purposes through him."<sup>54</sup> The Church of God (cf. 1 Co 1:2) may stumble before the world, but God still saves the world through His Church.

## ■ Application

How will I go about being a witness of Jesus Christ in the world (Ac 1:8) despite all my weaknesses and shortcomings?

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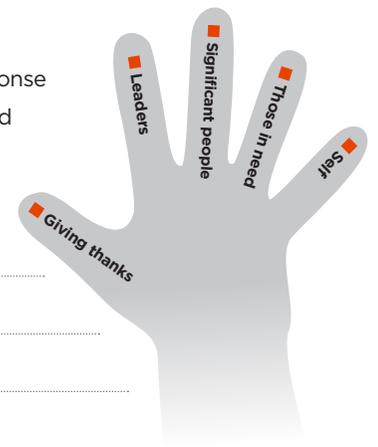
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## ■ Prayer

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



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<sup>50</sup> W. H. Griffith Thomas, 48  
<sup>51</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 286  
<sup>52</sup> Derek Kidner, 138  
<sup>53</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 288  
<sup>54</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 282

June 14  
Sunday  
2015

■ 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?*

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**RESPOND**

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

COMMIT IN PRAYER

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**FAMILY DEVOTIONAL**  
**June 2015 – Week 2**
**LIGHTEN YOUR HEART**

Give your worries to God. He will carry them for you.

**Scripture - Matthew 11:28-30**

**1. Activity Bite**

**Props:** An egg, a cup, water, salt, a teaspoon

Put an egg into a cup filled to three quarters with water. This egg will sink. Add about four teaspoons of salt into the water and stir slowly until all the salt is dissolved. The egg should gradually rise to the top.

**2. Chat Time**

**Q1:** Do you ever feel that your heart is heavy with worry and fear like the sinking egg?

**Q2:** If worry and fear make our hearts heavy, what do you think will lighten them?

**Q3:** How can we give our worries and fears to Jesus so that our hearts will be light again?

**3. Learning Point**

Worry and fear will cause us to lose our joy. We may lose our sleep and get stressed too. Sometimes we may even mistrust people and think that they are against us. It may feel like our hearts are very heavy. But God wants us to have His joy. He doesn't want us to carry around this heavy heart every day. We can give our worries and fears to Him. Tell Him how you need His help. He will carry your burdens for you. In return He will give you His peace and joy so that you will feel that your heart is light again.

**4. Action Point**

Write down all the things that make you worry or fearful on a piece of paper. Fold the paper and say a prayer to God, telling Him that you want to give what you have written to Him. Crush the piece of paper and throw it away to signify that God has heard your prayer.

**5. Prayer Power**

(Ask your children to pray after you.)

Thank You, Jesus, for carrying all my worries and fears. I am happy because I can have Your peace and joy. I will praise You always. Amen.

June 15  
Monday  
2015

# The Father Who Sees

## ■ Scripture

Luke 15:1-2, 11-32

## ■ Observation

Note the audience of this parable. How does the familiar parable of the lost son gain further significance in light of its intended audience?

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## Deeper Reflection

As we lead up to Father's Day, we examine the well-known parable of the lost son. While it is familiar, the story takes on deeper meaning, given that Jesus was responding to the self-righteous Pharisees questioning His association with sinners. "Through this parable Jesus challenges what nearly everyone has ever thought about God, sin and salvation. His story reveals the destructive self-centeredness of the younger brother, but it also condemns the elder brother's moralistic life in the strongest terms."<sup>55</sup> In other words, Jesus is addressing not just the sin of the two brothers, but also that of the Pharisees. It is against this background of utter lostness that verse 20 speaks so evocatively (strongly, emotively, and compellingly) of the father's heart: "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion." The word "saw" is *horáō* in Greek which means to see clearly, to perceive. Our Father sees through to the depths of our wretched hearts, and yet He still has compassion on us and embraces us. "God knows you are a sinner, but your sins do not surprise Him. Nor do they reduce in the slightest His love for you."<sup>56</sup>

## ■ Application

Remember that our sins do not surprise God. In which area(s) of my life do I need to find God's compassions, forgiveness and love?

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## ■ Prayer

Father God, you see me as who I really am and yet you still love me the same. "As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear Him."<sup>57</sup> Open my eyes and my heart to comprehend the depths of the Father's love. Move me from mere head knowledge to a heart realisation of Your love. Amen.



<sup>55</sup> Timothy Keller, *The Prodigal God*

<sup>56</sup> David Benner, *Surrendered to Love*

<sup>57</sup> Psalm 103:13

June 16  
Tuesday  
2015

# The Father Who Waits

## ■ Scripture

Luke 15:11-20, Isaiah 49:15,16

## ■ Observation

What is significant about the father's actions in response to the son's demand for inheritance in Luke 15?

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## Deeper Reflection

In the parable, there is much detail about the actions of the younger son. From his first request of the father's property until his return and repentance, there is a strong narrative arc about his rebellious, wilful and wastrel ways and his eventual awakening and return. However, in comparison, little is said of the father at first except that he acceded quietly to his son's incredibly disrespectful demand. What did the father do in the meantime? The silence implies that the father waited for his son's return. To wait for a wayward child to return – this is one of the most difficult things for a parent to do. Those who think of the father as an over-indulgent parent miss the essence of love. The father understood that a wayward heart cannot be forced into submission. A heart that truly loves is one who loves not out of duty or obligation, but out of free choice. Therein lies the powerful theology of a forbearing, patient Father who waits for us to choose to return. He has engraved us on the palm of His hands (Isa 49:16a).

## ■ Application

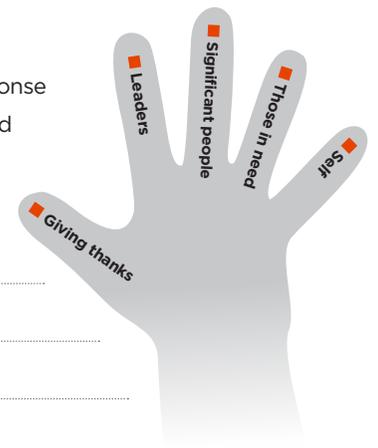
God is our forbearing Father who lovingly waits for us to return. What are the areas in your life where you have been running away from God?

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## ■ Prayer

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

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June 17  
Wednesday  
2015

# The Father Who Grieves

## ■ Scripture

Luke 15:11-13, 28-30

## ■ Observation

What similarities or contrasts can you observe between the actions of the two sons?

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## Deeper Reflection

Much has been said of the wild-living son, where he only used his father as a means to his ends. What about the brother? On the surface, the older son's unhappiness seems justified due to his unwavering obedience as compared to his brother. But to look into his inner heart, we must ask for what reason he obeyed all these years. The tone of the bitter accusation of "yet you never gave me a young goat" implies the older brother's expectation of reward for his obedience. In other words, the older brother served the father for a reward, not necessarily out of love. One could say both brothers used the father to get what they wanted. They only wanted what the father could give. Luke 15:31 is particularly poignant in the father's response to the elder son: "Son, you are always with me..." Although the elder son was physically present with his father, his heart was far away. How it must have grieved the father's heart to know his children only wanted his gifts, not a relationship. Yet, though it grieved him, the father still waited, still longed for and still pursued both wayward children. Even more so, our heartbroken Heavenly Father grieves, waits and longs for the return of our wayward hearts.

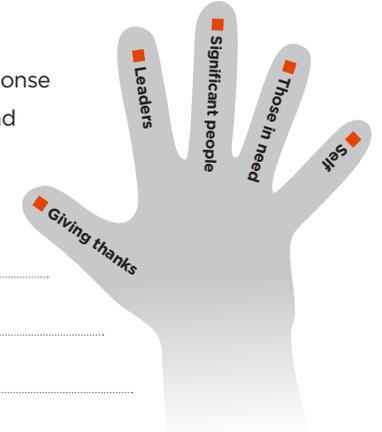
## ■ Application

Our heart is deceitful above all things (cf. Jer 17:9). What are the areas that I have to repent from "using God" when I should be loving Him?

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## ■ Prayer

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



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June 19  
Friday  
2015

# The Father Who Restores

## ■ Scripture

Luke 15:18-19, 21; Psalm 103:8-14

## ■ Observation

What do you observe about the younger son's beliefs when he decided to return to the father?

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## Deeper Reflection

The younger son came to a point where he finally recognised his sin. But in the midst of his repentance, he held certain beliefs about his sonship – “I am no longer worthy to be called your son.” To him, he had to live up to a certain standard of righteousness to be worthy enough to be a son. The assumption is that his actions negated his relationship with his father – his sin disqualified him from his sonship. But his father’s actions showed him otherwise. The father received the son’s return with unconditional acceptance, without recrimination or condemnation. When we sin, we have to live with its consequences but condemnation is not God’s intent for us when we repent. “The presence of anger does not mean the absence of love – particularly in God.”<sup>59</sup> God may hate sin, but his love does not depend on our behaviour. In fact, the father’s celebration of his return with a robe, a ring, shoes and the fattened calf is a sign of the restored sonship to the father. When we return wholeheartedly, Psalm 103 reminds us that our Father God will remove all our transgressions from us and restore us.

## ■ Application

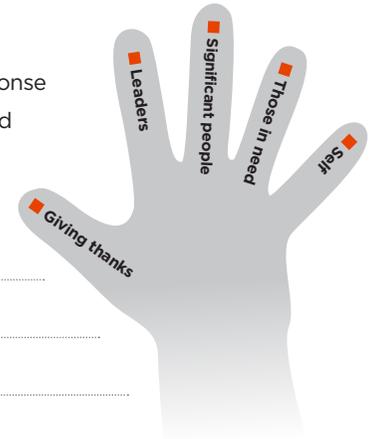
In what area(s) of your life do you require God's restoration? Surrender them to the Lord knowing that in your repentance, there is no longer any condemnation for those who are in Christ (Ro 8:1).

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## ■ Prayer

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

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<sup>59</sup> David G. Benner, *Surrender to Love* (IVP Books, April 28 2003)

June 20  
Saturday  
2015

# The Father Who Rejoices

## ■ Scripture

Luke 15:6-7, 9-10, 22-24, 31-32

## ■ Observation

What does each parable end with and what is its significance in our understanding of God?

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## Deeper Reflection

That which was lost is now found. That which was dead is alive again. In God's eyes, nothing brings greater pleasure and joy to His heart than a sinner returning to Him. When we think of who God is, many of us have the picture of a high and cosmic Creator God or the picture of a Master whom we must have allegiance to. Even if we are able to relate to God as a Father, our mental picture of Him may be that of a father who deserves respect but perhaps appears distant. Again, verse 20 reveals the opposite of a distant father. This father "ran, and embraced him and kissed him." The Greek word "kissed" that is used here actually means "kissed much". It is an overwhelmingly emotional language that speaks of the Father's joy. And what exactly does the Father take joy in? The Father God created us for to have a relationship with Him, and so He rejoices in the restoration of relationships to its rightful place. He takes joy in his children's hearts being finally where they should be, in a righted Fatherhood and a restored relationship.

## ■ Application

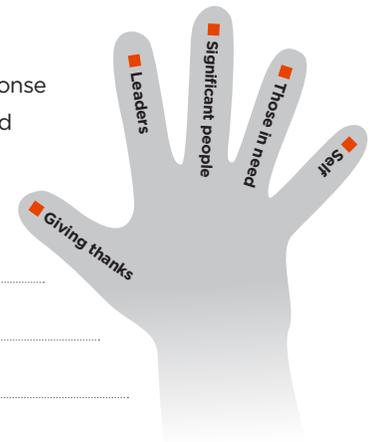
God takes a high view of His relationship with us. Do I find it difficult to believe that God would rejoice over me? What is it about my self-perception that prevents this?

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## ■ Prayer

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

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**June 21**  
Sunday  
**2015**

■ **Scripture** .....

■ **Observation**  
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■ **Application**  
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■ **Prayer**  
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**The Past Week**

**REVIEW**

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

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*What gave me life and what drained me?*

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*How was the Spirit of God at work?*

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**REFLECT**

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

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**RESPOND**

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

COMMIT IN PRAYER

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**FAMILY DEVOTIONAL**  
**June 2015 – Week 3**
**FATHER'S DAY**

He is not Superman, but he's my dad.

**Scripture - Joshua 1:9**

**1. Activity Bite**

**Props:** Paper, pen or pencil

Write down on a piece of paper all the things that your dad can do, which Superman can't. For example, "My dad comes home to be with us; Superman can't because this is not his house." Or "My dad changed my diapers when I was a baby; Superman can't because he can't stand the smell of my poo."

**2. Chat Time**

**Q1:** Look at your list. Do you think other dads will be willing to do these things for you?

**Q2:** Why do you think your dad is willing to do so much for you?

**Q3:** From Joshua 1:9, how do you think God can help your dad to be a better father?

**3. Learning Point**

You may have your own idea of a perfect father – one who is the most fun person to be around, who plays with you and helps you with your homework, or one who is there for you every time. But you know that this doesn't happen all the time. The reality is that he is not perfect and is trying to be the best father he can be. No one is perfect other than Jesus, but God will help your dad to be a better person. A family can only be strong when Jesus is the centre of everything.

**4. Action Point**

Think of one thing that will make your dad happy. It can be a short note of appreciation or letting him watch whatever he wants to on TV. You can create it or make it happen with the help of your mother.

**5. Prayer Power**

(Ask your children to pray after you.)

Dear God, my dad may not get everything right but I am thankful that he takes care of us. I pray that You will help him to be a better person every day. Amen.

June 22  
Monday  
2015

## In His Time

### ■ Scripture

Genesis 21:1-2

### ■ Observation

What do you learn about God in verses 1 and 2?

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### Deeper Reflection

Abraham waited on God for 25 years before God fulfilled His promise of a son to him at His “appointed time” (Ge 21:2). I had a painful break up of a relationship on Christmas Day 1980. On 20 January 1981, I wrote a poem, *Jesus Alone Knows*, to help me walk the difficult journey.

Jesus alone knows about my sorrows,  
Who wisely on me His best bestows.  
Though His mysterious ways I do not know,  
Him must I just faithfully follow.  
Trusting Him for all my tomorrows,  
I wait on Him His plans to unfold.  
Though my burdens make my pace so slow,  
His love and care for me never grow cold.  
Onto Jesus I must tightly hold,  
By His grace striving toward His goal.

I had to wait for 10 years before God kindly gave me a great life partner. The long wait was not easy. But God “made everything beautiful in its time” (Ecc 3:11, NIV). “Waiting on the Lord is worthwhile because of what He is going to do for us...waiting is that divine activity of expecting God to work. And He never disappoints...He’s patient with you. Why not be patient with Him and let Him work in His time?”<sup>60</sup>

### ■ Application

What is my thinking and attitude about having to wait on God in certain areas in my life?

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### ■ Prayer

Lord, I wait patiently for You. Turn to me and hear my cry. Lift me out of the pit of despair, out of the mud and the mire. Set my feet on solid ground and steady me as I continue to walk with You.<sup>61</sup> I trust in You that in Your love and wisdom You will make all things beautiful to Your glory in Your time. Amen.



<sup>60</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *Prayer, Praise & Promises: A Daily Walk Through the Psalms* ((Baker, 1992, 2011), 107  
<sup>61</sup> Adapted from Psalm 40:1-2

June 23  
Tuesday  
2015

# Who Would Have Said?

## ■ Scripture

Genesis 21:1-7

### ■ Observation

*How does Sarah's experience with God and her response reflect her understanding of God in verses 1 to 7?*

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### Deeper Reflection

When Sarah gave birth to Isaac, she said “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children?” (v. 7a). “Who would have said?” The obvious answer to Sarah’s question is: “No one, except God.” Perhaps, you are going through certain challenges in your life which are beyond your control. What do you say about your life situation? What do people say about it? What you or people say may be right or wrong. But what is surely true, and really matters, is what God says. **Rely on God’s Word:** We cannot miss the strong emphasis on the Word of God “as He said”, “as He promised” (v. 1), “of which God had spoken to him” (v. 2). This emphasis expresses “the quiet precision of His control”<sup>62</sup>. When God has spoken but yet to act, He is still in sovereign control and not late. **Release to God’s work:** “Yet I have borne him a son” (v. 7b). Begetting in barrenness can only, and has only, to be God’s work. So let go and let God. **Rest in God’s way:** God chose to fulfil His promise of a son to Abraham “in his old age” – the idea is repeated thrice (vv. 2, 5, 7). God’s way is the best way.

## ■ Application

*What is my understanding of God when I go through challenges in my life that are beyond my control?*

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## ■ Prayer

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

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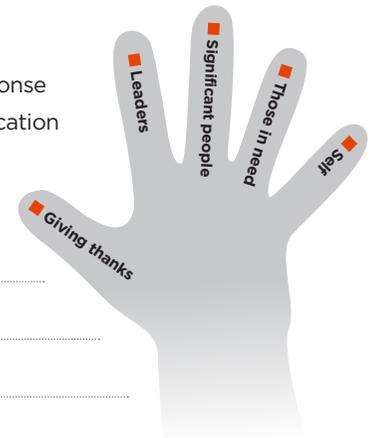
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<sup>62</sup> Derek Kidner, 139

June 24  
Wednesday  
2015

# From Delight to Distress

## ■ Scripture

Genesis 21:8-13

### ■ Observation

What do you learn about God in verses 8 to 13?

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### Deeper Reflection

Isaac “grew and was weaned”, and Abraham celebrated the occasion with “a great feast” (v. 8). Then Sarah saw Ishmael “making fun of her son Isaac” (v. 9, NLT). Ishmael might just have been “a typical nasty big brother engaging in adolescent misbehaviour”<sup>63</sup>. But it was not funny to Sarah; it made her furious. For that, Sarah demanded Abraham get rid of Hagar and her son (v. 10). Delight turned into distress for Abraham (“greatly distressed”, v. 11). The great delight that comes from God’s marvellous blessings (Ge 21:1-8) can suddenly turn into great distress, even when we are walking faithfully with God. But it was also “the result of Abraham’s mistake and sin [Ge 16:2-4].”<sup>64</sup> Feelings of regret and guilt may have flooded his heart. But one must face the reality that what’s done cannot be undone. Abraham was caught in between the two wives whom he loved: “What should I do?” Then God spoke: “Let Hagar and Ishmael go. I will take care of the consequences” (vv. 12-13). God is such a gracious God. Thus, the last word is not the human “greatly distressed” (v. 11), but the divine “do not be distressed” (v. 12).

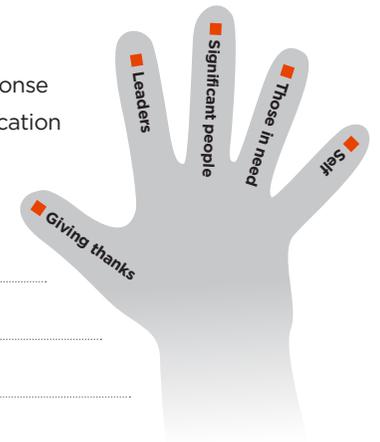
## ■ Application

How should I handle my great distress with God?

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## ■ Prayer

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



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<sup>63</sup> D. Stuart Briscoe, 178  
<sup>64</sup> W. H. Griffith Thomas, 49



June 26  
Friday  
2015

# From Stumbling Block to Shining Light

## ■ Scripture

Genesis 21:22-34

### ■ Observation

What do you observe about Abraham in his encounter with Abimelech, as being called by God to be a blessing to the nations (vv. 22-34)?

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### Deeper Reflection

We must view Abraham’s encounter with Abimelech in verses 22 to 34 in light of God calling Abraham to be a blessing to the nations. We may reflect on two questions here. **What does the world say about the Church?** What the world says about the Church depends on what the world sees in the Church. Does the world say this about the Church: “God is with you in everything you do” (v. 22, NIV; cf. Ge 26:28)? Abimelech saw “the supernatural blessing on Abraham, an alien shepherd”<sup>66</sup>, that reflected God’s presence with him, so much so that Abimelech sought to make a “non-aggression pact”<sup>67</sup> with Abraham, who accepted it (vv. 23-24). **What does the Church show to the world?** Abraham mentioned to Abimelech “a grievance”<sup>68</sup> over possession of a well dug by him (vv. 25-26) – “a longstanding complaint”<sup>69</sup>. But Abraham saw the situation needed to be healed, not heated. So, “though he was the aggrieved party, Abraham provided the animals for the covenant ceremony”<sup>70</sup> (v. 27). God has called His Church to be “peacemakers” (Mt 5:9; Ro 14:19) with “the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Co 5:18-19). And here, Abraham rose from being a stumbling block to the world (Ge 20) to being a shining light!

## ■ Application

What do both believers and unbelievers around me see in my life and say about me?

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## ■ Prayer

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

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<sup>66</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 299  
<sup>67</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 299  
<sup>68</sup> Joyce G. Baldwin, The Message of Genesis 12-50, The Bible Speaks Today (IVP, 1986), 88  
<sup>69</sup> D. Stuart Briscoe, 180; also Derek Kidner, 141  
<sup>70</sup> Joyce G. Baldwin, 88

June 27  
Saturday  
2015

# Growing Journey of Knowing God

## ■ Scripture

Genesis 14:18-20; 17:1; 21:33

## ■ Observation

What do you observe about God and Abraham in verses 18 to 20, Genesis 17:1 and 21:33?

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## Deeper Reflection

Knowing God is a growing journey. Abraham came to know God at different points of his journey of walking with God. Abraham came to know God as “God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth” (vv. 18-20), then “God Almighty” (Ge 17:1), and now “the Everlasting God” (Ge 21:33). We cannot know God unless God makes Himself known to us. We see here that God revealed Himself, not in propositional truths, but in the narrative of life. This is true throughout Scripture. Each of these divine revelations to Abraham was of relevance and significance to him in his relationship with God, God’s calling and purposes for his life, and how he lived in the world. Can you sense the immense transcendence of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth, God Almighty and the Everlasting God, over and around the finite Abraham? And this God was Abraham’s God, who was very personal to him. Studying Scripture for theology is necessary for God has revealed Himself in Scripture. But in theological study, we must always bear this in mind: God is not an idea to be studied, but a person to relate with. Therefore, theology has to be primarily relational in nature, not just conceptual.

## ■ Application

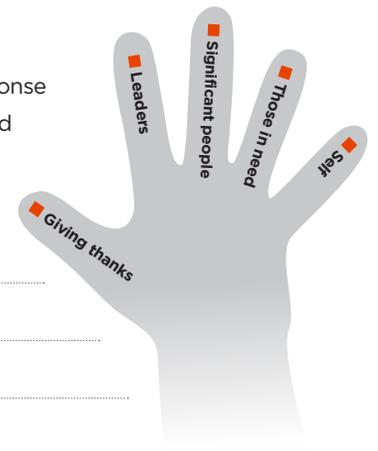
How have I grown to know God more, theologically and personally, in my Christian life?

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## ■ Prayer

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

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**June 28**  
Sunday  
2015

■ **Scripture** .....

■ **Observation**

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■ **Application**

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■ **Prayer**

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**The Past Week**

**REVIEW**

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

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*What gave me life and what drained me?*

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*How was the Spirit of God at work?*

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**REFLECT**

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

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**RESPOND**

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

COMMIT IN PRAYER

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**FAMILY DEVOTIONAL**  
**June 2015 - Week 4**

**GOD IS KIND**

God shows His kindness even through the smallest things in life.

**Scripture - Psalm 36:7**

**1. Activity Bite**

**Props:** A bowl, sweets or chocolate

Fill a bowl with gummy sweets or pieces of chocolate. Take turns to share one kind thing that God has done in the past few days. For every item you share, you can take one treat.

**2. Chat Time**

**Q1:** God shows His kindness even in the smallest things in life. What are some of them?

**Q2:** Why does God want to show kindness to every man?

**Q3:** How can we help non-Christians to experience God's kindness too?

**3. Learning Point**

Kindness is part of God's nature. He wants to do kind things for every man, even though many reject Him. He shows His kindness even in the smallest things in life, for example, giving us shoes to wear or a bed to sleep in. His acts of kindness can be different for different people because He is a personal God. So, stop comparing but be thankful for all the things you have now because they are all God's personal acts of kindness to you.

**4. Action Point**

Choose three things that you know are God's acts of kindness. Thank Him for these things. Do this everyday for the whole week.

**5. Prayer Power**

(Ask your children to pray after you.)

Dear God, I am so thankful because You are very kind to me and my family. Help me to appreciate what I have now. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

June 29  
Monday  
2015

## Glory of the Holy Triune God!

### ■ Scripture

*Ephesians 1:3-14*

### ■ Observation

What do you understand from Paul's doxology in verses 3 to 14?

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### Deeper Reflection

"The whole paragraph" of Ephesians 1:3-14<sup>71</sup> "is a paean of praise, a doxology"<sup>72</sup>. It begins by blessing God for blessing us with "every conceivable blessing"<sup>73</sup> (v. 3), interspersed with three exclamations of praise to God's glory (vv. 6, 12, 14). There is "a deliberate reference to the Trinity"<sup>74</sup> in verse 3: The "origin"<sup>75</sup> of the blessings is God the Father, its "sphere"<sup>76</sup> is the Son ("in Christ"), and its "nature"<sup>77</sup> is of the Spirit ("Spiritual"). The doxology is expanded in "a trinitarian structure"<sup>78</sup>: "the Father electing (vv. 4-6), the Son redeeming (vv. 7-12) and the Spirit sealing (vv. 13-14)."<sup>79</sup> The acts of the Triune God spans from pre-creation in election and predestination (vv. 4-6); through history accomplishing redemption through Christ's death (v. 7), and the Spirit effecting salvation in believers (vv. 13-14); and into the future of uniting all things in Christ in the fullness of the time (vv. 9-10). And now in our increasingly chaotic world, God "works all things after the counsel of His will" (v. 11). In Christ we receive "every Spiritual blessing" (v. 3). But, who are we to be such receivers? It is only according to the riches of God's glorious grace, freely bestowed and lavished on us in Christ (vv. 6-8). This is the glory of the Holy Triune God!

### ■ Application

How have I captured God's glory in my heart as manifested in verses 3 to 14?

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### ■ Prayer

Eternal God, who is, who was and who is to come, who creates and holds all things in heaven and on earth, of past, present, future and eternity. In Your infinite greatness and glory, You have become my Heavenly Father in Christ, dwelling in my heart in the Spirit, and walking with me as father and child to the praise of the glory of Your grace! Thank You, my Father. Amen.



<sup>71</sup> In the original Greek, Ephesians 1:3-14 constitutes a single complex sentence.  
<sup>72</sup> John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, The Bible Speaks Today (IVP, 1979), 32  
<sup>73</sup> John Stott, 32  
<sup>74</sup> John Stott, 32  
<sup>75</sup> John Stott, 32  
<sup>76</sup> John Stott, 32  
<sup>77</sup> John Stott, 33  
<sup>78</sup> John Stott, 33  
<sup>79</sup> John Stott, 33

June 30  
Tuesday  
2015

# Knowing Him More and More Fully

## ■ Scripture

Ephesians 1:15-17

### ■ Observation

What is the significance of what Paul asks of God for the Church in verses 15 to 17 in light of Ephesians 1:3-14?

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### Deeper Reflection

“God has blessed us with every Spiritual blessing...in Christ” (Eph 1:3). Observe the terms “has blessed”, “every” and “in Christ”. God has already given all the blessings to us in Christ, and thus, we have them all. We only need to see and know them, to live in them and live them out in “loyalty to Christ and love to men”<sup>80</sup> (v. 15). Having known what God has blessed us with, we need “to grasp the fullness of this blessing”<sup>81</sup>. Thus for Paul, following his “great benediction”<sup>82</sup> (Eph 1:3-14) is his “great intercession”<sup>83</sup> (Eph 1:15-23). And the first thing Paul seeks for the Church in his intercession is this: “You come to know Him more and more fully”<sup>84</sup> (v. 17). Why? If the Spiritual blessings given to us in Christ is to God’s glory (vv. 3-14), then at the heart of this blessing is to know “the Father of glory” (v. 17) and live for His glory. But such personal knowledge of God, in understanding and experience, “is impossible without revelation”<sup>85</sup> that comes from “the Spirit of wisdom and revelation” (v. 17). “Wisdom” is “the wisdom of the deep things of God”<sup>86</sup> (vv. 8b-9). Knowing God must be our life’s purpose, priority, passion and pursuit, making verse 17 our constant prayer.

## ■ Application

How can I make knowing God my life’s purpose, priority, passion and pursuit?

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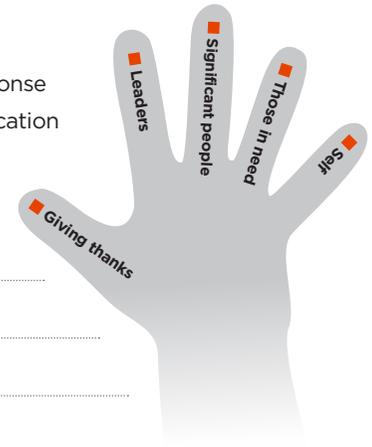
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## ■ Prayer

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



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<sup>80</sup> William Barclay, *The Letters to the Galatians and the Ephesians*, The Daily Study Bible (Saint Andrews Press, 1958; Indian Edition, TPI), 88  
<sup>81</sup> John Stott, 52  
<sup>82</sup> John Stott, 51  
<sup>83</sup> John Stott, 51  
<sup>84</sup> William Barclay, 88  
<sup>85</sup> John Stott, 54  
<sup>86</sup> William Barclay, 90









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