

"Suppose one of you want to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it?"

Luke 14:28-29 NIV

DAY
1

➤ **Reading passage:** *Luke 14:25-35*

Sit Down First And Count The Cost

Ramu was born poor. He had a small job in a grocery shop. All his life, he dreamt of making a house of his own. He bought a piece of land with all his savings. With the money borrowed from many sources, he laid a foundation for a three-bedroom house. However, when the foundation work was over, he did not have money to carry on the work. He fell into utter poverty as he lost his job in the meantime. His wife and children were starving. As he failed to pay rent for many months, he had to leave the house he was staying in! Finally, he had to move to a tent near the "foundation" he laid for his dream house; and that too with the help of some good people. Those who were passing by looked at the tent and whispered; "How sad, this man did not sit down and count the cost before he laid the foundation!"

Becoming a disciple of Jesus is like building a tower, or a house. You need to lose bricks, cement, wood and sweat

to make a house. Likewise, you need to lose many of your comforts, possessions and positions to make your eternal home a reality.

Jesus said, "If you would follow me, sit down and consider the cost you have to pay. Your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters may leave you because of your faith in me. I want to see that you are putting me first, not your parents or spouse or siblings! (**vv 25&26**). Likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be my disciple (**v.33**)."

You need to bear these costs if you want to be a disciple of Jesus. Nothing can be built without losing something. However, it is worth it! What is lost is nothing when we compare it with what we stand to gain.

Prayer: *Lord, I decide to take up my cross, deny myself and follow you. You are my Lord. You are my everything. Help me to understand that the things I lose here is an eternal investment... AMEN*

For further reading: *Mt. 10:32-39; Luke 19:1-10.*

*Therefore, since we are surrounded
by such a great cloud of
witnesses, let us throw off
everything that hinders and the sin
that so easily entangles, and let us
run with perseverance the race
marked out for us.*

Heb 12:1 NIV

DAY
2

➤ **Reading passage: Hebrew 11:1-12:1**

A Cloud Of Witnesses

Imagine you are assigned to run a lengthy race with lots of hurdles in between. Looking at the target that seems so unattainable, you fear you would never make it. Here comes somebody who encourages you. He reminds you that you are not a pioneer. Many have already finished the race faithfully. He urges you to look at the gallery where those pioneers are seated and watching you run. The author of Hebrews is that kind of an encourager.

In the previous chapter, he was describing the lives of those saints. He starts with Abel, goes through Noah, Abraham and Moses and does not finish the list because they are numerous. And what more shall I say? I do not

have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets. **Heb 11:32. NIV.** Enduring sufferings, despising and shame, they all stood for God. They ran a good race and fought a good fight. Their stories are written in the Bible for our encouragement. The author not only tells their stories, but also tells us that they are watching our race with much eagerness to see our victory. They are on the gallery. When we are weary, they rise up and encourage us with their testimony. When we think we are alone and there is nobody on God's side, Elijah would stand up and tell us his story of being taught by God about God's remnant. When we think the problems are like mountains before us, Joshua would rise up and describe the fall of the Jericho fort. Nehemiah would say about the building of the wall while Daniel would describe his night at the lion's den.

Prayer: *Lord I thank you for the cloud of witnesses, of the Bible times and also of this age, who encourages me in running the race. I understand, the target is not unattainable, even though it is not easy. Help me to run my race faithfully. AMEN*

**For further reading: Rom.4:18-25;
2Cor. 5:6-10.**

So I said: Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts.
Isa. 6:5 NKJV

DAY
3


➤ **Reading Passage: Isa. 6:1-8**

See Yourself In The Light Of God

In Isaiah's vision, the seraphim could not stand or even look at the holiness of the Lord of hosts. If such strong beings like the Seraphim could not stand before God's holiness, how can I, a man of unclean lips? Isaiah was doubted whether he was alive. He was the prophet of the Lord, and always pronounced woe to others. In his eyes, he was a better person than the people around. But, he was always seeing himself in the light of others. Now, for the first time he is seeing himself in the light of God and he was discontent. We will know who we are only when we see ourselves in the light of God. When Peter saw himself in the light of the Lord, he cried: Depart from me, for I am a sinner, Lord! **Luke 5:8**

Even though Isaiah was a prophet of the Lord, he was ready to admit his sins. He confessed his sins. Woe to me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, he cried. (**Isa. 6:5. NIV**). His confession turned everything upside down. One of the mighty angels flew over to the altar and with a pair of tongs picked up a burning coal. He touched his lips with it and said, Now you are pronounced 'not guilty' because this coal has touched your lips. Your sins are all forgiven. (**Isa 6:6-7 TLB**)

If Isaiah were reluctant to confess his sins, he would never have been forgiven. But he could not afford not to do it. Many of us are content with ourselves. We fail to see God, or see ourselves in the light of God. We never see our guilt. We are reluctant to confess our sins. Therefore, we live an unforgiven life.

 **Prayer:** *Lord, let me see myself in your light. I confess my sins. Touch my mouth, eyes, hands and my soul with the Fire from the altar. Let my guilt be burned in that fire-Amen*

 **For further reading: Lev. 20:26; Luke 5:6-10**

*Jesus said to him,
"Let the dead bury their own dead,
but you go and proclaim
the Kingdom of God."
Luke 9:60 NIV*

**DAY
4**

> Reading Passage: Luke 9:57-62

Dead To The World; Alive To The Kingdom Of God

When Jesus called his disciples, at once they left everything and followed him. But here, some one is asking for time. He said he would follow, but after burying his father. His excuse seems very genuine. However, Jesus was not ready to wait. How sad! Why is our master so stubborn, not even allowing him to bury his dead father?

That is the problem. His father is not dead yet. According to the Jewish tradition, children receive their inheritance only when the father dies. This young man wanted to follow Jesus, but could find no security in following the Jesus folk. They were all poor. He thought of joining only after receiving his inheritance. Life would then be secure. For this, however, he would have to wait until his father's burial.

Jesus said, leave the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the Kingdom of God.

The physically dead, of course, cannot bury the dead. Here, Jesus is using the same language the young man used. To him, burial of his father meant money and money meant security. In effect, Jesus was saying: Hey man, you are called to preach because you are alive to the Kingdom of God. Those people, your brothers and relatives, are dead to the Kingdom of God. Let the dead take the inheritance when your father dies. They are alive only to wealth. I need you to be dead to wealth and alive to the Kingdom of God. Go and preach the Kingdom.

Many who want to follow Jesus wait for their father to die. However, Jesus does not compromise with those who want both God and wealth. If you want to follow him, you need to die to the world.

You are either dead to the Kingdom of God and alive to the world, or alive to the world and dead to the Kingdom of God. You cannot be alive to both!



Prayer: *Lord, I know following you is the most secure thing in the world. Help me to be dead to the world and alive to the kingdom of God!*



**For further reading: Mt. 19:16-22;
Luke 12:32-34**

"And I am sure that he
who began the good work
in you will bring it to
completion at the day of
Jesus Christ."
Phil 1:5-6 RSV

DAY
5

> **Reading Passage: *Phil. 1:3-14***

He Is Still Working On You

Sunil was a painter. To make a portrait, he asked a small boy to sit on a chair so that he can make the sketch. After a few hours, the boy looked at the work of art and he could not figure out what the Painter was doing. He could see only some strokes on the Canvas and he was sad. "Hey this is quite absurd!" he said. "Son, please wait. I am still working on you," said the painter.

We also are like that small boy. When God makes a seemingly unattractive stroke on our life, may be a sickness, a loss or even a massacre, we complain. We do not see any relevance in that. However, God has something beautiful in His plan. Be confident that he who began the good work in you will bring it to completion.

Paul writes this letter from the Roman prison. Is not the imprisonment of God's faithful missionary a hindrance to

the advancement of Gospel? In human terms, yes! However, Paul says it is God's design. "...what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ; and most of the brethren have been made confident in the Lord because of my imprisonment, and are much more bold to speak the word of God without fear." **Phil 1:12-14 RSV**

We are God's workmanship (*poieema-G*) (**Eph 2:10**). It is the work of a weaver. He is working on a few bundles of thread. But he has a design in his mind. We are also like that raw thread. He will not let you fail but finish his work in you. Wait patiently to see how He does everything beautiful in His time.

*Some thing beautiful; Something good
All your confusion He understands
All you have to offer Him is brokenness and scrap
And He will do something beautiful in you.*



Prayer: *Lord, Help me to wait patiently to see your work in me. I am confident that you will fulfill what you have begun. AMEN*



For further reading: *Eph. 2: 8-10; 1. Cor 3. 5-9*

"And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death".

Rev 12:11 NASU

DAY
6

➤ **Reading passage: *Revelation 12: 7-12.***

Love Not Your Life

Here, we see Satan, the accuser, in heaven. Like in the case of Job, he might have accused the saints for their past sins or, questioned their integrity, I suppose. They conquered the first accusation by the blood of Jesus. The second one is proved through their word of testimony. "We will not shrink back from following our Master even at the point of death," they said, and they proved their words true.

Once a king asked a second century saint to give up his faith, or all his wealth would be seized. "You cannot do that O' King," said the saint "for all my treasures are in heaven." "Then I will send you afar." The king said. "Send me anywhere king, my Jesus will be with me," said the saint. "Then I will kill you," screamed the king. "But king, I am a dead man for the last forty years" was the saint's answer.

Those who do not fear death do not fear anything. They cannot be induced or threatened by anything of this world. No money, no good job, no better living, can tempt you; no excommunication, assault or anything of that kind can frighten you, if you do not love your own life. Paul says: "I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may accomplish my course..." **Acts 20:24. cf. Acts 21. 13.**

In this case, Satan totally fails in his accusations, and he was driven out from heaven by Michael and his angels. However, it is not the power of the Archangel, but the blood of the lamb and the word of testimony that made the victory possible. Yes! If the saints loved their lives more than their devotion to their Master, the Archangel could never drive Satan away. When we do not love anything, even our lives, more than Jesus, We conquer Satan.



Prayer: *Lord I understand that my love for my life is a snare. I want to defeat Satan with my confession that I do not love my life. Let what come may, I will follow you, my master. AMEN*



For further reading: Acts 20. 22-24; Luke 9.23-27; Acts 15.26

*"Set your minds on things
that are above, not on things
that are on earth"
Col 3:2-3 RSV*

DAY
7

➤ **Reading passage: Col.: 3.1-17**

Set Your Minds

A watch repairer noticed that a man came every morning and set his watch according to the master clock in the shop.


When asked, the man explained: I am the one who blows the siren in the town and I set my watch according to your master clock and I blow the siren according to my watch!"

The watch repairer started laughing loudly. Hey, I set my clock hearing your siren, man! said he.

We cannot set our watch according to just any clock. We need to set it to a standard time. Likewise, we cannot give our mind to be set to any trivial pursuit. We belong not to this world, but to Christ (**Col. 3. 1**). We need to set it according to the heavenly standard. We do not live according to the worldly standard. Men of this world will say, that is normal, everybody does it. May be everybody is doing it, and they find nothing wrong with that.

However, we can do only the things that Jesus would do. So, at every juncture, ask: "What Would Jesus Do" (WWJD)?

Paul here exhorts us not only to be cautious about deeds, but also not to put our mind on things that is not at par with Jesus! When a worldly thought comes to us, our mind should not respond to it. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God **Col 3:3**. A dead man does not respond! When you are offered deceptive gain, unshared comfort, undue respect, your mind does not rise up to receive it! You abstain from those things, not just because they are forbidden. You resent it. That is a natural indignation, since your mind is not on that. However, when you see the things that make heaven happy and delight Jesus, you are overwhelmed with joy, for your mind is set on heavenly things!

 **Prayer:** *Lord, I do not look for the gains of this material world. I know, I am called to live with a heavenly standard in this world. I set my mind on heavenly things - on You. AMEN.*

 **For further reading: 3:1; 11:13-16; 12:1-3**

*So, affectionately longing for you,
we were well pleased to impart to you
not only the gospel of God, but also
our own lives, because you had
become dear to us.*

1 Thessalonians 2:8 NKJV

DAY
8

➤ **Reading passage: *1 Thess. 2:1-12***

Share Life, Not Just Word

Paul had to suffer severely in Thessalonica. But that was insignificant compared to his sufferings in Philippi (***1 Thess. 2:2 cf. Acts 16:16-24***). Paul could spend only three weeks in Thessalonica but won many Jews and devout Greeks for the Lord (***Acts 17.1-5***). However, the new believers were ready to risk much for Paul in Thessalonica. Jason, who opened his home for the missionaries, was dragged and put under custody, because he helped them (***Acts 17. 5- 10***).

What was Paul's attitude when he was in Thessalonica? Our reading passage says many things. They- Paul and Silas- were God pleasers, hard working, with the gentleness of a nursing mother and the affection of a father! However, he says, he was there not just to preach the Gospel, win souls and retreat! Of course, he wanted to see souls redeemed. But he did it because he loved them. In fact, he said, he was reluctant to leave Thessalonica because of the persecution. He was saddened to see the

authorities persecute Jason, who gave him a home to stay. He says, he would have given his life for him.

These days, we hear many success stories from various mission fields. Millions heard the gospel, thousands accepted Jesus, hundreds were baptized and so forth. Good, but come to think of it, why do we share the Gospel?

Paul loved those to whom he preached the gospel, more than his very life. Do we have that kind of love for people we minister to? What motivates us to preach the Gospel? Is it the burden of the great commandment, or the urge of pure love that we have towards people? One thing is for sure, we fail many times because we do not love people more than our lives. Remember, if you do not love a person, you have no right to share the gospel with him.



Prayer: *Lord, many times love for people is not the motivating factor in my sharing the gospel. Help me to understand that I become your disciple, only when I love. AMEN*



For further reading: *Acts 16. 16-22 ; Acts 17. 1- 10*

Conduct yourselves wisely
toward outsiders,
making the most of the time -
Col. 4:5 RSV

DAY
9

➤ Reading passage: *Col. 4:2-6*

Making The Most Of Our Time

What is the most precious gift of God, other than Jesus, of course? It is time! Money, if lost today, could be regained tomorrow. Anything material can be regained, except time. You are given only a fixed amount of time, equal to your life span. So, spending time means spending life. You cannot afford to lose it through laziness or mismanagement. We must make the most of our time!

Paul asks us to continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving (v.2). While in this world, we get the most from time spent in the presence of the Lord! When time is spent on silly talk, slander, watching vain things on the TV or surfing useless sites on the internet, we lose time that could have been spent with the Lord. We lose it for ever!

Another way to make use of time is to spend it for the lonely and the neglected. Pure and undefiled religion

before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble. **James 1.27.** What they need most is not our money, but our time. Visiting orphans and widows in their affliction needs time, but God honors it. He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will repay him for his deed. **Proverbs 19: 17.**

So, making the most of your time means spending it in the presence of God and also giving it away to the needy and the poor. The remaining time, if any at all, - should be spent wisely. The Wise will speak only gracious words that are seasoned with salt (v.6). When we use harsh words, people are offended. Then again, we need to find time to mend our relations. So, if we are not wise, we are not only losing the time spent for quarrel, but also the time spent on reconciliation!



Prayer: *Jesus, help me to make the best use of my time by spending it with you and also with the afflicted. AMEN*



For further reading: *John 9:4-5; Eccl. 5.2-7*

And the LORD said to Joshua,
"Today I will begin to exalt you in
the eyes of all Israel, so they may
know that I am with you as
I was with Moses.

Josh 3:7 NIV

DAY
10

➤ Reading passage: **Joshua 3: 1-17**

When God begins to exalt me...

Moses, who led the people of Israel for forty years in the wilderness, is now dead (**Deut 34:5-7**). Joshua was commissioned by God and appointed by Moses, to lead the people to the Promised Land (**Deut 34:9-12**). He was a little fearful as he knew he was nobody compared to Moses. But God encouraged him and said, Joshua, today onwards, I will begin to exalt you, and all Israel will know that I am with you as I was with Moses.

Remember, God exalts Joshua, so that the people may know that he is in partnership with Him. The act of exaltation is not to show how strong you are, but to demonstrate God's presence in your life! When a feeble person is exalted, others will know that somebody is with him.

God fulfilled His promise on the same day. As soon as the feet of the priests touched the water's edge, the upstream stopped flowing. As in the case of the red sea, the people crossed over through the dry land! (**Joshua**

3:9-17) That day the LORD exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they revered him all the days of his life, just as they had revered Moses. (**Josh 4:14**)

However, it is possible that when God exalts us, we become proud. We may think that the reverence we get is for our endowment. An imaginary story says that the colt that Jesus rode to Jerusalem was elated and thought it is for its admiration the robes were spread. While it's way back, it saw the launderer spread robes to be dried. The colt thought it was spread in its honor, and proudly walked over the cloth. There is no need to say how severely it was beaten up! We are exalted because Jesus is riding upon us.

It is God, who is with us, that exalts us. People should see God and not selves, His act of exaltation. You are exalted not because you are great, but because you bear a great God!



Prayer: *Lord, Thanks for choosing me to be your partner. Every honor and glory belongs to you, O God, AMEN*



For further reading: ***I Tim 1:15-17; Matt. 5:14-16***

Then Jesus was led by the
Spirit into the desert
to be tempted by the devil.
Matt 4:1 NIV

DAY
11

➤ Reading passage: **Matthew 4:1-11**

Led By The Spirit And Tempted By The Devil

This is a bit confusing. The Spirit leads Jesus to be tempted by the Devil! Why does the Spirit do so? God never tempts us. "When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me, for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He tempt anyone" **James 1:13 NIV**. Sometimes, however, He leads us to be tempted.

We all fear temptations. But remember, temptations are an opportunity to prove our integrity. It is just like a class exam. If there is no exam, how can we prove the competence of a student?

"That's Okay" you may say, "But the sad thing is, Satan is the examiner! Why is it not an angel?" It is because Satan is the accuser of the saints, not the angels. In the case of Job, the blameless and righteous, he said; "Does Job fear God for nothing? Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has?" **Job 1:9-10 NIV**. When Satan puts a challenge like that, God sends

us for an exam, which is conducted by Satan! He says, "Go, my son! Undertake the challenge! Prove your faithfulness!"

Some times people ask, why did God make the tree of knowledge that, which He knew, would induce Man? If God had not been allowing temptations, He would be like a father who does not send his child for class exams, fearing that the child would fail. Why didn't God intervene when Eve was failing? If He did so, He would have been like a father who writes the exams in place of his child!

It is God, who put Joseph in Potiphar's house. God even allowed Potiphar's wife, to have Joseph's mantle. But Joseph came out victoriously from Satan's persuasion. He proved his purity and integrity. God wants us to go through temptations and come out victorious. Only then, He can proudly say, "Yea, my child's purity is proven. Now, No one can accuse him."



Prayer: *Lord, I know, you never tempt me to sin. But, when you allow me to undergo temptations, help me to come out victoriously. I am weak, but thou art strong! Give me strength, AMEN*



For further reading: **Gen 39.1- 23; James 1. 12-15**

Testifying both to Jews and to
Greeks of repentance to God
and of faith in our Lord
Jesus Christ.
Acts 20:21 RSV

DAY
12

> **Reading passage: Acts 20: 17-35**

Repentance From Death, To God

The word 'repentance' carries more meaning in the Bible than it does in our regular use. In our past life, we turned our backs on God, not our faces. We believed that the world, money, health, relations, friends and family would give us all that we need. We toiled day and night to gain material things and maintain relations! We thought the world was everything, so, we gave our very lives for its passions. However, finally we realized that the direction was wrong. We were sorry for the past, futile, life. Then came the message of the Gospel.

Paul says it is repentance towards God. It is not just asking us to confess our sins, or even lamenting over it. It asks us to repent, leave our old ways, goals and likings and turn towards GOD! It is repentance from dead works (**Heb 6:1-RSV**) and repentance towards God! Now, our way becomes God, goal becomes God and likings become God! No more we dare to look- or even think of the old ways and days, for help, guidance and control. We have a new goal, new help, and a new control station - God!

Why should we repent towards God? Because, it is from there that we fell! When we fell from God, we fell from life. Then on, all our doings were dead works. Jesus came to this world to restore us to the life we had lost, and, that we may have that life abundantly. (**John 10:10 RSV**)

We repent from our dead works and repent to God for life. We receive life, in the true sense of it, only in the presence of God, for He is the only source of life (**John 1: 4**).

Therefore, repentance is a restoration to the presence of God! If restoration doesn't happen, repentance is of no value.

When we repent towards God, we enter in to life. Every life is to be lived, or it would be snuffed out. To live that life, we need faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, says Paul. That's why he preached both repentance towards God and faith in Jesus Christ! That makes the Gospel whole.



Prayer: *Lord, I repent from dead works and repent towards you. You are my only goal, delight and control station, AMEN*



For further reading: Acts 2. 36- 41; Col 3. 5-14

Is any one of you in trouble?
He should pray. Is anyone happy?
Let him sing songs of praise.
James 5:13 NIV

DAY
13

> **Reading passage: *James 5: 13-19***

Pray Or Praise, But Never You Worry!

It is said that human life is a blend of afflictions and affluence! We all are in either of the situations. James says, we should pray when we are afflicted and praise when we are blessed. These are the only two attitudes that we should keep.

During times of affliction, we pray, but also we worry! We worry and pray. Most of our prayers spring from fear and worry. However, God wants us to trust and pray. Remember, trust and worry doesn't ever go together. They are oxymoron- contradictory words! (Fear and worry are siblings.) If you trust, you cannot worry and if you worry, you cannot trust. When you are afflicted, if you trust in a God, who is concerned about you and who is able to help you, your prayers will spring not from worry or fear, but from faith.

What do we do when we are blessed? James asks us to praise! Praise is the spontaneous expression of a thankful heart. We pray when we are in trouble, we

forget to give thanks to the Lord when we are blessed. The people of Israel received hundreds of blessings when they were in the wilderness. We see they sing praises to the Lord at the other shore of the red sea after their deliverance from Pharaoh and his army. In their journey, they had to face many more troubles. Even though they witnessed God's concern and power many times in their lives, they always murmured, instead of praying. And when God delivered them, they never thanked Him! They were a thankless people.

Again, praise is an expression of humility. When you praise God for the blessings, you confess that you are not worthy to receive it. You give the credit to God.

A praying man is a humble man, for he admits that he cannot face any given situation on his own. A praising man also is humble, for he admits that he do not deserve what he received!



Prayer: *Lord, forgive me for I worry many times. Give me faith. Also, help me to be thankful, AMEN*

For further reading: *Phil 4: 4-7; Matthew 6:25- 34*



There I will give you my love.
Song 7:12 RSV

DAY
14

> **Reading passage: *Song of Solomon 7: 9- 8:4***

There I Will Give You My Love!

Song of Solomon has been interpreted in many different ways. Of course, it portrays the physical expression of the love of a husband and wife. However, its best expression is found when it is illustrated as the love relation between Christ and His Church.

In this book, we see a shepherd boy who is the lover and a Shulammite, his beloved. In addition, we see a king in the scene, who wants to mug the love of the Shulammite. The king brought her to his chamber and the city girls (daughters of Jerusalem) describe the majesty of the king and his love for her. Even the king describes how he loves her. However, the Shulammite reserves her love just for her beloved.

In Chapter Seven, the Shulammite is a captive in the king's chamber. Either the city girls, or the king himself describes her beauty (**VV 6-9**). But many Bible translations make a division for **verse 9**, including NIV, NKJV and NASB U. Half of it is spoken by the king and the rest by the Shulamite herself.

THE KING SAYS... 9 And the roof of your mouth like the best wine.

THE SHULAMITE SAYS: The wine goes down smoothly for my beloved, Moving gently the lips of sleepers. 10 I am my beloved's, And his desire is toward me. ***Song 7:9-10 NKJV***

The shulamite hears the king's description, but she said, "the wine goes to my beloved, not to the king. I am my beloved's, and his desire is for me!"

When the world tries to distort our love, remember, your beloved's only desire is for you! "Come, my beloved," says the Shulamite, "Let us go forth to the villages... There I will give you my love."

She somehow wants to escape the vanity of the city. Her soul longs to be with her beloved in the serenity of the village! "There I will give my love," she says.

We all should keep this kind of resentment towards the conceit of the modern world. Only in solitude, can we pour out our love to our beloved.

Prayer: *Lord, help me to be discontent with the vain splendor of this world. Let me be alone with you, and I want to pour out my love towards you! Amen!*

For further reading: *Psalms 27: 1-6; Phil 3: 7-11*

Micaí'ah said, "As the LORD lives,
what my God says, that
I will speak."
2 Chron 18:13

DAY
15

➤ **Reading passage: 2Chronicles 18: 1-34**

An isolated voice!

Jehoshaphat, the Judean king, entered into a matrimonial alliance with Ahab, the king of Israel. Ahab wanted Jehoshaphat to go with him against the Syrians in war. He was ready to go, but fearing God, he said, "only after God's consent!" The easiest way was to ask a prophet. "That's not a problem", Ahab said "I have 400 of them in my custody."

"Go up; for God will give it into your hands," said all the prophets! Jehoshaphat, however, doubted their integrity. "Is there not here another prophet of the LORD?" He asked. "There is a guy, but I hate him... He always speaks against my desires. So, I don't entertain him these days," said Ahab. What a pity! The king expected the prophet to sanction all his wild desires.

Prophet Micaiah, the rebel in Ahab's sight, was finally summoned. Micaiah said, "As the LORD lives, what my God says, that I will speak."

"Why, Micaiah? Why can't you be just one among the other 400?" The king's messenger asked him and said,

"Behold, the words of the prophets with one accord are favorable to the king; let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak favorably."

A prophet is a messenger of God. He speaks on behalf of God! Who decides the content of the message? It is neither the messenger, nor the one who is addressed to. It is the author of the message... God himself!

The voice of Micaiah was an isolated one. He was not in for a compromise. However, there were 400 prophets, who prophesied "in the name of the Lord" (v.10) and ready for a compromise.

"Oh Micaiah, prophesy the truth. Shall we go to Ramoth-gilead?" asked the king. "What did your official prophets say? Why don't you hear their voice and go?" Micaiah mocked at the king. "What they said is their truth or your truth. But I tell you 'the' Truth. Israel is going to become a shepherdless sheep. You are willing to go die in this battle."

Micaiah was thrown into prison for his uncompromising words, but what he spoke was God's truth. King Ahab died as he prophesied.



Prayer: *Lord help me to stand uncompromising for your truth, even when I need to suffer for it.*



For further reading: Micah 2: 6-11

"Suppose one of you want to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it?"

Luke 14:28-29 NIV

DAY
16

➤ **Reading passage: Philemon 1. 1-25**

Charge that to my account

"If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me." Philemon 18

People are not just souls. They have a personality and social relationships. Paul, when in prison, became the spiritual father of Onesimus, a runaway slave. (Even prison can become a platform for evangelisation). Onesimus is now serving Paul in prison. He was a genuine, beneficial and useful (that is the meaning of his name-v.11) servant. Paul considered him as his own very heart (v.12). Paul was happy to appoint him as his personal assistant (v.13). Nevertheless, he wanted to send this new convert back to his master. "I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that any favour you do will be spontaneous and not forced," (v. 14) Paul said.

Look at the way Paul deals with his convert. When he sent him back, He introduced Onesimus as his son, not as a former slave of Philemon, or not even as "Brother Onesimus!" (If Philemon saw him as his former slave, he would look to him with grudge... Now, Onesimus is Paul's son!). "If he has done you any wrong or owes you

anything, charge it to me. I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand; I will pay it back" (vv.18-19).

Paul was ready to pay a cost for someone who had accepted Jesus. He was not like the Pharisees Jesus talked about in Matt 23:15 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are." Which breed do we belong to? The Pharisees, who struggle to see conversions and then forget the converted, or, Paul, who in love reckoned the convert as his son?

Evangelism is about giving. It demands you, and, all that you have too. We all speak about John 3:16 - the 'so great love' God has shown to mankind. How about 1 John 3:16? "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers." Looking at a helpless man, will you say, "Charge that to my account?"



Prayer: Lord, help me understand that witnessing is giving, Amen.



For further reading: James 2. 8-20, 1 John 3. 16-20

“... the great locust and the
young locust, the other locusts
and the locust swarm-
my great army that
I sent among you.”
Joel 2:25

DAY
17

> **Reading passage: Joel 1: 1-20**

Disasters: Is it God's language?

Something very miserable happened in the life of Israel, that had never happened in their days or in the days of their forefathers! “What the locust swarm has left the great locusts have eaten; what the great locusts have left the young locusts have eaten; what the young locusts have left other locusts have eaten” (Joel 1:2-5).

Who is behind this? Devil, the adversary? To their, rather everybody's, surprise, God declared that he himself was behind the calamity. “The locusts were my army,” said God! “I was trying to talk to you... but you were not listening.” Many times disasters are from the Lord, even though we fail to recognize it as God's language

An isolated house on a hilltop was on fire. Seeing this from afar, people rushed to the place. The main door was opened. They pulled and threw all the valuables out of the house and, to their surprise, found a room locked from the inside with all the family members watching a movie on the Television. Coming out of the room and seeing all their valuables thrown out, they shouted: “Who

gave you the authority to throw away our valuables...?” One man showed them the fire and said, “It was not our desire Sir, but your house is on fire”

“Wake up, you drunkards, and weep!” said God. (Joel 1:5) Why are you not even weeping? Are you drunk? Awake!

Yes! People are drunk with money, position, philosophy, pride... They fail to read God's language! Disasters are natural for them! God says... It is I who brought the disaster. It is I who threw out all your valuables. We cry... Why God? Why do you break me? Why do you take away mine? The answer is simple... You are heading towards eternal fire!

God sends locusts, His “great army” to teach you a lesson. He allows disasters in your life to save you from greater disasters. It's better that you learn the lessons early. So start looking at the happenings in your life as God's language. Respond to it spiritually.



Prayer: *Help me Lord to understand your language. Purify me through your works in me.*



**For further reading: Isaiah. 59: 9-11;
Deuteronomy.. 28 1-29**

"In my Father's house
are many rooms..."
John. 14:2

DAY
18

➤ **Reading passage: *John 14: 1-27***

Find Abode in Jesus

Ancient man lived in caves. Modern man has comfortable houses and even mansions. However, they fail to find a room for their troubled hearts.

Jesus said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me." John 14:1.

No Jack and Jill can come and console you like this. You need a reason to quench your fear. Jesus is giving you a reason. "Trusting in God and trusting in me will solve your puzzles." Only Jesus can say this.

Trust is total dependence. Imagine, you are fainting and about to fall, you lean on someone. Now, you are not standing on your own... You cannot! You have lost all strength. You put all your weight on the person you are leaning on... That is "trust." If you trust in God, in Jesus, in such a manner, you don't need to be troubled, ever!

Why do many of our celebrities commit suicide even after they own mansions in every continent? Their trust is in their money and fame, but those fragile things can

never bear their burden. All their expensive, fine clothes are inadequate to wipe away the inner tears of their troubled hearts. They try to lean upon their friends, but they too are like "leaning walls." (Ps. 62.3) They collapse! Oh! Let them lean upon Jesus, the Rock of Ages, who can bear all their burdens!

Jesus is preparing a mansion for you in heaven; but you have to find a home in Him here. Jesus asks you to abide in Him! (John 15.4) Then the eternal mansion that Jesus prepares is yours.

Abiding is not just visiting. Abiding is staying. It is like the branch abiding in the vine. It is a 24/7 business. You make Jesus your permanent home. You find no rest in something or somebody else. If you find abode in Jesus and Him alone in this world, He will never leave you orphan. He will come back and take you to be with Him, that you also may be where He is."

"Abandon yourself in to the hands of the Lord, and He will never abandon you into somebody else's hands."



Prayer: *Lord, I am weary. I lean upon you.
I know I am in your safe hands. Amen.*



For further reading: *Psalms 23:1-6,
John 16: 16-24*

*"And God said, "Let there be light";
and there was light."*

Gen 1:3

DAY
19

> **Reading passage: Gen 1:2-4**

Let There be Light

God saw that the world he made had become void and shapeless. God came down to see what had happened. Everything was a mess because there was darkness upon the deep!

Who created darkness?

There is no need to create darkness... Just blow the light out and it is darkness. Darkness is not something that has a being. It is just the absence of light.

Once, during an over-night function, an elderly man gave a lit lantern to a boy and asked him to keep it where he finds darkness. After the lad rambled on for a while, he said he couldn't see darkness! Yes, wherever he put the lantern, the darkness fled and light reigned! Where there is no light, it is darkness. Where there is light, there is no darkness. It is mutually exclusive.

Darkness turned Earth into a chaos. In fact, the problem was not darkness, but absence of light. To rebuild the earth, light should come back! Therefore, God said- Let there be light, and there was light! And light brought life, and, life brought everything!

Isn't it confusing to see that light is created in the first day, while God creates sun only on the fourth day?

In this description of creation, neither darkness nor light is referred to literally. In this context, the darkness is a spiritual darkness. The earth was without God, and it became void. Darkness was upon the deep, because there was no light, or in other words, because of the lack of God's presence! To make things right, it was not the light of the sun that was needed, but the light of God... Therefore, God sent His light to the world, and the world was rebuilt! "In him was life, and that life was the light of men." John 1:4

Sun is not the source of light. Son is. It is God! He himself is light, and in Him, there is no darkness! (1JOHN 1-5) In His presence, everything is light. In His absence, everything is darkness.

God created us as children of light. We, however, yielded to darkness many times over. We need God to hover over us so that the darkness in us is turned into light.



Prayer: *"Shine upon me O' Holy God, so that I can reflect your light."*



**For further reading: John 1: 1-14
1. John 1: 5-7**

*"Hebrew women are not like
Egyptian women;
they are vigorous and give
birth before the midwives arrive."
Ex 1:19*

DAY
20

> **Reading passage: Exodus 1: 1-20.**

Let us be vigorous!

Israel went to Egypt "few in number" (Deuteronomy. 26:5), but now they are "increased greatly" (Exodus. 1:7). The enemy was in dread! (Exodus 1:12) So they thought of acting shrewdly. (V. 10)

The enemy oppressed them to suppress them in number. But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied! Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, asked the midwives to kill every male child born to Israelites at birth. (He feared the males would fight against him in the future.) However, the midwives feared God! (*The Pharaoh feared Israel, but the midwives feared God! God gave them family [V.21]. Pharaoh did not fear God and God took his family- the first-born.*)

The enemy is not looking for a straight battle. He acts shrewdly (v.10). Satan is cunning. Beware of his wiles (Eph.6.11). The enemy doesn't want to see a new birth taking place among the children of God. He will take up all his wiles to desolate a newborn. However, the women of Israel were vigorous and gave birth even without the help of midwives! (v.19)

Old Israel is a symbol of the new church. The enemy doesn't want to see any new birth taking place in the kingdom of God. However, God wants His church to be vigorous in childbearing. He expects strong children, who would pull down the strongholds of Satan, to come up. But what do we see in the present day church? We are groaning in travail, but no childbirth. We have labour pain, but deliver still-born. Many a times the midwives - not Egyptian but Israelite, kill the male child!

We have lost our vigour! We have even lost our desire for offspring. Many think that a birth control is needed in church. We are satisfied with our number. To many, newborns are a source of botheration! We forget the fact that we are in warfare. Many of us see the world not as an enemy, but as a misunderstood friend! Instead of fighting, we look for compromise...

Remember, the enemy is not afraid of a compromising church. But he trembles at the sight of a vigorous church giving birth to strong children!



Prayer: *Lord, let me and my church be
vigorous in producing spiritual offspring.
Help us to tear away the gates of hell- Amen*



**For further reading: Acts 8. 1-8, Rev
7. 9-17**

"With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands". Judg 7:7-8 NIV

DAY
21

> **Reading passage: Judges: 7 1-8**

Watchful, even in times of comfort

When Gideon beckoned people to war, the line up was 32,000 strong! But the enemy force was so big, like locusts for multitude; and their camels were without number" Judg 7:12. Gideon thought he needed more people to fight, but God said the force with him was too big. "Let the fearful turn back and leave," announced Gideon. Twenty-two thousand left, and ten thousand remained. The fearful have no place in God's army!

Gideon might have been somewhat annoyed to see such a retreat. What could he do with a mere ten thousand, when the enemy force is like sand on the seashore! But, God said the number is still too big. Another screening was needed.

Gideon took the men down to the water, that they may drink! Three hundred men lapped the water up with their tongues like a dog. All the rest got down on their knees to drink. The LORD said to Gideon, "With the three hundred men that lapped, I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands"

Why are those who lapped up the water with their tongue competent for war and those who sat down incompetent?

Watch the dog! Its eyes are opened when it drinks water (not like a cat that drinks milk). It doesn't look at the water, but at the sides. A dog is watchful even when it drinks water.

Those who lapped up the water with their tongue are watchful even in times of comfort. They have only one thing in their eyes- WAR! We are at war with our enemy, Satan. Those who sat down, water was their priority, not war.

God doesn't want us to forget our mission when we are comfortable. You need to drink water, but water should not drink you. Look, these 9,700 people who were rejected by the Lord were not fearful (they didn't leave the army when the fearful were asked to leave) but they were not watchful. God wants us not only to be fearless, but also to be watchful.



Prayer: *Lord, I don't want to be eaten up by my comforts. Help me to see only the furtherance of Thy kingdom in my eyes! Amen.*



For further reading: 1 Peter 5:6-11; 1 Cor 7:28-31.

"By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was attested as having pleased God." Heb 11:5

DAY
22

> **Reading passage: Gen 5. 19-23**

Attest your Character

Usually, we only speak good of departed souls. Once, a filthy, arrogant and wicked miser died. Not wanting to hurt the sentiments of the bereaved with their 'truth', everybody at the funeral praised him as generous and compassionate. Listening to all the false appraisals, the widow beckoned to her son and said; "son, did you hear what they said about your dad? Go to the casket, watch closely and make sure it's your dad indeed!"

If you live a good life, people will certainly praise you when you die. The real testimony you get for your life, however, is not at death but while you are still alive.

Enoch lived a life of faith. What does it mean? He lived a life totally surrendered to God. He was always pleasing God. Somehow, he wanted to bring a smile upon God's face! He always sought God's will and obeyed. He pleased God by keeping himself holy enough to walk with the holy God.

This doesn't mean that everyone was pleased with Enoch. I am sure Enoch displeased many of his contemporaries.

You cannot please God and men at the same time. ('Men', here, means people with human understanding... people without Godly insight!) Even when people disliked Enoch for his piety, he stood alone and pleased God. However, even people who did not appreciate him attested to one thing from their heart: "This guy only has one thing in his mind... somehow to please his God!"

Maybe people of his time considered Enoch crazy, a misfit for earthly living... Yes! Maybe that's the reason why God said, "come on boy, I will put you in a place fit for you!"

Do you want to live a life that will bring a smile upon the face of your God? That would be costly, but worth it. Will people around you... your family, friends, neighbours, colleagues, fellow travellers in a metro, grocery shop attendant... attest your life as one pleasing only your God?



Prayer: *Lord, help me bring a smile upon your face, Amen!*



For further reading: *Job. 1: 1-8; Luke 7. 2-11*

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

DAY
23

➤ **Reading passage: *Luke 12. 1-12***

Confess Him before Men

Modern man admires Jesus, but seldom has he acknowledged Him. Some times people say..." I love Jesus. He knows my heart. I will keep my religion to myself. What's the need to tell it to everyone?" But friend, if your heart is filled with the love of Jesus, what keeps you from pouring it out before people? It is fear, right? You fear men.

Jesus is our bridegroom. No bride is hesitant to confess her groom before people. Rather, she would do it proudly. What is there to be ashamed of to tell others that you are the bride of Jesus and He is your saviour, master and eternal God? Remember, millions were martyred for confessing their faith. Do you consider their confession as foolish?

These days, even churchgoers fail to witness Jesus. Their faith is unknown to those who are always with them in school, office and workplace. They "worship" in church, but are afraid or ashamed to confess Jesus before people. You need to confess your faith "before men," not just

inside the church. If you are ashamed, Jesus says, he has to "disown you before the angels of God!"

Whom do you fear? Jesus said; "do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after the killing the body, has power to throw you into hell" (Luke 12:4-5). Fear God! You know what awaits those who deny God and receive the mark of the beast? "...He will be tormented with burning sulphur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb" (Rev 14:10).

Let's be proud to witness Jesus before people. Do you know the reward for it? Jesus will acknowledge us before the angels... He will proudly say to them, "Look, my bride who loved me so much and confessed me before people without fear and shame!" What else do we need in heaven?



Prayer: *Lord, Help me to be shameless and fearless to tell the world that I belong to you, Amen!*



For further reading: *1 Peter 4. 12- 19; 2 Timothy 2 8-11; Rev 12. 7-12;*

*"But God chose the foolish things
of the world to shame the wise;
God chose the weak things of the
world to shame the strong.*

1 Cor 1:27 NIV

DAY
24

➤ **Reading passage: 1. Cor. 1: 16-31**

God Chose the Weak

Most of the worldly wise do not choose a life of faith. They think they can manage by themselves. They think it "foolish" to give up on their wisdom and follow an "uncertain" life. Paul says, God chose the "Foolish" to shame the Wise. 'The Wise not choosing God', is only one side of the story. The reality is that God did not choose the Wise of this world!

Luke 19:28-40, talks about a "tied colt." Before crucifixion, Jesus had to enter in to Jerusalem, the King's city. He is the son of David, the everlasting King! Now it is time for this King of kings to have a royal procession. He needed a vessel to carry him. Which animal would be appropriate? An Elephant, as in the case of Eastern kings? Or, a horse as in the case of Western kings? Or, at least a camel as with the kings of the desert?

No! God chose to ride on a colt! He asked His disciples to

go to the village ahead of them, where they would see a colt tied, on which no one ever sat... We do not know why. May be no one ever wanted to sit on it.

In a minute, a colt no one wanted to sit on, became a "Royal colt!" Everyone started spreading clothes on its way. Yes, it is the King of kings and Lord of lords who is now seated on it. According to Paul, God chose a colt as His royal vessel to shame Mr. Elephants and Rev. Horses and Dr. Camels! They thought they were worthy beings to carry "His Majesty", but God did not consider them worthy to carry Him! Their feeling of 'worth' was their unworthiness, and the colt's feeling of 'unworth' was its worthiness! He did it this way, so that no one can boast before Him (1 Cor 1:29). Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord." (1 Cor 1:31)



Prayer: *Lord, I know that I am an unworthy creature! You chose me for no reason, but your mercy. Let me boast in you, and you alone, my Master! Amen*



**For further reading: Luke 7. 36-50;
Mark 11.1-11**

*"The ark and Israel and Judah
dwell in booths; ... shall I then
go to my house, to eat and to drink,
and to lie with my wife?
2. Sam 11:11*

DAY
25

➤ **Reading passage: 2 Samuel 11. 1- 17**

How then I shall?

It was wartime. Kings were expected to be in the battleground! King David, nevertheless, decided to take rest and, that culminated in his moral fall. Lazy people fall in to sin. Had David gone to the warfront, he would never have seen Bathsheba bathing and fallen in to adultery with her. (At least he could have prayed for the soldiers... After all, it was evening, his prayer time! Ps. 55:17) Satan speaks more to idle people. Better be busy with Godly matters.

Stumbling on a steep path does not end up in one single fall. We fall and roll! This is what happened to David. To cover up his one sin, he committed many more sins! Crookedly he asked his soldier Uriah, the Hittite, husband of Bathsheba, to go home and spend the night with his wife. Remember, he was a Hittite, not pure Israelite. Nevertheless, he said... "The ark and Israel and Judah dwell in booths; and my lord Jo'ab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field; shall I then go to

my house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? As you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do this thing." 2 Sam 11:11

Look how loyal he was towards his mission! He could think of nothing, but war! His personal pleasures did not touch him...

Here, is an underlying question to David... King David, how could you eat, drink and indulge in lustful pleasures when your people are camping in the open field to capture terrains for you? You even went for illegitimate pleasures, while Uriah chose to deny normal things like eating and drinking at home and sleeping with his wife...

We see a pleasure loving society around us. Even people like David, mighty men of the Lord, men "after Gods own heart" are after personal pleasures! "What is wrong with enjoying life?" they ask. The answer is... the battle of the Lord is undone... How can we?



Prayer: *Lord, I know that I cannot indulge in worldly pleasures as the battle of the Lord is yet unfinished. Help me to be busy with Godly affairs, Amen*



**For further reading: 2 Samuel 23 13-17
1 Corinthians 7. 29-31**

*"The pride of your heart has deceived
you, you who live
in the clefts of the rocks and make
your home on the heights"*
Obadiah 1. 3

DAY
26

➤ **Reading passage: Obadiah. 1- 21**

Haughty Spirit- Pathway to Fall

Titanic, the largest and most luxurious ship afloat then, sank on April 15, 1912 during its maiden voyage. It had a double-bottomed hull divided into 16 watertight compartments. It was considered unsinkable. The builders of Titanic claimed, no power on earth could sink the ship. They didn't even bother to take enough lifeboats for its first voyage! However, shortly before midnight on April 14, it collided with an iceberg, and the ship sank. Over 1,500 of its 2,200 passengers lost their lives in the Atlantic.

What made the Titanic sink? Ice berg? No! I would to say, it was pride! "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall." Prov 16:18

Edom was a hill city, situated in the clefts of rocks that acted as a natural fort. No enemy could normally defeat the city, as it was high on the rocky mountains. In addition, she had strong allies (v.7). Therefore, Edom said, "No one can bring me down to the ground!" (V.3)

Do you think you are living in the "high mountains," holding positions in your office, organization, church? Do

you think you live in the clefts of the rocks, like wealth, health, wisdom (craftiness)? May be you have strong allies... influence in the administrative body, with politicians...

Although you show humility outside, may be you are proud in your heart. You cannot trick God! God says... "though your nest is set among the stars, thence I will bring you down" (v. 4.)

"The pride of your heart has deceived you", says the Lord! Pride becomes a deception because the Proud will never listen to warnings! "The strong allies" also deceived Edom. Her destruction was inevitable!

When we have everything and everybody with us, we are confident in ourselves and we ignore warnings! But that's a deception. Some one with a haughty heart can never please God.

'All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.' 1 Peter 5:5-6



Prayer: *Lord, Let me not be deceived by possessions, positions or Allies. Let me know that I am just dust and ash, Amen*



**For further reading: Acts 12. 19- 23;
Daniel 4. 1-36;**

"Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke with him... and put the Spirit on the seventy elders. When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied, but they did not do so again." Num 11:25 NIV

DAY
27

➤ **Reading passage: Numb 11. 16-17; 24-30**

Let the Spirit rest upon you

Modern man is so restless that his ability to concentrate on anything is almost zero! He cannot even watch the same Television channel for more than an hour. (Curiosity leads him to restlessly keep changing channels) We allow no one or nothing to "rest upon" us.

God asked Moses to select 70 elders from the congregation of Israel, so that He could pour His spirit upon them. He did so and when the Spirit "rested" upon them, they prophesied! The spirit has to "rest" upon us. Only then, He can work on us.

Should the governor of your province come to your home to help you... to bestow upon you a merciful gift, what would you do? Won't you invite him in, seat him comfortably, offer a drink and make him rest? Only then, he will enter in to his business. The spirit, likewise, is seeking to "rest" in you.

The word 'rest' here means, "Settling down" in the

original text. It also means 'sleep' or 'slumber'. What does it tell us? The Spirit should feel comfortable in you. Only then, He can "settle down." It is like carrying someone on your shoulders and walking. If you keep moving, the person seated on your shoulder cannot rest.

We seldom concentrate on God. We do ask the Spirit to come upon us but we seldom prepare room for Him. Even when we sit in the presence of the Lord, our body rests there, but our minds wander to a hundred places. How then can the Spirit settle down upon us? Remember, each time our minds go after worldly things, it is a hindrance for the Spirit upon us to "sleep".

Also, remember, the Spirit doesn't just come, help and go. He comes to live with you and become your permanent helper for your entire life. He is very sensitive. You also should be sensitive to the Spirit. If He becomes restless, He may retreat!



Prayer: *Lord, I understand your Spirit seeks rest in me O' God! Let me be sensitive to the Spirit, Amen!*



For further reading: *Eph 4. 30-32; Matt. 12. 30-32*

“...there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?”
Job 1:8-9

DAY
28

➤ **Reading passage: Job. 1: 1-22**

One who turns away from evil...

The writer introduces Job as blameless. (v.1) God testified to it (v.8). Satan accepted it (He did not deny the fact but tried to falsely accuse Job of keeping integrity for a counterfeit reason - vv. 9-11).

Four things God says about Job: He was blameless (perfect), upright, fears God and turns away from evil. What more can a man ask for during this earthly life!

The first comment speaks about perfection in every part, as in the case of a sacrificial animal (Lev 1. 3). God expects us to live in perfect holiness in the personal, family, church, professional and social aspects of our lives! In addition, it is a 24/7 business. Even the enemy should get no opportunity for slander (1. Tim 5:14).

Job was an upright man, a straight person- a childlike character! He was plain and simple, with nothing to hide!

He was God fearing. What does it mean? He knew that God was walking with him and watching everything he

does. Experiencing God's presence in every moment of his life helped him to live a holy life.

Finally, he was a man who turned away from all evil. May be you are upright and God fearing, living a perfect life, you still need to stay away from sinful circumstances. There are people who live a holy life, but no one is free from temptations!

Turning away from evil is a deliberate act. It is resolving that you will not defile yourself. Job says, "I have made a covenant with my eyes; how then could I look upon a virgin?" Job 31:1. Job's resolution was not just that he will not commit adultery, but also that he would abstain from all lustful scenes that would lead him to fall! It is not just a covenant with our eyes... Commitment is making a covenant with all the members of your body, all the faculties that pour out thoughts in to your mind and all the enzymes that stimulate emotions in your heart!



Prayer: *Lord, help me live a perfect, upright and God-fearing life. I resolve not to defile myself with evil. Help me to please you, Amen.*



**For further reading: Daniel 1. 3-20
1 Thess. 5 21-22**

"The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, 'We have found the Messiah' (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus..."
John 1:41-42

DAY
29

> **Reading passage: John 1. 35-51**

Witnessing: An urge from within

John the Baptist introduced Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! Hearing this testimony, two of John's disciples went to Jesus and even stayed with him for a day. They were convinced Jesus was the Messiah.

On their return, Andrew, one of the disciples, found his brother Simon. (Andrew was, in fact, seeking Simon. NIV renders it correct... the first thing Andrew did was to find...) Andrew was so excited. He could not suppress the joy of finding the treasure- Jesus the Messiah! (Matthew. 13.44) He started "evangelizing!" He witnessed, and even brought his brother to Jesus and that ended up in Simon's conversion!

Andrew did not wait for a theological degree so he could start witnessing. He did not wait for a "mega crusade" stage or even Charismatic gifts so that his witnessing would be effective. He was simply pouring his heart out before his brother!

Witnessing is just telling others what you have found... in Jesus. When you do it from your heart, that's it! All who

have found Jesus and stayed with him at least for a day cannot keep themselves from witnessing.

Andrew started witnessing the next morning he found Jesus. He did not wait for a "big opportunity." He started with his own brother. Start with small. To be faithful in small things is a big thing. To him, his brother was important. The truth that I found, my brother should find also... that was his mind. Witnessing should be an urge from within.

Maybe Andrew was not a big preacher. (Preaching, at times, is a "head" business where words are important. Witnessing, on the other hand, is a heart business and words are not that important.) But it is Andrew who brought the little boy with five loaves of bread and two fish to Jesus (John 6. 8-9). Like wise, the first convert of Andrew - Simon Peter, his brother - became a mighty preacher who won 3,000 souls in his first sermon. I am sure Andrew would also receive a portion of the reward for that big catch on the day of Pentecost!



Prayer: *Lord, help me to be your witness, everywhere, every time. Amen!*



For further reading: *Rom 1. 16-20; John 4. 28-42*

*"Know that the LORD has
set apart the godly for himself"*

Ps 4:3

DAY
30

> **Reading passage: *Psalms. 4: 1- 8***

You are set apart... for God Himself

We know that we are a separated people, called out of darkness... We say, we were in a deep pit, miry clay, without hope... We only speak of the places we were in, in our fallen stage; and of the cry we made... We just wanted to be freed from the bondage to any other place... and Jesus redeemed us. However, is that the whole story? Here, the Psalmist says, the Lord has not just redeemed us, but He set us apart for Himself. He begins the statement by, "know that...", because, we forget this truth so often!

God doesn't just save you and then leaving you alone, somewhere on the bank of the pit you were rescued from. He makes you His own! Why does God set us apart for Himself? Because it is from Him that we have fallen. It is from Him that we have fallen in to sin, darkness, hopelessness and death! Away from Him, we are victims of Satan. Severed from His love, we entered into the world of God's wrath... Therefore, even for our salvation, we need to be restored to Him. If we fail to be set apart for God, our salvation is not complete!

Once His property, we were lost for some time. Now we are restored... Now I am not an orphan. I have come back to my Fathers' house! And now, I need to live with my father. I understand, away from Him, I am an orphan. I am not safe... Therefore, what I do is to live so close to Him that nothing would separate me from His everlasting love!

When God wanted to appoint a few people to help Moses in administrative affairs, He asked Moses to "*Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel*" (Num 11:16). Even when Jesus appointed the twelve, it was *to be with him*, and to be sent out to preach (Mark 3:14).

"You my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, are people, and I am your God," declares the Sovereign LORD (Ezek 34:31). Yes, "you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls" (1 Peter 2:25).

Let's remember, each moment of our life, we are His own.



Prayer: *Restore us to thyself, O LORD, that we may be restored! (Lam 5:21)*



For further reading: *Psalms 23; John 13 22-25*