



Title/Date: 1/10/24 **“Spiritual Change and Progress”**
(Saul’s Immediate Change After Conversion)

I. Text: **Acts 9:19b-31** 19b and he took food and was strengthened. Now for several days he was with the disciples who were at Damascus, 20 and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, [h]saying, “He is the Son of God.” 21 And all those hearing him continued to be astounded, and were saying, “Is this not the one who in Jerusalem destroyed those that called on this name, and who had come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?” 22 But Saul kept increasing in strength and confounding the Jews who lived at Damascus by proving that this One is the Christ. 23 And when many days had elapsed, the Jews plotted together to put him to death, 24 but their plot became known to Saul. They were also watching the gates day and night so that they might put him to death; 25 but his disciples took him by night and let him down through the wall, lowering him in a large basket. 26 And when he came to Jerusalem, he was trying to associate with the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and recounted to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had talked to him, and how at Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus. 28 So he was with them, moving about freely in Jerusalem, speaking out boldly in the name of the Lord. 29 And he was talking and arguing with the Hellenistic Jews, but they were attempting to put him to death. 30 But when the brothers learned of it, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him away to Tarsus. 31 So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria was having peace, being built up. And going on in the fear of the Lord and in the encouragement of the Holy Spirit, it continued to multiply.

What IMMEDIATE change after conversion in Saul’s life do you see/observe in the text? How should that relate or encourage new believers to change and pursue spiritual progress after their conversion in modern times?

II. Introduction: Spiritual Change and Progress in 2024

- ▶ There are 929 chapters in the Old Testament. There are 260 chapters in the New Testament. This gives a total of 1,189 chapters. The average reader can read the Bible through in about **65 to 75 hours**. So if you read the Bible for less than 15 minutes a day, you would accomplish your goal. There are 23,145 verses in the Old Testament and 7,957 verses in the New Testament. This gives a total of 31,102 verses, which is an average of a little more than 26 verses per chapter and 471 verses per book.
- ▶ info.thecrossingchurch.com/blog/the-real-reason-you-dont-have-time-to-read-the-bible
- ▶ Do you have a specific time, place, plan, and goals in 2024? Consider 4 key daily priorities for Spiritual Growth/Maturity:
 1. **Personal devotions** (Chad calls it his PWR times – Prayer, Word, Review/Recite/Record - biblereadingplangenerator.com / ligonier.org/posts/bible-reading-plans/),
 2. **Physical health** (diet, exercise, sleep – join a gym / decide on diet changes - your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit – honor God with your body),
 3. **Family devotions/worship** (The Jeremiah Study Bible – Psalms and Proverbs / Handbook for Praying Scripture / The Picture Bible / Read and Learn Bible), and
 4. **Spiritual unity with your spouse** – coordination, conversation, prayer with your spouse (Prayer Journal)
 5. **Church involvement/fellowship** (commitment and consistency, service in a ministry, and pursuing the “One Anothers”)
 6. **Evangelism/witnessing** (where and when can you be intentional and obedient to witness? – regularly praying for the lost by name, asking God for opportunities, planning to interact and share Christ with unbelievers – Ex. Passing out tracts / inviting neighbors over for dinner, etc.)
 7. **Giving/Loving others above yourself** – giving of your time, talents, and treasure (visiting orphans, widows, elderly, prisoners, advocating for the unborn, tithing to your local church, benevolence to the needy, setting aside time for date nights, family nights, invite church families over, etc.)

What are your major/overall praises for 2023 looking back, and what are prayers and goals/spiritual resolutions for 2024 looking ahead? What do you think God’s will/goals are for you are in 2024?

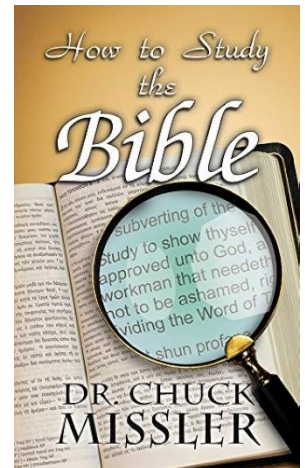
III. Review of Acts 9:1-19a (Saul’s Conversion – 7 “I’s”)

- God’s **INITIATION** (Saul wasn’t seeking God, he was seeking to persecute God’s people)
- God’s **INTERVENTION** (light and voice from heaven)
- God’s **INTEROGATION** (why are you persecuting me, why are you kicking against the goads)
- Saul’s Biblical **IDENTIFICATION** (who are you Lord?)
- Saul’s Biblical **INTERCHANGE** (rise up, enter the city, you will be told what you must do...Repentance and Faith)
- Saul’s Biblical **IDEOLOGY** (why do you delay, get up be baptized, wash away your sins, calling on HIS NAME - Jesus is Lord/Jesus is God)
- Saul’s Biblical **INTRODUCTION** – his baptism was just the beginning of a lifetime commitment that continues towards Biblical change and progress

When in your life did you...

- Repent of your sins like Saul?
- Believe and trust in Jesus for salvation like Saul?
- Be baptized/indwelt by the Holy Spirit like Saul?
- Be baptized/immersed in water like Saul by Ananias to publicly identify with Christ and the Church/other Christians?
- Start changing - Immediately begin sharing Christ with others like Saul?

What are the changes in your life that took place immediately after your conversion?



IV: Main Points – 10 Immediate Changes in Saul (Steps of Christian Growth) that should be True after Genuine Conversion. (Key word “IMMEDIATELY”)

1. **Water Baptism** (Public Identification with Christ and His Church)
2. Improving **Physical Health**/strength to match your new and growing spiritual strength/health
3. Church **Fellowship** (gathering together with other believers)
4. Personal **Evangelism** (sharing Christ and His gospel with unbelievers)
5. Spiritual **Growth** and maturity (growth and progress in greater Christlikeness)
6. **Willingness** to go and do what God wants and wills (even if it brings hardship and persecution)
7. A **Trust** in the sovereignty of God no matter the circumstances
8. A reliance and **Interdependence** on and with fellow believers
9. **1 to 1 Discipleship** – and close Christian friendship(s)
10. A bold/**Unashamed mindset**/attitude that always stands up, speaks, and defends (apologetics) the truth against anything/anyone who stands against our Lord Jesus, His Word the Bible, or His People the Church.

What should we do if some claims to be a Christian but has little to no change after conversion?

V: Main Points in-depth:

1. (9:18) Water Baptism (Public Identification with Christ & His Church)

Acts 9:18 ¹⁸ And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized;

The First Command of Jesus that New Believers Should Obey after their Conversion:

- ▶ 1. Who: Only for genuine believers,
- ▶ 2. What: Is symbolic representing one's belief/faith/trust in Jesus life, death/burial, and resurrection for spiritual cleansing, new birth, and start of a new commitment and relationship to live for the Lord and like the Lord.
- ▶ 3. When: Should occur publicly and as SOON after conversion as possible (the 10 examples of believers baptism was the same day / immediately after as their good confession/calling on THE NAME/= Jesus is Lord!
- ▶ 4. Where/how: Should be done by immersion, by another believer, and in the context of the church.
- ▶ 5. Why: And should be done with the motivation of pleasing and obeying the Lord's commands for a new believer to identify with Him and other believers publicly right after conversion (Mt. 28:18-20). (See also Acts 9:18, 22:16)

Where and when were you baptized after your conversion?

2. (19b) Improving Physical strength and health (9:19b) to match your new and improving spiritual health/strength

Acts 9:19b ¹⁹ and he took food and was strengthened.

The context is that while Paul was blinded after personally meeting Jesus and counting the cost of following Jesus – he didn't eat or drink physically and so had become very weak. God lets us know in the text that Saul was renewed **immediately** BOTH physically and spiritually. (why I pray when someone is sick – Lord give them the health they need to best serve you, their family, and the church) (this principle would also apply to those who are saved out of drug addiction, alcoholism, anything/anyone doing great harm to their physical body).

– I recently heard of a man saved out of prison ministry, who then relapsed into drugs/cocaine, lost his marriage and his health (emaciated), but then returned to church and praising God that he was 6 months clean) (so while Christians can struggle and reap consequences of sin – we should not stay unhealthy – a new convert should not stay an alcoholic, or a drug addict, or a lazy glutton, or not try to get physically healthy).

... now this does not mean every Christian becomes a body builder lifting tons of weight or a gymnast doing flips, or a star athlete with 4% body fat – but overall it is a Scriptural principle for Christians to be physically healthy – as elsewhere in Scripture it says we should be soberminded (not abusing things that alter our mind) (physical training is of some value) (and to honor God with our bodies because we are now a temple of the Holy Spirit) (See also 1 Cor. 3:16-17, 6:19-20, 9:24-27, 1 Tim. 4:8)

How is your physical health and what specific steps or plans do you have to improve it for the glory of God in 2024?

3. (9:19c) Church Fellowship (gathering together with other believers)

Acts 9:19c Now for several days he was with the disciples who were at Damascus,

Notice Saul Christian fellowship with other believers begins **immediately** after his conversion. He didn't wait to find or join a church – the Holy Spirit within him led him to seek out and find and be "with the disciples." (See also Acts 2:42, 5:42, Hebrews 3:13-14, 10:23-25)

How is your Christian Fellowship, friendships, and church involvement/service, what specific steps or plans do you have to improve it for the glory of God in 2024?

4. (9:20-21) Personal Evangelism (sharing Christ and His gospel with unbelievers)

Acts 9:20 and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God."

Notice that Paul didn't wait in his Christian life to progress in order to start witnessing he started witnessing **immediately** – he was unashamed of his new Lord from the start – now it is true that he had a wealth of Scriptural knowledge as a former Pharisee that God immediately retooled and used to prove to people that Jesus was the Christ/Messiah – but even if you don't have a phd or much Scriptural knowledge – God still can and will use you to testify of what God has done for you.

This personal testimony is a great witness – because often it not just the knowledge of the gospel, it's the personal validations of undeniable change that God uses to convince and convict people not only of their sin, but that He can do the same for them – make them a brand new person. A new start – with a new mind, new spirit, new hope, new friends/fellowship, new power to overcome sin, and new purpose – to represent and share Jesus as Savior, Lord, and King to a lost and dying world.

Here in the context we see Saul proclaiming Jesus - and two specifics lessons – in the synagogues (this likely is because Saul relates best to Jews as a Jew (we often best relate and are able reach our own culture/countrymen because we speak their language and understand the culture) but also Saul went to a synagogue because people going to a religious gathering place reveals they have some fear of God, desire to worship God, quest to know God, and sometimes some Bible background or knowledge that God always uses powerfully to reach people (Isa. 55:6-11).

Specifically what did Paul proclaim? – Jesus is the Son of God. (Jesus deity, by implication His perfection/sinlessness, and His supernatural abilities as God – 3 "omni's" – all knowing, all powerful, all present). I like calling this the exclusivity of Christ – only Jesus is the Son of God, Son of Man, 100% God/100% Man, Savior, Messiah, Christ, King of kings and Lord of lords. We should know, memorize, and share key verses (Consider memorizing "exclusivity of Jesus" verses like Jn.14:6, Acts 4:12, 1 Tim.1:17, 2:5, 6:15. Rev. 17:14, 19:16!)

How is your personal Evangelism, obedience to the Great Commission (Mt 28:18-20, Acts 1:8) what specific steps or plans do you have to improve it for the glory of God in 2024?

5. (9:21-22) Spiritual growth (change and progress in holiness/godliness/Christlikeness)

Acts 9:22 ²² But Saul kept increasing in strength and confounding the Jews who lived at Damascus by proving that this Jesus is the Christ.

Saul was increasing in strength (spiritual) immediately/ right away– he is able to confounding the Jews (who deny Jesus is the Messiah and disown him as their own/much less their Savior and God), proving this One (Jesus) is the Christ/Messiah/Anointed One by God to save from sin, and defend the one true faith (Titus 1:9). While we don't know for sure Paul's age – Paul's amazing and immediate growth shows that age should not be a barrier to spiritual leadership as his was totally leadership by example – no one (besides the Lord) knew more, did more, loved more, traveled more, or suffered more – his spiritual maturity was one of heart not of age.

How are you specifically and currently growing or not growing? what specific steps or plans do you have to improve it for the glory of God in 2024? Did anything stand out or challenge you from the first 5 immediate changes in Saul's life that you could also growth or progress in during 2024?

6. (9:23-24) Willing to suffer persecution

Acts 9:23-24 ²³ When many days had elapsed, the Jews plotted together to do away with him, ²⁴ but their plot became known to Saul. They were also watching the gates day and night so that they might put him to death;

Saul is willing to suffer **immediate** persecution for his Jesus ...so clear and immediate threat was the new Saul that Satan and his minions (not just demons but every unbeliever is a child of the devil) will try to not only stop his evangelism but destroy/kill him altogether. They plotted together to put him to death.

Many people form and work together for good but so too and so often religious but not saved people can plot to eliminate the perceived threats to their beliefs, their money/way of life, their culture/tradition, etc. They justify their evil or spiritualize their rebellion usually with far out lies. Consider how the Pharisees and Sadducees justified their plotting and murder under the religious guise of blasphemy, the ruse of Jesus doing miracles by the power of Satan/ Beelzebul (Mt. 12, Mk. 12, Lk. 11), 4 illegal in the middle of the night sham trials without the who Sanhedrin present (Jesus before Annas, Caiphas, Herod, and Pilate) or the old fashioned tactic of false testimony/lies (forbids taxes to Caesar), or twists on the truths (claims to be a King, would destroy the temple/rebuild it in 3 days – Luke 23:2, Mt. 26:60, and even to political leverage – claims to be a King (Luke 23:2, John 18:37, no friend of Caesar (John 19:12), people/the church). (See also 2 Cor. 6:4-10, Col. 1:24-29, 1 Thess. 3:2-8, 2 Thess. 1:3-5, 2 Tim. 3:12-14)

I wonder about four things in regards to persecution of Christians in the USA/in the current modern era –

1. Are we just blessed without persecution because even in Acts their were times of peace and times of persecution and we are just sovereignly blessed to be in a time pf peace,
2. Perhaps because the USA still has the greatest number of Christians in the world or because of our previous morals (world wars to fight aggression, tyranny, and oppression/genocide, holocaust) generosity (greatest giver of humanitarian aid around the world for famine, floods, natural disasters, war torn countries), or still the greatest missionary sending country in history, or historic and current support of the the nation of Israel (the nation that blessed Israel will be blessed, curses them will be curse – Gen 12:3, 27:2).
3. Are we now lukewarm spiritually and in such decline as a former Christian nation turned secular that current Christians are just too passive, not vocal, not bold/unashamed, and therefore not much of a threat to Satan with prayer, holiness, or revival that this is the reason we have little to no persecution.
4. Or that we are currently heading into a time of increasing persecution where the kettle with the frog is slowly heating up and we are the frog = and that the progression of persecution will be an eroding of our freedoms – first the government telling us when, where, and how we can or cannot worship (Covid19 in 2020-21), people taking us to court to make our life miserable (you have to bake a cake or perform your business even if it goes against your conscience or religion, could be loss of some benefits (giving deductions, tax exempt status, etc.) could be hate speech / discrimination laws that makes it illegal to speak against any clear sins/depravity in our culture, could be anti-proselytizing laws (you can practice your religion but its illegal to share it with anyone else or try to convert anyone else), but I don't think it's a stretch to see in our lifetime and in our country forms of persecution the early church endured – namely confiscation of their property (govt stealing assets under religious laws/bans), imprisonment, bodily harm/torture like Paul endured everywhere, or even martyrdom/death ... ALL FOR JESUS BEING YOUR LORD – as the Bible says the world is not done afflicting Christ (through His people/the church).

How can you, your family, or our church best prepare for persecution if that is what all the godly are destined for? (1 Thess 3:3)

7. (9:24) A trust in the sovereignty of God

Acts 9:24 ²⁴ but their plot became known to Saul. They were also watching the gates day and night so that they might put him to death;

By faith Saul obeys, and by providence God spares his life time and time again. Here God allows Saul himself to come to know of the particular plot/death threat against him. And his enemies are intent and intense – watching the gate (entrance to the city) day and night in order to kill him.

I'm reminded how someone similar happens to Paul later in his life when a relative of his reveals to him the plot against him in Jerusalem and God uses a Roman guard to take him to Ceasarea to foil those who had even shaved their heads and vowed not to eat until they had murdered Paul. God was always faithful to direct, encourage, and protect Paul... (See also Acts 16:9-10, 18:9-10, 23:11)

Faith is a spiritual gift that prays, trusts, hopes, and relies on God no matter what the circumstances – and helps others also endure, persevere, and keep on keeping on in tough times - how can we all grow in a greater faith/trust of God's sovereignty like we see in Job?

8. (9:25) A reliance and interdependence with fellow believers.

Acts 9:25 ²⁵ but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a large basket.

Saul has to rely on fellow believers to get him out of Damascus safely – here they lower Saul over the wall in a large (human size basket) (story of my parents acting out Bible stories from my youth – the two most memorable – dad digging a large hole in our back yard and lowering me in... “but dad I don't want to be Joseph.” or him lowering my brother and I in a laundry basket over the stairwell to enact Saul's escape from Damascus. (In retrospect I wonder what our neighbors were thinking about the local Pastor digging a large whole and putting his children in©) getting back to reliance on fellow believers – how are we doing?

I think so many Christians are lone Rangers – but I wonder if there coming a time when we will have to rely upon each other and help each other for food, survival, or comfort/encouragement when of us is imprisoned and killed for the faith? I'll always remember the hardest thing for Harlan Popov and Richard Wurmbrandt (I believe both – tortured for Christ, tortured for the faith in Romania during the cold war era – was not the torture/beatings, or even harsh conditions/little food but was the brain washing tactics they used to turn their younger children against them while they were in prison – one of the 13 years! (long time).

But I pray if that ever be the circumstances we face – that we would face them together – I believe there would be a greater closeness, depth, fervency, and appreciation of our fellowship than even before – much like the military has or law enforcement has – because they depend on each other for life and death, and go through the toughest things TOGETHER!

How can we specifically and intentionally develop and foster great interdependence and togetherness here at TBC?

9. (9:26-27) 1 to 1 Discipleship (9:26-27) – a friend that sticks closer than a brother.

Acts 9:26-27 ²⁶ When he came to Jerusalem, he was trying to associate with the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. ²⁷ But Barnabas took hold of him and brought him to the apostles and described to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had talked to him, and how at Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus.

For Paul this was Barnabus (took him and brought him spoke for him/recounted Paul's conversion) (Barnabus name/reputation was Son of Encouragement) We see that Saul seeks fellowship and acceptance by the Christians in Jerusalem, but apparently his previous persecution was likely much greater and more prolonged where they needed more convincing before ever accepting much less trusting Saul into their lives and one of their own.

And here we see God using Barnabus. Barnabus must have had the the gift of faith and the gift of encouragement – because he befriends Paul, helps Paul here gain acceptance through the Apostles at Jerusalem, and later will go with Paul on his first missionary Journey – so probably goes with Saul to Caesarea and to Tarsus, and eventually to Antioch their home church/sending church.

This kind of friendship – I call it David /Jonathan friendship, Paul and Barnabus partnership, and good ole fashioned 1 to 1 discipleship that Dawson Trotman of the Navigators championed and instilled to help the church grow in Bible knowledge, Bible memory, and Evangelism is once again missing in the church. Dawson would ask – Where is you man (meaning who are you discipling/pouring your life into spiritually to help them grow). (See also Titus 2:3-5 about women discipling other women, and 2 Timothy 2:1-6 about men discipling other men)

If anyone in this church wants to be discipled – men or women – all you need to do is ask – ask one of the Elders or Deacons, ask on your connection card – I suggest a 7-8 week initial commitment to meet with a brother or sister 1 to 1 every week or every 2 weeks – to share about their life (life on life), hold each other accountable and pray for one another, memorize and study the word together/or go through one of the **7 TBC discipleship classes** – most of which are 7-8 weeks long).

As you have heard me say before – many Christians wonder why they not growing, greatly struggling, or even stagnating or backsliding in their faith – and I will surely find that Satan ISOLATED them from other Christians – just like a roaring lion hunts in a pack and isolates the weak gazeele all by themselves in order to pounce on them to destroy them. **1 Pet. 5:7-11**

Others think that Congregation/Church alone is enough – that 52 sermons a year or 2 hours of church a week will somehow counteract or void the 30-50 hours of secular social media (music, movies, apps, internet) that people are ingesting full of Satan's agenda and they wonder while they are spiritual sick or weak. Some wisely add the Class or Cells to grow (S.s/smaller group bible studies), but I've found the last 2 C's – Comrade (no Russian sympathizer here just needing a C for 1 to 1 Discipleship) and Christian studying the word for themselves 5-7 x a week as part of their personal devotions/quiet times –is how Christians grow the most and the best in their journey of discipleship to be like Christ, please Christ, and put Him first so that He has 1st place/supremacy in everything! **Col. 1:15-18**

Have you ever been discipled 1 to 1, are you discipling anyone else 1 to 1, are you willing to learn how to disciple others?

10. (9:28-31) A bold/unashamed mindset/attitude that always stands up, speaks, & defends (apologetics) the truth.

Acts 9:28-31 28 And he was with them, moving about freely in Jerusalem, speaking out boldly in the name of the Lord. 29 And he was talking and arguing with the Hellenistic Jews; but they were attempting to put him to death. 30 But when the brethren learned of it, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him away to Tarsus. 31 So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.

Saul was talking and arguing with the Hellenistic Jews who were no doubt bringing Jesus, Christians (The Wayers), and God's Word into disrepute. God raising up a Saul to confound, prove, and here argue with those not just rejecting Christ themselves but most likely keeping others from Christ or even worst leading younger/immature/or weak believers AWAY from Christ. We have to watch out for new believers getting sucked into fine sounding cults like Mormonism, JW's, Oneness Pentecostals, and yes Roman Catholicism. We must stand and defend/content earnestly (with agony) **Jude 1:3** against every form or source of false doctrine. (See also **2 Corinthians 10:1-5**)

But when Paul does this – he once again – at the 2nd time is specifically being targeted to be killed by those whom was confounding, proving, and arguing with. God again uses the brothers to get him to safety – here they send him to Caesarea and back home to his hometown of Tarsus. Now some will say Paul was being too bold, too confrontational, too uncompromising, too black and white so the church leaders sent him back home.

But I think God sent him home to spare his life, to prepare him for his ultimate ministry (3-4 missionary journeys to reach the Gentiles that has made its way to you and to me some 2000 years later). The reason I believe this is Jesus was bold to the point of death, Paul and most of the Apostles bold to the point of death, and the Bible always commends them.

God is never stated with the slightest notion of words to the effect of "hey tone things down a bit, don't be so bold, its ok to compromise on some small things, etc.) No that is the voice of the devil – the voice of God is how our text ends – the church was GOING On and Being BUILT UP – how? Not compromise, not weakness, not capitulation to culture, but **IN THE FEAR OF THE LORD**, and **comfort/encouragement of the Holy Spirit**. – They CONTINUED TO MULTIPLY. God multiplied the church as they like Saul went out boldly in unashamed personal evangelism. So too I commend you, myself, and this church to spiritually grow, change, and progress as we enter this new year.

How can our church/TBC specifically grow in the fear of the Lord, and comfort/encouragement of the Holy Spirit so that we too GROW like the early church in the book of Acts?

VI. Application: Acts 2:46-47, 5:42, 9:31, 16:5

Let's specifically pray for God's will, God's growth, and God's encouragement/blessing for our church in 2024!

Acts 1:15 – 120

Acts 2:41 – 3000

Acts 4:4 – 5000

Acts 5:14 – multitudes

Acts 6:1,7 – increasing in number, the disciples increased greatly

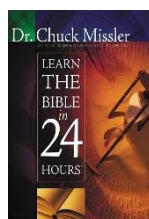
Acts 11:21 – large number believed turned to the Lord

Acts 16:5 - So the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily.

VII. Practical Application: Learn the Bible in 24 hours, Legacy Standard Bible (audio)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PZ3hEj_M8

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=24yLtdMkufw&t=57s>



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FOLLOWERS OF JESUS SEEKING TO...

LOVE GOD SUPREMELY

Matthew 22:37-38 ³⁷ And He said to him, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND." ³⁸ "This is the great and foremost commandment.

SERVE PEOPLE SINCERELY

Matthew 22:39 ³⁹ "The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'

John 13:34-35 ³⁴ "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵ "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

REACH THE LOST URGENTLY

Matthew 28:19-20 ¹⁹ "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Acts 9:19b–31 (LSB)

19b Now for several days he was with the disciples who were at Damascus, 20 and immediately he *began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.”* 21 And all those hearing him continued to be astounded, and were saying, “Is this not the one who in Jerusalem destroyed those that called on this name, and *who had come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?*” 22 But Saul kept increasing in strength and confounding the Jews who lived at Damascus by proving that this One is the Christ. 23 And when many days had elapsed, the Jews plotted together to put him to death,



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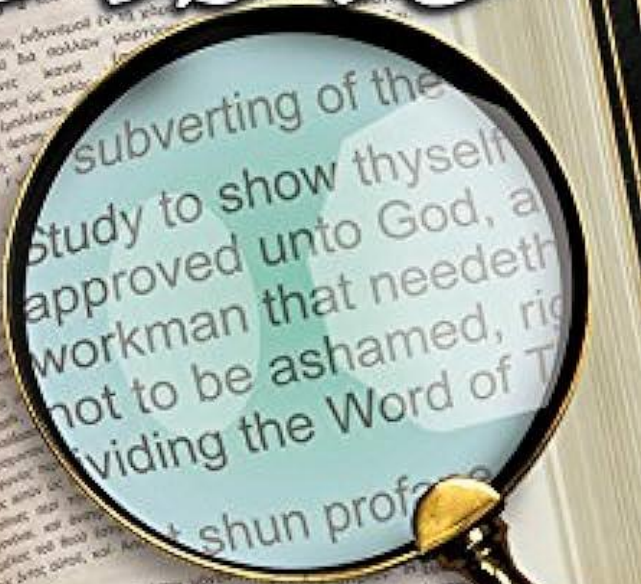


Acts 9:19b–31 (LSB)

29 And he was talking and arguing with the Hellenistic *Jews*, *but they were attempting to put him to death.* 30 But when the brothers learned *of it, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him away to Tarsus.* 31 So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria was having peace, being built up. And going on in the fear of the Lord and in the encouragement of the Holy Spirit, it continued to multiply.



How to Study
the
Bible



**DR. CHUCK
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HOW TO
STUDY
the **BIBLE**
FOR
YOURSELF

TIM LAHAYE

Chapter 1

The Word of God

And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 3:15

The Bible is the Word of God.

That's quite a statement. If we really believe that, it should change everything. We realize that the Bible is not the random jottings of ancient Hebrew sages, but a portal - a portal into the heart of our Creator. The Word of God is given to instruct and correct and guide us,¹ but it is also a weapon to protect us from the enemy of our souls.²

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12

The Bible is by far the best-selling book of all time, yet thousands of Bibles sit on shelves year after year gathering dust. When we come to realize the true nature of the Bible, we understand what a terrible waste that is. We live in a world filled with deception, and the best way to recognize a lie is to already know the truth. We need to *know* this book that God breathed through His prophets and disciples. We need to know what it says and how to wield it in our own lives. I often say that the Bible is a message by one Author from outside our time domain, but it's vital to know why I say that and how it's true.

How should we study the Bible? I'm going to make some personal remarks in this book. I've been studying the Bible for more than sixty

years, so I've developed my own viewpoints on matters. However, nobody should accept anything just because I've said it or because some other Bible teacher has said it. You have a much better tutor than me readily available to you through the person of the Holy Spirit. Research and study the Bible for yourself to determine what it says - from front to back. My foundational verse on Bible study is Acts 17:11, which tells us about the people of Berea, who:

...were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."

Acts 17:11

We are in a predicament as human beings. We are plagued by a general spiritual blindness. Most of us cannot see past the atoms of this world into the dimensions beyond us, the dimensions of angels and demons, or of the spiritual warfare that takes place on our behalf. We get a peek in [2 Kings 6](#) and [Daniel 10](#), but we cannot see the full reality ourselves.

Too many of us think of Jesus Christ as that broken carpenter hanging on a cross. We do not fully appreciate that the man who rose again on Resurrection Sunday is the King of the universe, through whom all things were made. ([John 1:3](#)) As we study the Bible, our greatest discovery will be a growing appreciation for the person and identity of Jesus, the Messiah of Israel and Creator and Lord of all things.

The Age of Deceit

It has become increasingly politically incorrect to be a Bible believer. It's strange to realize that many church congregations are embarrassed by people who take the Bible seriously. Our culture is apathetic to the very idea of truth. It used to be the dream of American mothers and fathers for their children to go off to college and learn, to become good thinkers and moral people able to distinguish right from wrong.

Today, students go to college to be told there is no right and wrong. They are told, "You have your truth and I have mine." The value of relativism has had tragic consequences.

Satan was a liar and a murderer from the beginning ([John 8:44](#)), and his goal is to deceive us. The only remedy, the only inoculation we can get to protect us from deceit is for us to do our homework. Benjamin Franklin is often misquoted as saying, "a jack of all trades and a master of none." It's actually, "a jack of all trades and a master of one." In other words, an educated person should know a little about everything, but know everything about one thing. If we are Christians, we should be a master of the Bible. We should know it inside and out. As Christians, we don't just represent ourselves. We are ambassadors for Jesus Christ, and it's vital that we represent Him faithfully. We cannot do that well if we do not know the Bible - and not just parts of the Bible taken out of context, but the Bible as a whole.

It's my premise that we cannot understand God's Word by spending 45 minutes at it once a week listening to a sermon (which may or may not dig into the Bible at all). We need to be involved in dedicated personal study.

Prerequisites to Study

I'm going to suggest there are a couple of preconditions you should have in place before you start your study of God's Word. These are important. We want to get all we can out of our Bible study. We don't want it to be a dry lump of wordy onion-skin papers that hit us in the face but don't dig deep into our hearts and souls.

First, ask Jesus Christ to be Lord of your life. This is vital, because when the Holy Spirit comes and dwells in us, He is the one who leads us into all truth. In [John 3](#), Jesus told Nicodemus that he had to be born again, and that applies to all of us. People who aren't saved can read the Bible and learn from it, but it's the

Holy Spirit who brings the Bible to life in our minds and hearts:

Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

John 14:17

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

John 15:26

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

John 16:13

Many people don't realize that God *wants* to give us the Holy Spirit, just as a father wants to give his children good things. We need His Spirit, and He is more than willing to fill us. We just have to ask.

For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Luke 11:10-13

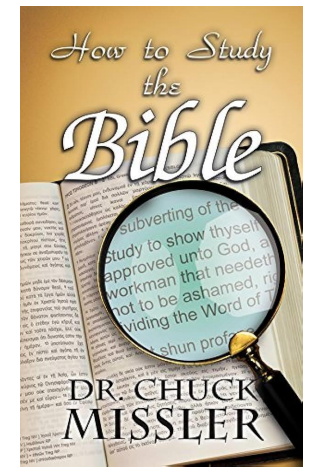
We might have a big experience when the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in us - we might feel His love and power fill us. Or, we might not feel anything at all - yet the Holy Spirit is there, ready to do His work in us. Either way, we know that His presence is one request God will absolutely honor when we ask, because it is always good.

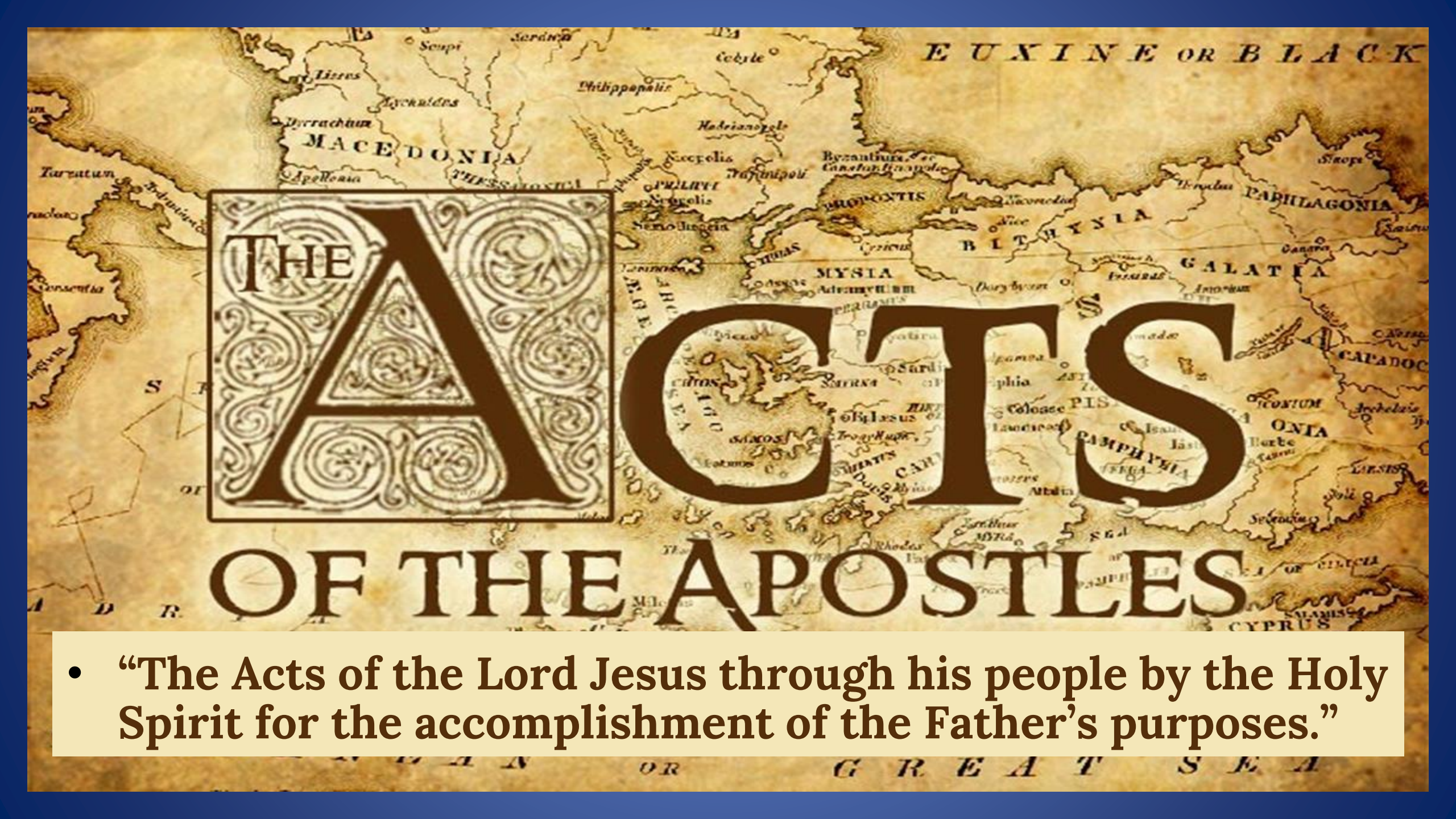
A second precondition is that we should always open our Bible study with prayer. It's important to remember that Bible study is a spiritual issue as well as an intellectual one. God gave us brains, and He wants us to use the minds He gave us, but we are also on a spiritual battlefield. We should always open with prayer.

A third part of preparation is obedience. We want to be under the tutorship of the Author of the Bible. God will reward our obedience with further insights. Obedience is a prerequisite, and we want to be pre-committed and surrendered to Jesus Christ as we embark on this study.

As we begin this study, let's take these things to heart. Let's bow our hearts as we begin on this little adventure.

Father, we pray for this moment in time. We know that there's no accidents in Your kingdom, and we simply pray that Your purpose would be accomplished in these chapters. Please open our understanding to Your Word, that this time might yield the fruit that You would intend. Please open our eyes to see the things You have for us, and give us discernment. We commit our studies and all of ourselves into Your hands, in Jesus Christ, amen.





THE ACTS
OF THE APOSTLES

- “The Acts of the Lord Jesus through his people by the Holy Spirit for the accomplishment of the Father’s purposes.”

Introduction:

When in your life did you...

1. Repent of your sins like Saul?
2. Believe and trust in Jesus for salvation like Saul?
3. Be baptized/indwelt by the **Holy Spirit** like Saul?
4. Be baptized/immersed in **water** like Saul by Ananias to publicly identify with Christ and the Church/other Christians?
5. Start **changing** - Immediately begin sharing Christ with others like Saul?

Acts 9 – Saul's Conversion and Immediate Change

1. God's **INITIATION** (Saul wasn't seeking God, he was seeking to persecute God's people)
2. God's **INTERVENTION** (light and voice from heaven)
3. God's **INTEROGATION** (why are you persecuting me, why are you kicking against the goads)
4. Biblical **IDENTIFICATION** (who are you Lord?)
5. Biblical **INTERCHANGE** (rise up, enter the city, you will be told what you must do...Repentance and Faith)
6. Biblical **IDEOLOGY** (why do you delay, get up be baptized, wash away your sins, calling on HIS NAME - Jesus is Lord/Jesus is God)
7. Biblical **INTRODUCTION** – just the beginning of a lifetime commitment that continues towards Biblical change and progress (our topic last week and this week)



Today's Sermon Title:

“The Change that Should Occur After True Conversion to Christ”

((Saul's IMMEDIATE change and obedience after his Conversion))

Acts 9:19b–31

Today's Sermon Title:

“Spiritual Change and Progress”

(Saul's Immediate Change after Salvation)

Acts 9:19b–31

2024 Spiritual Progress Plan

Inspiration: Daniel did not have perfect circumstances (exiled in a foreign land and forced to serve in the administration of wicked kings – Daniel 1). Daniel was disciplined to pray to Yahweh 3x a day (Dan. 6:10) no doubt for spiritual power, perspective, progress, and perseverance. His devotion, dedication, and discipline are legendary in that we can follow his example of depending on the Lord for everything, but also doing his part to cooperate and appropriate the resources of the Lord – putting on the full armor of God (Eph. 6) and recognizing God has blessed us (Eph. 1:3-6) has given us His Son (salvation/intercession – Eph. 1:7-12), given us His Holy Spirit (indwelling/empowering – Eph. 1:13-14), given us each other (the blessed church/bride of Christ – Eph. 4:11-16), given us His Word (to feed and nourish our souls – Mt. 4:4), and given us access to Himself through prayer – Col. 4:2 with a promise that if we ask anything according to His Name/His will – He will do it – John 14:14, 15:7, 15:16, 16:23-24, 1 John 3:22). Finally, Daniel certainly had a certain hope for the future – God used him to predict how the Messiah (Jesus) will first suffer (Dan. 9:26), but then also return and reign in an eternal Kingdom that will last forever (Dan. 2:44, 4:34, 6:26, 7:18). May we be prayerful, hopeful, and faithful like Daniel in 2024.

Prayer: Lord, help me live a life worthy of my calling (Eph. 4:1) as a follower and worshipper of you (2 Thess. 1:11-12). Lord show me a good plan of progress and empower me to actually follow it and live it out for your glory (Col. 3:17-23). Lord lead me to what do you want, reveal to me what would please you the most, and progress me in your likeness so that not my will is pursued but your will be done in every area of my life (Mt. 6:10). I now prayerfully submit to you this spiritual plan (Prov. 16:3) of progress in 2024:

Daily Priorities:

- Personal Worship** (power in the morning)
 - Time – 6:00a
 - Place – Sunroom
 - Plan – Bible Read Through, Acts Journaling, Finish O.T. Commentary, Memorize Colossians, Write Learn and Live the Bible Books, Prayer for Wife, Kids, Church, Community, Country, World, Self
 - Goal – Consistency, Growth in Self-Discipline, Self-Denial, Self-Control, Progress in Holiness/Purity and Hope (not double minded, half-hearted, discouraged/depression)
- Physical Exercise** (midday hour at the gym)
 - Time – 12:15-1:15p (maximize 1 hour)
 - Place – Planet Fitness or Home Gym (min. 3x week, max 6x week – Sundays always rest)
 - Plan – Cardio, Weight Training, Stretching, Diet (water, portion control, less processed foods, less eating out/fast food, less carbs (esp. cereal) and desserts, no eating late)
 - Goal – Lose 20 pounds, look and feel better, fitness to play with my kids, honor God with my body, health to best serve my God, my family, and my church
- Family Devotions** (evening dinner table fellowship, family prayer walk after dinner)
 - Time – 6:00p
 - Place – Dinner Table, take a family prayer walk after dinner as time/weather/schedule allow
 - Plan – Handbook for Praying Scripture (Dr. William Varner), Young Kids: Children’s Bible (ABS Read & Learn Bible)
 - Goal – Become a selfless, others focused, praying family not media filled family, kids to learn and live the Bible, older children to become mature to stand alone in their faith, younger kids to be genuinely saved.
- Spousal Unity** (communication, coordination, and prayer at the end of the day)
 - Time – 10:00p, Marriage Counseling once a month? (9x year meeting once a month with a godly couple)
 - Place – M. Bedroom
 - Plan – Talk about the day, Talk about tomorrow, Pray Together
 - Goal – To be Joyful, Thankful, Loving, Serving, and Patient/Forebearing. Not bitter, to have a mutual positive view of growing/progressing vs stagnating or declining, always seeking oneness/unity in every area – being interdependent not isolated or independent/isolated in our mission to know God and give Him glory, as well as our purpose to evangelize and disciple our kids, our calling be good examples/spiritual pace setters to our church, and our commission to reach the lost/making the most of every opportunity.

Specific Action Points: Prioritize Prayer above all (ask God for help, power, progress). Plan and print new schedule, enter everything in Calendar. Share plan with M and Elders/friends to pray, encourage, and hold accountable. Buy LSB and prayer devotional for all the kids, buy Acts journal for M and I, memorize Top 20 verses on Purity, Buy gym membership at PF, Set, print, & follow new schedule (early to rise/early to bed), Decide on diet/exercise and be resolved! *Resolve to keep going when I fail or fall short of ideals.*

Weekly Priorities:

- Weekly Couples Planning and Coordination (Communication, Calendar, Finances, Accountability) - Mondays
- Weekly Church Night – Home Group Fellowship Wednesday Night
- Weekly Date Night – Monday or Friday Night
- Weekly Family Night – Friday or Saturday Night (have other families over for dinner)
- Sunday Worship – Sunday School and Worship Service, Family Lunch after church (invite other families)
- Sunday Ministry – Youth/Awaya/Leadership Development
- ***Weekly Outreach/Evangelism – passing out tracts, visiting prisoners, orphans, widows, elderly

Monthly Priorities:

- TBC Men’s Fellowship (Faithful Men – 1st Saturday of the month)
- Protesting at abortion clinic (2nd Sat. of every month)
- Having a Church family over for dinner (Fri, Sat, Mon nights or Sun afternoons)

Quarterly Priorities:

- TBC Half Day of Prayer (1st Saturday of Jan, April, July, Oct)
- Inviting a neighbor over for dinner
- Quarterly cleaning and organizing (basement, garage, shed(s))

Yearly Priorities:

- Family Birthdays (May 10 - M, 11 - W, 13 - K, April 7 - H, May 12 - B, June 9 - A, July 15 - C, 18 - Ch, August 10 - E)
- Anniversary Trip (June 7)
- Family Vacation (July-August)
- Family Thanksgiving (November)
- Family Christmas (December)
- Church Family Seder Supper / Resurrection Sunday (March-April)
- Extended Family Events (Holidays, Graduations, Reunions, Weddings, Funerals)

Other Important Dates:

- April 15th – Federal and State Taxes Due
- September 30th – Property Taxes Due
- December 31st – Yearly Church Giving Due
- 7 Holidays TBC gives off – (New Years, Rez Sunday, Memorial, Independence, Labor, Thanksgiving, Christmas)
- Annual TBC Events: Elder Retreat/Faith Giving (Jan), Youth Winter Retreat (Feb), Women’s Retreat (Mar), Seder/Rez Sunday (Mar-Apr), Bible Conference (April/May), Awaya Grand Prix/Regatta (May), Youth Summer Camp (June), VBS/Summer Concert (July), Men’s Retreat (Sep), All Church Retreat (Oct), Thanksgiving Service (Nov), Christmas Party/Eve Service (Dec).

Family Goals (Top 3 Prayers)

- All my children saved – come safely into Jesus’ Kingdom
- All my children marry in the faith and raise a godly legacy so there is faith through my line till Christ’s return
- My wife and children to love, respect, and follow me, see me grow/progress in my areas of weakness, along with the Lord to overall view me/find me a FAITHFUL husband, father, pastor, evangelist, and slave of the Lord Jesus.

Personal Goals (No Regrets, No Reserve, No Retreat)

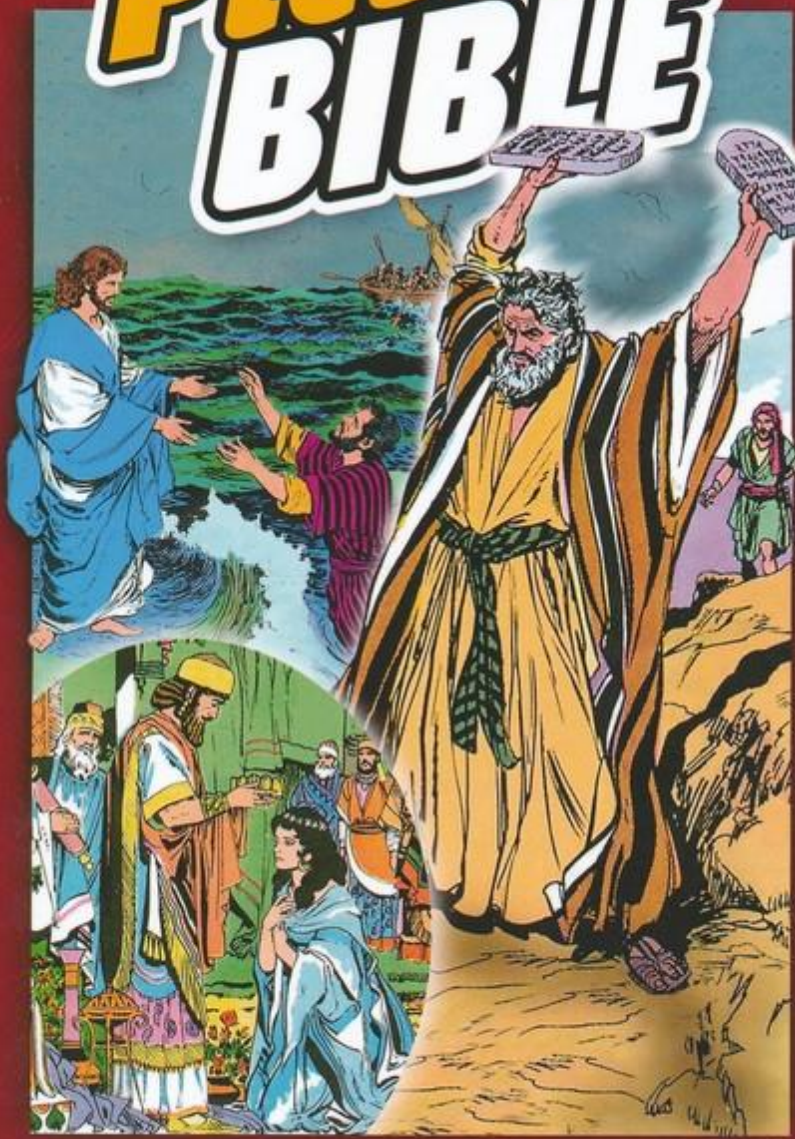
- Read most of my books/Pastoral library instead of waste my time with news, movies, media etc.
- Become proficient in Greek and Hebrew – able to read my devotions in the original languages.
- Preach through the N.T. verse by verse, write books to leave to my church/kids, plant Biblical churches
- Relearn piano to play any hymn for personal worship, improve guitar to jam for fun/write songs and lead music with Marissa
- Mission Trips (past: Mexico early 1990s, Ukraine 2010, Uganda 2018, future: Indonesia to visit TBC Missionaries)
- Interesting places (past: Army/Korea 1995, Hawaii/SCC 2006, Ukraine/Moldova/Romania/Greece/Italy 2011)
- Visit the Holy Land/Israel (TBC trip in 2019), future: Visit Reformer places in Europe, cruise to Alaska

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31	Jan 1	2 □ Gen 1-5; Luk 1	3 □ Gen 6-10; John 1; Mat 1	4 □ Gen 11; Job 1-5; Luk 2	5 □ Job 6-10; Mat 2-3	6 □ Job 11-16; Mk 1
7	8 □ Job 17-21; Luk 3; Mat 4	9 □ Job 22-27; Luk 4	10 □ Job 28-32; Luk 5; John 2	11 □ Job 33-38; John 3	12 □ Job 39-42; Gen 12; John 4; Mat 8	13 □ Gen 13-18; Mk 2
14	15 □ Gen 19-23; John 5; Mat 12	16 □ Gen 24-29; Mk 3	17 □ Gen 30-34; Luk 6; Mat 5	18 □ Gen 35-39; Mat 6	19 □ Gen 40-45; Mat 7, 9	20 □ Gen 46-50; Luk 7
21	22 □ Ex 1-6; Mat 11; Luk 11	23 □ Ex 7-11; Mat 13; Luk 8	24 □ Ex 12-17; Mk 4	25 □ Ex 18-22; Mk 5; Mat 10	26 □ Ex 23-28; Mat 14	27 □ Ex 29-33; Mk 6; Luk 9
28	29 □ Ex 34-39; John 6	30 □ Ex 40; Lev 1-4; Mat 15; Mk 7	31 □ Lev 5-10; Mat 16	Feb 1 □ Lev 11-15; Mk 8; Mat 17	2 □ Lev 16-21; Mk 9	3 □ Lev 22-26; Mat 18; John 7
4	5 □ Lev 27; Num 1-4; John 8	6 □ Num 5-10; John 9-10	7 □ Num 11-15; Luk 10	8 □ Ps 90; Num 16-20; Luk 12-13	9 □ Num 21-25; Luk 14	10 □ Num 26-31; Luk 15-16
11	12 □ Num 32-36; Luk 17; John 11	13 □ Deut 1-6; Luk 18	14 □ Deut 7-11; Mat 19; Mk 10	15 □ Deut 12-17; Mat 20	16 □ Deut 18-22; Mat 21; Luk 19	17 □ Deut 23-28; Mk 11
18	19 □ Deut 29-33; John 12; Mat 22	20 □ Deut 34; Ps 91; Josh 1-3; Mk 12	21 □ Josh 4-9; Mat 23; Luk 20	22 □ Josh 10-14; Luk 21	23 □ Josh 15-20; Mk 13; Mat 24	24 □ Josh 21-24; Jdg 1; Mat 25
25	26 □ Jdg 2-7; Mat 26; Mk 14	27 □ Jdg 8-12; Luk 22	28 □ Jdg 13-18; John 13-14	29 □ Jdg 19-21; Rut 1-2; John 15	Mar 1 □ Rut 3-4; 1 Sa 1-4; John 16-17	2 □ 1 Sa 5-9; Mat 27; Mk 15
3	4 □ 1 Sa 10-15; Luk 23	5 □ 1 Sa 16-20; John 18-19	6 □ Ps 11, 59; 1 Sa 21-24; Mat 28	7 □ Ps 7, 27, 31, 34, 52; Mk 16; Luk 24	8 □ Ps 56, 120, 140-142; John 20	9 □ 1 Sa 25-27; Ps 17, 35, 54; John 21; Acts 1
10	11 □ Ps 63; 1 Sa 28-31; Acts 2	12 □ Ps 18, 121, 123-125, 128; Acts 3-4	13 □ Ps 129-130; 2 Sa 1-3; Acts 5	14 □ 2 Sa 4; Ps 6, 8-10, 14; Acts 6-7	15 □ Ps 16, 19, 21; 1 Chr 1-2; Acts 8	16 □ Ps 43-45, 49, 84-85; Acts 9-10
17	18 □ Ps 87; 1 Chr 3-5; Ps 73; Acts 11	19 □ Ps 77-78; 1 Chr 6; Ps 81, 88, 92; Acts 12-13	20 □ Ps 93; 1 Chr 7-10; Acts 14	21 □ Ps 102-104; 2 Sa 5; 1 Chr 11-12; Jam 1-2	22 □ Ps 133, 106-107; 1 Chr 13-14; Jam 3-4	23 □ 1 Chr 15-16; Ps 1-2, 15; Jam 5
24	25 □ Ps 22-24, 47, 68, 89; Acts 15-16	26 □ Ps 96, 100-101, 105, 132; Gal 1	27 □ 2 Sa 6-7; 1 Chr 17; Ps 25, 29, 33; Gal 2-3	28 □ Ps 36, 39; 2 Sa 8-9; 1 Chr 18; Gal 4	29 □ Ps 50, 53, 60, 75; 2 Sa 10; 1 Chr 19; Gal 5-6	30 □ Ps 20, 65-67, 69; Acts 17



31	Apr 1 □ Ps 70; 2 Sa 11-12; 1 Chr 20; Ps 32, 51; 1 Th 1-2	2 □ Ps 86, 122; 2 Sa 13-15; 1 Th 3	3 □ Ps 3-4, 12-13, 28, 55; 1 Th 4-5	4 □ 2 Sa 16-18; Ps 26, 40; 2 Th 1	5 □ Ps 58, 61-62, 64; 2 Sa 19-20; 2 Th 2-3	6 □ 2 Sa 21; Ps 5, 38, 41-42; Acts 18
7	8 □ 2 Sa 22-23; Ps 57, 95, 97-98; Acts 19; 1 Co 1	9 □ Ps 99; 2 Sa 24; 1 Chr 21-22; Ps 30; 1 Co 2	10 □ Ps 108-110; 1 Chr 23-24; 1 Co 3-4	11 □ 1 Chr 25; Ps 131, 138-139, 143-144; 1 Co 5-6	12 □ Ps 145; 1 Chr 26-29; 1 Co 7	13 □ Ps 127, 111-115; 1 Co 8-9
14	15 □ Ps 116-118; 1 Kgs 1-2; 1 Co 10	16 □ Ps 37, 71, 94, 119; 1 Kgs 3-4; 1 Co 11-12	17 □ 2 Chr 1; Ps 72; Sos 1-3; 1 Co 13	18 □ Sos 4-8; Pro 1; 1 Co 14-15	19 □ Pro 2-6; 1 Co 16	20 □ Pro 7-12; 2 Co 1-2
21	22 □ Pro 13-17; 2 Co 3	23 □ Pro 18-23; 2 Co 4-5	24 □ Pro 24; 1 Kgs 5-6; 2 Chr 2-3; 2 Co 6	25 □ 1 Kgs 7; 2 Chr 4; 1 Kgs 8; 2 Chr 5-7; 2 Co 7-8	26 □ Ps 136, 134, 146-148; 2 Co 9	27 □ Ps 149-150; 1 Kgs 9; 2 Chr 8; Pro 25; 2 Co 10-11
28	29 □ Pro 26-29; Ecc 1-2; 2 Co 12	30 □ Ecc 3-7; 2 Co 13; Rom 1	May 1 □ Ecc 8-12; 1 Kgs 10; Rom 2-3	2 □ 1 Kgs 11; 2 Chr 9; Pro 30-31; 1 Kgs 12; Rom 4	3 □ 1 Kgs 13-14; 2 Chr 10-12; 1 Kgs 15; Rom 5-6	4 □ 2 Chr 13-16; 1 Kgs 16; Rom 7
5	6 □ 2 Chr 17; 1 Kgs 17-21; Rom 8-9	7 □ 1 Kgs 22; 2 Chr 18-21; Rom 10	8 □ 2 Chr 22-23; Obas; Ps 82; 83; 2 Kgs 1; Rom 11-12	9 □ 2 Kgs 2-6; Rom 13	10 □ 2 Kgs 7-12; Rom 14-15	11 □ 2 Kgs 13; 2 Chr 24; 2 Kgs 14; 2 Chr 25; Jon 1; Rom 16
12	13 □ Jon 2-4; 2 Kgs 15; 2 Chr 26; Acts 20-21	14 □ Isa 1-6; Acts 22	15 □ Isa 7-8; Amo 1-3; Acts 23-24	16 □ Amo 4-9; Acts 25	17 □ 2 Chr 27; Isa 9-12; Acts 26-27	18 □ Mic 1-6; Acts 28
19	20 □ Mic 7; 2 Chr 28; 2 Kgs 16-17; Isa 13; Col 1-2	21 □ Isa 14-19; Col 3-4	22 □ Isa 20-24; Phlm	23 □ Isa 25-27; 2 Kgs 18; 2 Chr 29-30; Eph 1-2	24 □ 2 Chr 31; Ps 48; Hos 1-3; Eph 3	25 □ Hos 4-9; Eph 4-5
26	27 □ Hos 10-14; Eph 6	28 □ Isa 28-33; Phil 1-2	29 □ Isa 34-38; Phil 3	30 □ Isa 39; Ps 76; Isa 40-42; Phil 4; 1 Ti 1	31 □ Isa 43-48; 1 Ti 2	Jun 1 □ 2 Kgs 19; Ps 46, 80, 135; Isa 49; 1 Ti 3-4
2	3 □ Isa 50-55; 1 Ti 5	4 □ Isa 56-60; 1 Ti 6; Tit 1	5 □ Isa 61-66; Tit 2	6 □ 2 Kgs 20-21; 2 Chr 32-33; Nah 1; Tit 3; 1 Pe 1	7 □ Nah 2-3; 2 Kgs 22-23; 2 Chr 34-35; 1 Pe 2	8 □ Zep 1-3; Jer 1-2; 1 Pe 3-4
9	10 □ Jer 3-8; 1 Pe 5; Heb 1	11 □ Jer 9-13; Heb 2	12 □ Jer 14-19; Heb 3-4	13 □ Jer 20-24; Heb 5	14 □ Jer 25-29; Heb 6-7	15 □ Jer 30-35; Heb 8
16	17 □ Jer 36-40; Heb 9-10	18 □ Ps 74, 79; 2 Kgs 24-25; 2 Chr 36; Hab 1; Heb 11	19 □ Hab 2-3; Jer 41-43; Heb 12-13	20 □ Jer 44-49; 2 Ti 1	21 □ Jer 50-52; Lam 1-2; 2 Ti 2-3	22 □ Lam 3-5; Eze 1-3; 2 Ti 4
23	24 □ Eze 4-8; 2 Pe 1-2	25 □ Eze 9-14; 2 Pe 3	26 □ Eze 15-19; Jude; 1 Jn 1	27 □ Eze 20-25; 1 Jn 2	28 □ Eze 26-30; 1 Jn 3-4	29 □ Eze 31-36; 1 Jn 5; 2 Jn
30	Jul 1 □ Eze 37-41; 3 Jn	2 □ Eze 42-46; Rev 1-2	3 □ Eze 47-48; Joe 1-3; Dan 1; Rev 3	4 □ Dan 2-6; Rev 4-5	5 □ Dan 7-12; Rev 6	6 □ Eze 1-5; Rev 7-8
7	8 □ Eze 6; Ps 137; Hag 1-2; Zec 1-2; Rev 9	9 □ Zec 3-7; Rev 10-11	10 □ Zec 8-13; Rev 12	11 □ Zec 14; Est 1-4; Rev 13-14	12 □ Est 5-10; Rev 15	13 □ Eze 7-10; Neh 1; Rev 16-17
14	15 □ Neh 2-7; Rev 18	16 □ Neh 8-12; Rev 19-20	17 □ Neh 13; Ps 126; Mal 1-4; Rev 21-22			

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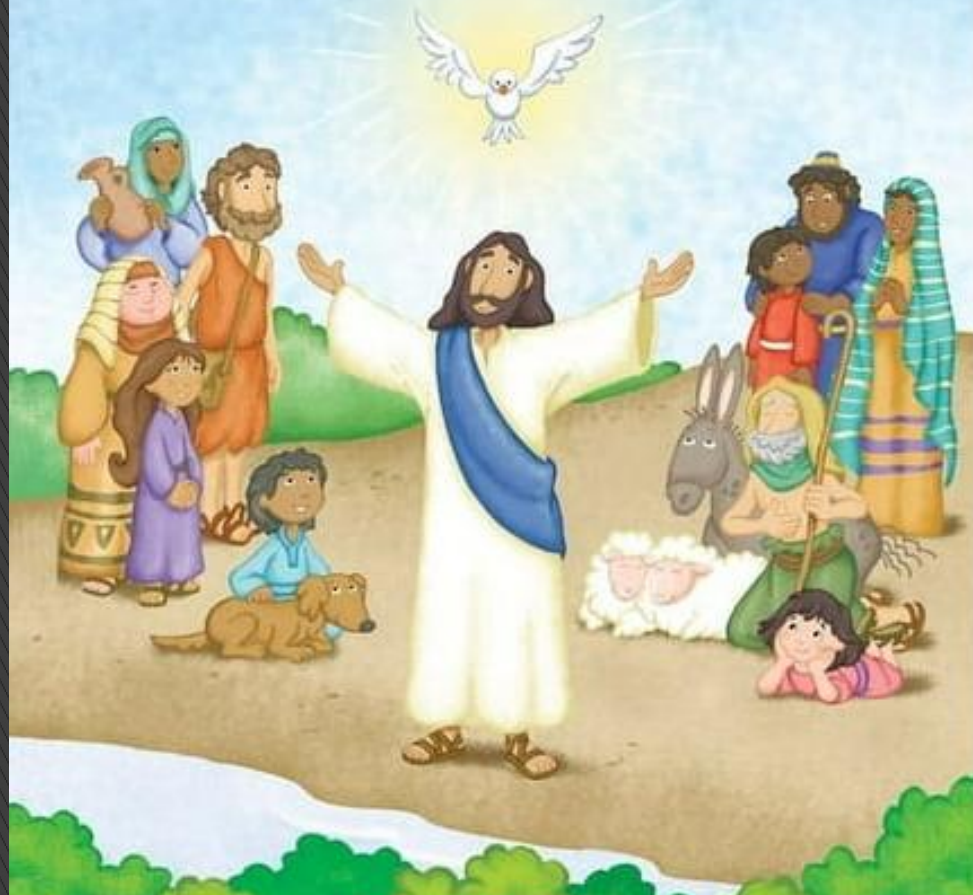


GOD'S WORD BROUGHT TO LIFE IN PICTURES



AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

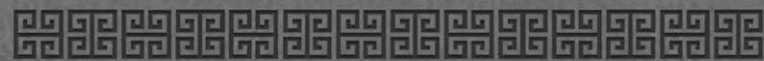
READ and LEARN™ BIBLE



SCHOLASTIC

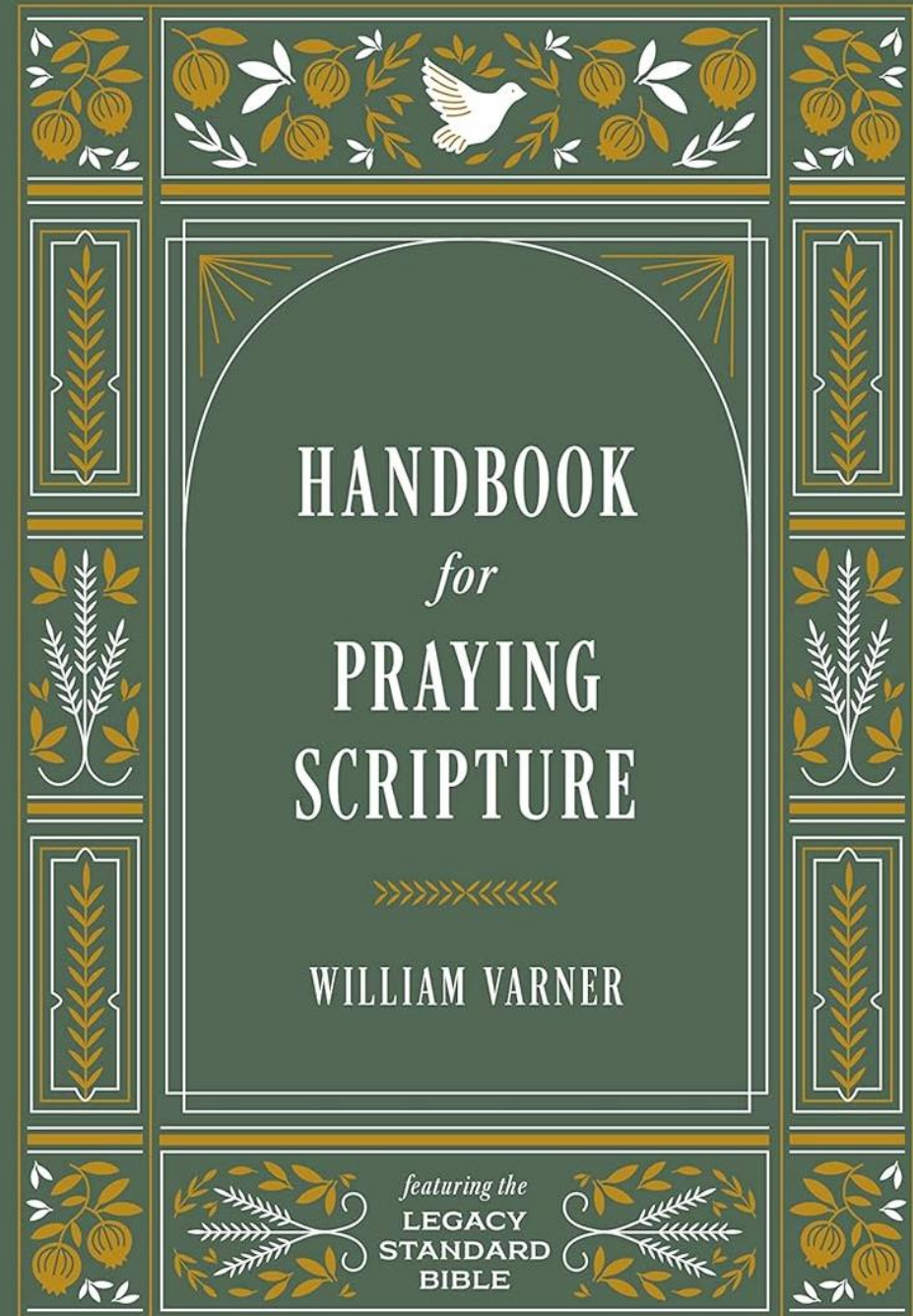


THE
JEREMIAH
STUDY BIBLE



PSALMS
and
PROVERBS

DR. DAVID JEREMIAH



- ▶ 52 Week/7 Genre Plan
- ▶ 5x5x5 N.T. Plan
- ▶ OT/NT Own Pace Plan
- ▶ Chronological Plan
- ▶ The Navigators Plan
- ▶ Nav 2x/day (OT/NT) Plan
- ▶ 4 Parts Plan (Gen., Ps., Mt., Acts)
- ▶ 6 Month NT Plan
- ▶ Psalm a Day Plan
- ▶ 1 Ch./Day/3yr Plan
- ▶ Historical Plan (Book Date)
- ▶ Horner 10 Chs/day 10 Lists Plan
- ▶ Redemptive/Historical Plan
- ▶ M'Cheyne Bible Calendar Plan
- ▶ 1 Yr Gen-Rev (3.2 Chs/day) Plan
- ▶ OT (2 Chs) NT (1 Ch) Plan
- ▶ Legacy Plan (Books by Month)
- ▶ Read it Through in 2 (by day) Plan
- ▶ Read it Through in 2 (by wk) Plan

Create Your Own Plan...

Time frame: 01/02/2024 - 198 days

Start: 01/02/2024

Days: 198

Format

English

Calendar
 List
 Weeks
 Books
 Circle

Bible Books

Traditional
 Old Testament +
 Deuterocanonical +
 New Testament +

Chronological
 Old Testament
 New Testament

Tanakh
 Hebrew Bible +

M'Cheyne

Divide by: Words per Chapter

Days of the Week

Sunday
 Monday
 Tuesday
 Wednesday
 Thursday
 Friday
 Saturday

Options

Include Checkbox
 Section Colors
 Daily Psalm
 Daily Proverb
 OT/NT Overlap
 Reverse
 Remove Dates
 Show Overall Stats
 Show Daily Stats
 Add Reading Links

Bible Gateway: NASB

Chronological Bible Reading Plan - Sundays Off (Jan 2 - Jul 18, 2024)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31	Jan 1	2 Gen 1-6; Luk 1	3 Gen 7-11; Job 1; John 1	4 Job 2-9; Mat 1	5 Job 10-18; Luk 2	6 Job 19-28; Mat 2-3
7	8 Job 29-35; Mk 1	9 Job 36-42; Luk 3; Mat 4	10 Gen 12-18; Luk 4	11 Gen 19-23; Luk 5	12 Gen 24-26; John 2-3	13 Gen 27-30; John 4
14	15 Gen 31-34; Mat 8	16 Gen 35-39; Mk 2; John 5	17 Gen 40-43; Mat 12	18 Gen 44-47; Mk 3	19 Gen 48-50; Ex 1-3; Luk 6	20 Ex 4-8; Mat 5
21	22 Ex 9-12; Mat 6	23 Ex 13-16; Mat 7, 9	24 Ex 17-21; Luk 7	25 Ex 22-26; Mat 11	26 Ex 27-29; Luk 11	27 Ex 30-34; Mat 13
28	29 Ex 35-38	30 Ex 39-40; Lev 1-3; Luk 8	31 Lev 4-7; Mk 4	Feb 1 Lev 8-12; Mk 5	2 Lev 13-14; Mat 10, 14	3 Lev 15-19; Mk 6
4	5 Lev 20-23	6 Lev 24-26; Luk 9	7 Lev 27; Num 1-2; John 6	8 Num 3-6; Mat 15	9 Num 7-9; Mk 7; Mat 16	10 Num 10-14; Mk 8
11	12 Num 15; Ps 90; Num 16-17; Mat 17	13 Num 18-21; Mk 9	14 Num 22-26; Mat 18; John 7	15 Num 27-30	16 Num 31-34; John 8	17 Num 35-36; Deut 1-2; John 9-10
18	19 Deut 3-5; Luk 10	20 Deut 6-10; Luk 12	21 Deut 11-14; Luk 13	22 Deut 15-19; Luk 14	23 Deut 20-24; Luk 15	24 Deut 25-28; Luk 16-17
25	26 Deut 29-32; John 11	27 Deut 33-34; Ps 91; Josh 1-3; Luk 18	28 Josh 4-7; Mat 19	29 Josh 8-11; Mk 10	Mar 1 Josh 12-17; Mat 20	2 Josh 18-21; Mat 21
3	4 Josh 22-24; Jdg 1; Luk 19; Mk 11	5 Jdg 2-5; John 12	6 Jdg 6-9; Mat 22	7 Jdg 10-13; Mk 12	8 Jdg 14-18; Mat 23	9 Jdg 19-21; Luk 20
10	11 Rut 1-4; 1 Sa 1; Luk 21; Mk 13	12 1 Sa 2-7; Mat 24	13 1 Sa 8-12; Mat 25	14 1 Sa 13-15; Mat 26	15 1 Sa 16-19	16 1 Sa 20; Ps 11, 59; 1 Sa 21-22; Mk 14
17	18 1 Sa 23-24; Ps 7, 27, 31, 34, 52, 56, 120, 140-141; Luk 22	19 Ps 142; 1 Sa 25-27; Ps 17, 35; John 13	20 Ps 54, 63; 1 Sa 28-31; Ps 18; John 14	21 Ps 121, 123-125, 128-130; 2 Sa 1-3; 1 Chr 15-16	22 2 Sa 4; Ps 6, 8-10, 14, 16, 19, 21; 1 Chr 1; John 17	23 1 Chr 2; Ps 43-45, 49, 84-85; 87; 1 Chr 3-4; Mat 27
24	25 1 Chr 5; Ps 73, 77-78; Mk 15	26 1 Chr 6; Ps 81, 88, 92-93; 1 Chr 7-9; Luk 23	27 1 Chr 10; Ps 102-104; 2 Sa 5; 1 Chr 11; John 18	28 1 Chr 12; Ps 133, 106-107; 1 Chr 13-14; John 19	29 1 Chr 15-16; Ps 1-2, 15, 22-24, 47, 68; Mat 28; Mk 16	30 Ps 89, 96, 100-101, 105, 132; 2 Sa 6-7; Luk 24
31	Apr 1 1 Chr 17; Ps 25, 29, 33, 36, 39; 2 Sa 8-9; 1 Chr 18; John 20-21	2 Ps 50, 53, 60, 75; 2 Sa 10; 1 Chr 19; Ps 20, 65-67, 69; Acts 1	3 Ps 70; 2 Sa 11-12; 1 Chr 20; Ps 32, 51, 86, 122; Acts 2-3	4 2 Sa 13-15; Ps 3-4; Acts 4	5 Ps 12-13, 28, 55; 2 Sa 16-18; Acts 5	6 Ps 26, 40, 58, 61-62, 64; 2 Sa 19-20; Acts 6

Bible Facts:

- ▶ There are 929 chapters in the Old Testament. There are 260 chapters in the New Testament. This gives a total of 1,189 chapters
- ▶ The average reader can read the Bible through in about 65 to 75 hours. So if you read the Bible for less than 15 minutes a day, you would accomplish your goal.
- ▶ There are 23,145 verses in the Old Testament and 7,957 verses in the New Testament. This gives a total of 31,102 verses, which is an average of a little more than 26 verses per chapter and 471 verses per book. Psalm 103:1–2 being the 15,551st and 15,552nd verses is in the middle of the 31,102 verses of the Bible.

The Real Reason You Don't Have Time To Read the Bible

By Patrick Miller

Jan 11, 2023

- ▶ <https://info.thecrossingchurch.com/blog/the-real-reason-you-dont-have-time-to-read-the-bible>

10 Changes in Saul (Steps of Christian Growth) that should be True after Genuine Conversion. (Key word "IMMEDIATELY")

1. Water **Baptism** (Public Identification with Christ and His Church)
2. Improving **Physical health/strength** to match your new and growing spiritual strength/health
3. Church **Fellowship** (gathering together with other believers)
4. Personal **Evangelism** (sharing Christ and His gospel with unbelievers)
5. Spiritual **growth and maturity** (growth and progress in greater Christlikeness)
6. **Willingness** to go and do what God wants and wills (even if it brings hardship and persecution)
7. A **Trust** in the sovereignty of God no matter the circumstances
8. A reliance and **interdependence** on and with fellow believers
9. **1 to 1 Discipleship** – and close Christian friendship(s)
10. A bold/**Unashamed** mindset/attitude that always stands up, speaks, and defends (apologetics) the truth against anything/anyone who stands against our Lord Jesus, His Word the Bible, or His People the Church.

10 Changes in Saul (Steps of Christian Growth) that should be True after Genuine Conversion.

6. Willing to suffer persecution (9:23–24)

Acts 9:23-24 ²³ When many days had elapsed, the Jews plotted together to do away with him, ²⁴ but their plot became known to Saul. They were also watching the gates day and night so that they might put him to death;

Saul is willing to suffer **immediate** persecution for his Jesus ...so clear and immediate threat was the new Saul that Satan and his minions (not just demons but every unbeliever is a child of the devil) will try to not only stop his evangelism but destroy/kill him altogether. They plotted together to put him to death.

Many people form and work together for good but so too and so often religious but not saved people can plot to eliminate the perceived threats to their beliefs, their money/way of life, their culture/tradition, etc. They justify their evil or spiritualize their rebellion usually with far out lies

Consider the Pharisees and Sadducees justified their plotting and murder under the religious guise of blasphemy, the ruse of Jesus doing miracles by the power of Satan/ Beelzebul (Mt. 12, Mk. 12, Lk. 11), 4 illegal in the middle of the night sham trials without the who Sanhedrin present (Jesus before Annas, Caiphas, Herod, and Pilate) or the old fashioned tactic of false testimony/lies (forbids taxes to Caesar), or twists on the truths (claims to be a King, would destroy the temple/rebuild it in 3 days – Luke 23:2, Mt. 26:60, and even to political leverage – claims to be a King (Luke 23:2, John 18:37, no friend of Caesar (John 19:12). people/the church).

10 Changes in Saul (Steps of Christian Growth) that should be True after Genuine Conversion.

6. Willing to suffer persecution (9:23–24)

I wonder about four things in regards to persecution of Christians in the USA/in the current modern era –

1. Are we just blessed without persecution because even in Acts there were times of peace and times of persecution and we are just sovereignly blessed to be in a time of peace,
2. Perhaps because the USA still has the greatest number of Christians in the world or because of our previous morals (world wars to fight aggression, tyranny, and oppression/genocide, holocaust) generosity (greatest giver of humanitarian aid around the world for famine, floods, natural disasters, war torn countries), or still the greatest missionary sending country in history, or historic and current support of the nation of Israel (the nation that blessed Israel will be blessed, curses them will be curse – [Gen 12:3, 27:2](#)).
3. Are we now lukewarm spiritually and in such decline as a former Christian nation turned secular that current Christians are just too passive, not vocal, not bold/unashamed, and therefore not much of a threat to Satan with prayer, holiness, or revival that this is the reason we have little to no persecution.
4. Or that we are currently heading into a time of increasing persecution where the kettle with the frog is slowly heating up and we are the frog = and that the progression of persecution will be an eroding of our freedoms – first the government telling us when, where, and how we can or cannot worship (Covid19 in 2020-21), people taking us to court to make our life miserable (you have to bake a cake or perform your business even if it goes against your conscience or religion, could be loss of some benefits (giving deductions, tax exempt status, etc.) could be hate speech / discrimination laws that makes it illegal to speak against any clear sins/depravity in our culture, could be anti-proselytizing laws (you can practice your religion but its illegal to share it with anyone else or try to convert anyone else), but I don't think it's a stretch to see in our lifetime and in our country forms of persecution the early church endured – namely confiscation of their property (govt stealing assets under religious laws/bans), imprisonment, bodily harm/torture like Paul endured everywhere, or even martyrdom/death ... ALL FOR JESUS BEING YOUR LORD – as the Bible says the world is not done afflicting Christ (through His people/the church).

10 Changes in Saul (Steps of Christian Growth) that should be True after Genuine Conversion.

6. Willing to suffer persecution (9:23–24)

2 Cor. 6:4-10 ⁴ but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses, ⁵ in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger, ⁶ in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love, ⁷ in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left, ⁸ by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; *regarded* as deceivers and yet true; ⁹ as unknown yet well-known, as dying yet behold, we live; as punished yet not put to death, ¹⁰ as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things.

Col. 1:24-29 ²⁴ Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions. ²⁵ *Of this church* I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the *preaching* of the word of God, ²⁶ *that is*, the mystery which has been hidden from the *past* ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, ²⁷ to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. ²⁸ We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. ²⁹ For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.

1 Thess. 3:2-8 we sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you as to your faith, ³ so that no one would be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this. ⁴ For indeed when we were with you, we *kept* telling you in advance that we were going to suffer affliction; and so it came to pass, as you know. ⁵ For this reason, when I could endure *it* no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor would be in vain. ⁶ But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always think kindly of us, longing to see us just as we also long to see you, ⁷ for this reason, brethren, in all our distress and affliction we were comforted about you through your faith; ⁸ for now we *really* live, if you stand firm in the Lord.

2 Thess. 1:3-5 ³ We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is *only* fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows *ever* greater; ⁴ therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure. ⁵ *This is* a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering.

2 Tim. 3:12-14 ¹² Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. ¹³ But evil men and impostors will proceed *from bad* to worse, deceiving and being deceived. ¹⁴ You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of...

10 Changes in Saul (Steps of Christian Growth) that should be True after Genuine Conversion.

7. A trust in the sovereignty of God (9:24)

Acts 9:24 ²⁴ but their plot became known to Saul. They were also watching the gates day and night so that they might put him to death;

By faith Saul obeys, and by providence God spares his life time and time again. Here God allows Saul himself to come to know of the particular plot/death threat against him. And his enemies are intent and intense – watching the gate (entrance to the city) day and night in order to kill him.

I'm reminded how someone similar happens to Paul later in his life when a relative of his reveals to him the plot against him in Jerusalem and God uses a Roman guard to take him to Ceasarea to foil those who had even shaved their heads and vowed not to eat until they had murdered Paul. God was always faithful to direct, encourage, and protect Paul...

Acts 23:11 ¹¹ But on the night *immediately* following, the Lord stood at his side and said, "Take courage; for as you have solemnly witnessed to My cause at Jerusalem, so you must witness at Rome also." Earlier in Corinth –

Acts 18:9-10 ⁹ And the Lord said to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid *any longer*, but go on speaking and do not be silent; ¹⁰ for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city." Even earlier in going to Macedonia –

Acts 16:9-10 ⁹ A vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." ¹⁰ When he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

10 Changes in Saul (Steps of Christian Growth) that should be True after Genuine Conversion.

8. A reliance and interdependence with fellow believers. (9:25)

Acts 9:25 ²⁵ but his disciples took him by night and let him down through *an opening in the wall*, lowering him in a large basket.

Saul has to rely on fellow believers to get him out of Damascus safely – here they lower Saul over the wall in a large (human size basket) (story of my parents acting out Bible stories from my youth – the two most memorable – dad digging a large hole in our back yard and lowering me in... “but dad I don’t want to be Joseph.” or him lowering my brother and I in a laundry basket over the stairwell to enact Saul’s escape from Damascus. (In retrospect I wonder what our neighbors were thinking about the local Pastor digging a large whole and putting his children in☺) getting back to reliance on fellow believers – how are we doing?

I think so many Christians are lone Rangers – but I wonder if there coming a time when we will have to rely upon each other and help each other for food, survival, or comfort/encouragement when of us is imprisoned and killed for the faith? I’ll always remember the hardest thing for Harlan Popov and Richard Wurmbandt (I believe both – tortured for Christ, tortured for the faith in Romania during the cold war era – was not the torture/beatings, or even harsh conditions/little food but was the brain washing tactics they used to turn their younger children against them while they were in prison – one of the 13 years! (long time).

But I pray if that ever be the circumstances we face – that we would face them together – I believe there would be a greater closeness, depth, fervency, and appreciation of our fellowship than even before – much like the military has or law enforcement has – because they depend on each other for life and death, and go through the toughest things TOGETHER!

10 Changes in Saul (Steps of Christian Growth) that should be True after Genuine Conversion.

9. 1 to 1 Discipleship (9:26–27) – a friend that sticks closer than a brother.

Acts 9:26-27 ²⁶ When he came to Jerusalem, he was trying to associate with the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. ²⁷ But Barnabas took hold of him and brought him to the apostles and described to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had talked to him, and how at Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus.

For Paul this was Barnabus (took him and brought him spoke for him/recounted Paul's conversion) (Barnabus name/reputation was Son of Encouragement) We see that Saul seeks fellowship and acceptance by the Christians in Jerusalem, but apparently his previous persecution was likely much greater and more prolonged where they needed more convincing before ever accepting much less trusting Saul into their lives and one of their own.

And here we see God using Barnabus. Barnabus must have had the the gift of faith and the gift of encouragement – because he befriends Paul, helps Paul here gain acceptance through the Apostles at Jerusalem, and later will go with Paul on his first missionary Journey – so probably goes with Saul to Caesarea and to Tarsus, and eventually to Antioch their home church/sending church.

This kind of friendship – I call it David /Jonathan friendship, Paul and Barnabus partnership, and good ole fashioned 1 to 1 discipleship that Dawson Trotman of the Navigators championed and instilled to help the church grow in Bible knowledge, Bible memory, and Evangelism is once again missing in the church. Dawson would ask – Where is you man (meaning who are you discipling/pouring your life into spiritually to help them grow).

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Titus 2:3-5 Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, ⁴ so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, ⁵ to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.

2 Tim. 2:1-6 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. ² The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. ³ Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴ No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. ⁵ Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules. ⁶ The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops.

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9. 1 to 1 Discipleship (9:26–27) – a friend that sticks closer than a brother.

If anyone in this church wants to be discipled – men or women – all you need to do is ask – ask one of the Elders or Deacons, ask on your connection card – I suggest a 7-8 week initial commitment to meet with a brother or sister 1 to 1 every week or every 2 weeks – to share about their life (life on life), hold each other accountable and pray for one another, memorize and study the word together/or go through one of the 7 TBC discipleship classes – most of which are 7-8 weeks long).

As you have heard me say before – many Christians wonder why they not growing, greatly struggling, or even stagnating or backsliding in their faith – and I will surely find that Satan ISOLATED them from other Christians – just like a roaring lion hunts in a pack and isolates the weak gazeele all by themselves in order to pounce on them to destroy them. **1 Pet. 5:7-11**

Others think that Congregation/Church alone is enough – that 52 sermons a year or 2 hours of church a week will somehow counteract or void the 30-50 hours of secular social media (music, movies, apps, internet) that people are ingesting full of Satan's agenda and they wonder while they are spiritual sick or weak. Some wisely add the Class or Cells to grow (S.s/smaller group bible studies), but I've found the last 2 C's – Comrade (no Russian sympathizer here just needing a C for 1 to 1 Discipleship) and Christian studying the word for themselves 5-7 x a week as part of their personal devotions/quiet times – is how Christians grow the most and the best in their journey of discipleship to be like Christ, please Christ, and put Him first so that He has 1st place/supremacy in everything! **Col. 1:15-18**

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9. 1 to 1 Discipleship (9:26–27) – a friend that sticks closer than a brother.

1 Pet. 5:7-11 ⁷ casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. ⁸ Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹ But resist him, firm in *your* faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. ¹⁰ After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen *and* establish you. ¹¹ To Him *be* dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Col. 1:15-18 ¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. ¹⁸ He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

10 Changes in Saul (Steps of Christian Growth) that should be True after Genuine Conversion.

10. A bold/unashamed mindset/attitude (9:28–31) that always stands up, speaks, and defends (apologetics) the truth.

Acts 9:28-31 28 And he was with them, moving about freely in Jerusalem, speaking out boldly in the name of the Lord. 29 And he was talking and arguing with the Hellenistic Jews; but they were attempting to put him to death. 30 But when the brethren learned of it, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him away to Tarsus. 31 So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.

Saul was talking and arguing with the Hellenistic Jews who were no doubt bringing Jesus, Christians (The Wayers), and God's Word into disrepute. God raising up a Saul to confound, prove, and here argue with those not just rejecting Christ themselves but most likely keeping others from Christ or even worst leading younger/immature/or weak believers AWAY from Christ. We have to watch out for new believers getting sucked into fine sounding cults like Mormonism, JW's, Oneness Pentecostals, and yes Roman Catholicism. We must stand and defend/content earnestly (with agony) **Jude 1:3** against every form or source of false doctrine.

2 Cor. 10:1-5 Now I, Paul, myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ-- I who am meek when face to face with you, but bold toward you when absent! ² I ask that when I am present I *need* not be bold with the confidence with which I propose to be courageous against some, who regard us as if we walked according to the flesh. ³ For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, ⁴ for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. ⁵ *We are* destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and *we are* taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,

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But when Paul does this – he once again – at the 2nd time is specifically being targeted to be killed by those whom was confounding, proving, and arguing with. God again uses the brothers to get him to safety – here they send him to Caesarea and back home to his hometown of Tarsus. Now some will say Paul was being too bold, too confrontational, too uncompromising, too black and white

Once an Elder told me – the problem with you Chad is that you look at all of Scripture as black and white, when in reality there are some parts that are shades of grey) (he meant I should have compromised or not died on the hill of my convictions/beliefs/etc.) But I believe with all my heart this Elder was wrong, as well as those who think the Jerusalem church sent Saul home because he was stirring things up too much.

I think God sent him home to spare his life, to prepare him for his ultimate ministry (3-4 missionary journeys to reach the Gentiles that has made its way to you and to me some 2000 years later). The reason I believe this is Jesus was bold to the point of death, Paul and most of the Apostles bold to the point of death, and the Bible always commends them.

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God is never stated with the slightest notion of words to the effect of “hey tone things down a bit, don’t be so bold, its ok to compromise on some small things, etc.) No that is the voice of the devil – the voice of God is how our text ends – the church was GOING On and Being BUILT UP – how? Not compromise, not weakness, not capitulation to culture, but IN THE FEAR OF THE Lord, encouragement of the Holy Spirit. – They CONTINUED TO MULTIPLY. God multiplied the church as they like Saul went out boldly in unashamed personal evangelism. So too I commend you, myself, and this church as we enter this new year. Let’s pray.

SO WHAT?

Application



Acts 2:46-47 46 And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, 47 praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Acts 5:42 42 And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

Acts 9:31 ³¹ So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and, going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.

Acts 16:5 So the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily.

Acts 1:15 – 120

Acts 2:41 – 3000

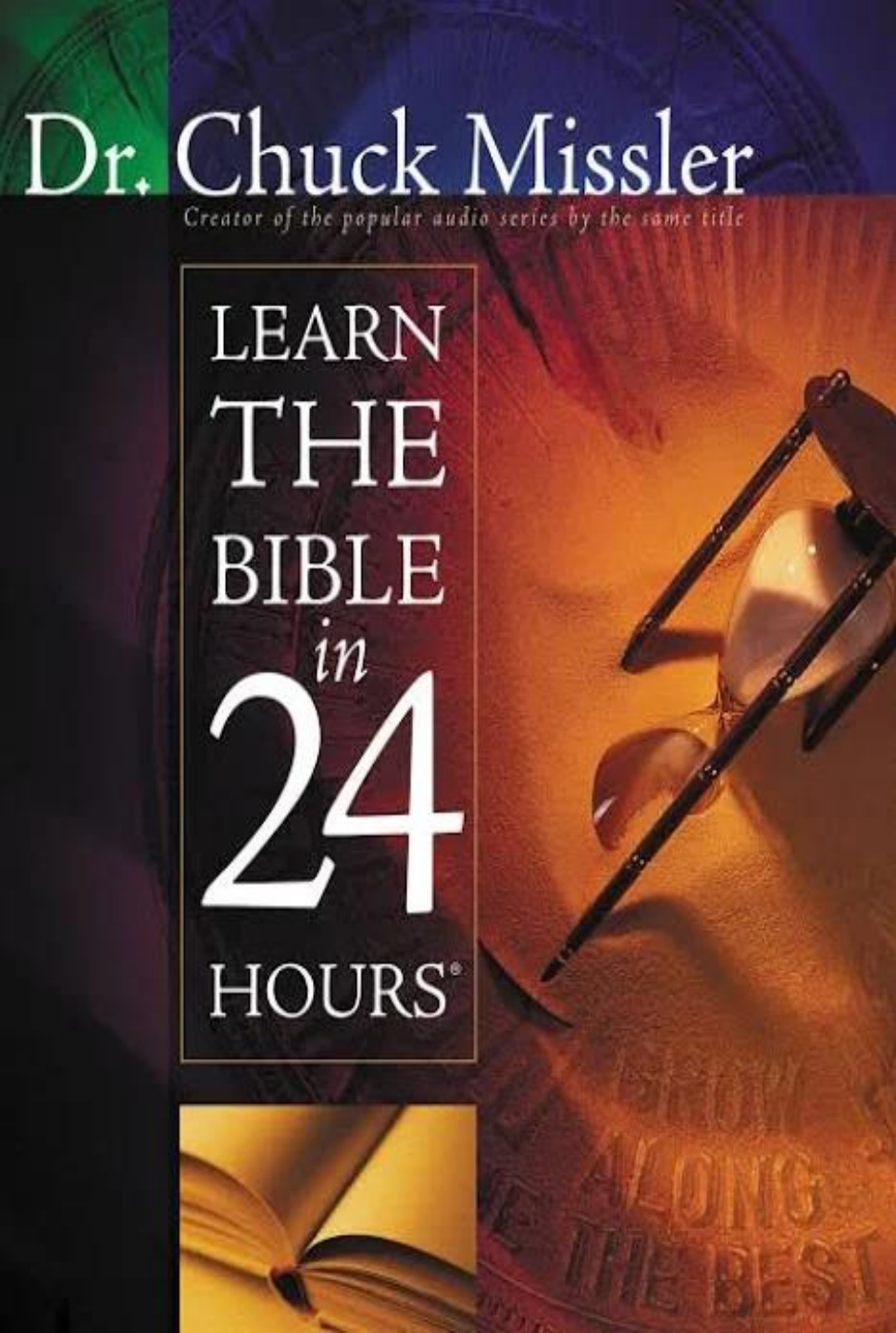
Acts 4:4 – 5000

Acts 5:14 – multitudes

Acts 6:1,7 – increasing in number, disciples increase greatly

Acts 11:21 – large number believed turned to the Lord

Acts 16:5 - So the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily.



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