



BETHANY CHURCH

NEWSLETTER ❖ OCTOBER '25

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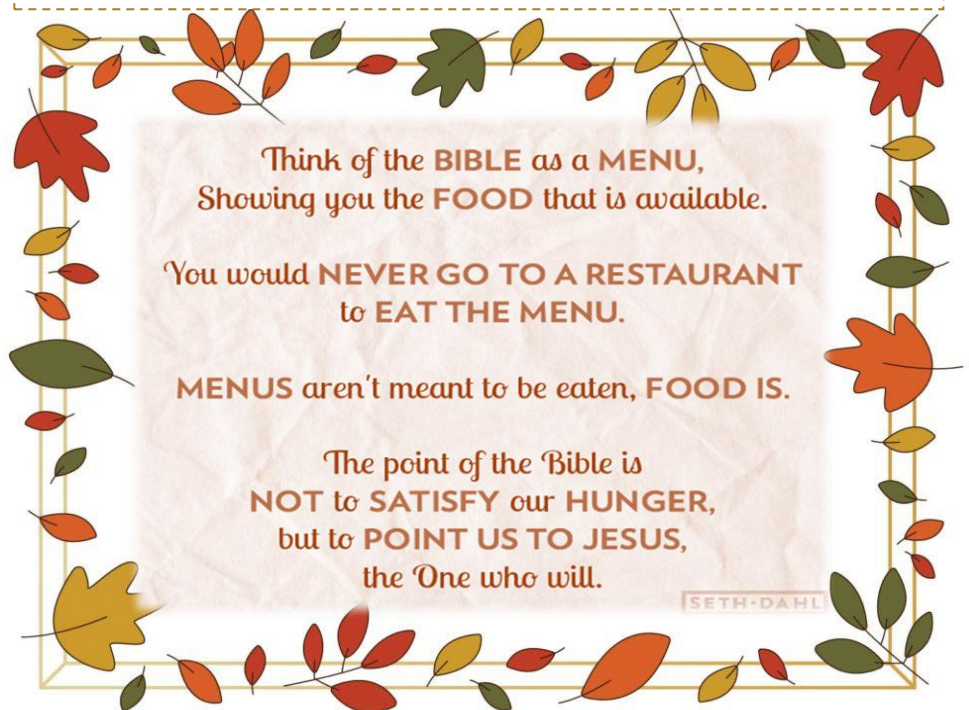
Stuff written in Pastor Rob's Bible:

Increasing the number of people praying for a certain outcome does not make the Lord more likely to grant than outcome. Instead, the purpose is to make more people aware of a need so that when God moves they become more convinced of His power and trust Him all the more. In that way our asking people to pray for us can become a strong witness to the goodness and power of the Lord.

~~~~~  
**2 Corinthians 1:11**  
**...as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.**

The Spirit inside of us is  
better than  
Jesus beside us.  
J.D. Greear

The Gospel is infinitely more than a ticket to heaven. It is a message that changes not only a person's destination in eternity but their heart and mind here and now. The Gospel transforms more than a person's relationship to God; it also transforms a person's relationship to everything else.



Knowing about the Lord is pointless without worship and praise. After all, the devil knows far more about God than we do, and yet this knowledge gives him no benefit because he refuses to bow the knee in humble adoration.

**James 2:19**

**Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that--and shudder.**

*When we prioritize the immediate over the enduring we lose sight of what really matters.*

REACH

LOVE

SERVE



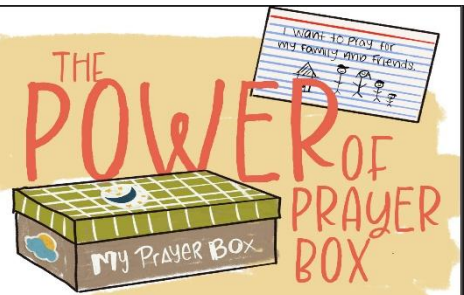
## JESUS TRAVELED TO MANY PLACES

Jesus traveled to many regions, cities, towns and villages to preach the Good News. In the puzzle below, find and circle the names of some of the places. Can you find the names on the list?

Words can go left to right, up, down or diagonal—so look carefully in all directions!

|                   |              |                 |
|-------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| BETHANY           | EPHRAIM      | MOUNT OF OLIVES |
| BETHLEHEM         | GALILEE      | NAZARETH        |
| BETHSAIDA         | JERICO       | PEREA           |
| CAESAREA PHILIPPI | JERUSALEM    | SAMARIA         |
| CANA              | JORDAN RIVER | SIDON           |
| CAPERNAUM         | JUDEA        | TYRE            |
| DECAPOLIS         | MAGDALA      | WILDERNESS      |
| EGYPT             |              |                 |

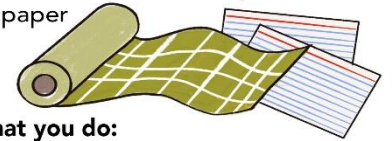
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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B | M | L | E | T | C | U | S | G | O | T | O | B | T | H | E |
| E | J | O | R | D | A | N | R | I | V | E | R | E | M | N | S |
| T | U | E | U | E | N | A | R | B | Y | V | I | T | A | L | S |
| H | D | L | R | N | A | Z | A | R | E | T | H | H | G | A | E |
| S | E | G | E | I | T | S | S | S | G | Y | O | L | D | I | N |
| A | A | C | J | A | C | O | N | I | Y | R | P | E | A | R | R |
| I | D | E | E | A | C | H | F | D | P | E | H | H | L | T | E |
| D | E | H | R | E | R | E | O | O | T | A | L | E | A | S | D |
| A | C | O | U | T | H | P | A | N | L | T | I | M | S | W | L |
| C | A | E | S | A | R | E | A | P | H | I | L | I | P | P | I |
| H | P | P | A | A | Y | R | I | H | A | V | V | E | C | O | W |
| M | O | H | L | E | M | E | S | O | H | E | T | E | R | A | V |
| E | L | R | E | L | E | A | D | T | H | R | O | U | S | G | H |
| O | I | A | M | U | T | G | R | A | B | E | T | H | A | N | Y |
| L | S | I | I | L | G | A | L | I | L | E | E | E | E | F | R |
| O | M | M | C | A | P | E | R | N | A | U | M | M | A | R | K |



Create a simple and meaningful prayer box your family can use to share requests and pray together all week long.

### What you need:

- Shoebox with lid
- Wrapping paper or decorative paper
- Scissors & tape
- Markers or crayons
- Stickers and other craft material (optional)
- Pens or pencils
- Index cards or small pieces of paper



### What you do:

1. Wrap the shoebox like a gift, wrapping the lid separately so it can be opened.
2. As a family, decorate the box with drawings, favorite Bible verses, photos, or stickers.
3. Place the box somewhere central, like the kitchen or living room.
4. Keep index cards and pens nearby. When someone has a prayer request, they can write or draw it and drop it in.
5. Throughout the week, take turns praying over the requests as a family, or have a parent lead prayer time.

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

—Colossians 4:2, NIV



**Providence & Pastries** > After starting a new diet, I altered my drive to work to avoid passing my favorite bakery. I accidentally drove by the bakery this morning and there in the window was a host of goodies. I felt this was no accident, so I prayed, “Lord, it is up to you. If you want me to have any of those delicious baked goods, create a parking place for me directly in front of the bakery.” And sure enough, God answered my prayer! On the eighth time round the block, there it was!



**C.S. Lewis argues that it takes a community of people to get to know an individual person. Reflecting on his own friendships, he observed that some aspects of one of his friend's personality were brought out only through interaction with a second friend. That meant if he lost the second friend, he lost the part of his first friend that was otherwise invisible. "By myself I am not large enough to call the whole man into activity; I want other lights than my own to show all his facets." If it takes a community to know an ordinary human being, how much more necessary would it be to get to know Jesus alongside others? By praying with friends, you will be able to hear and see facets of Jesus that you have not yet perceived.**

**That is why, Lewis thinks, that the angels in Isaiah 6 are crying, "Holy, Holy, Holy" to one another. Each angel is communicating to all the rest the part of the glory it sees. Knowing the Lord is communal and cumulative, we must pray and praise together. That way "the more we share the Heavenly Bread between us, the more we shall all have."**

**Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God  
Timothy Keller, p.119**

## **Who, me? Yes, you!**

The Bible is filled with people who don't feel up to the challenge of serving God, speaking for God or leading his people. But God always knows what he's doing. Pastor Haviland Houston issues this challenge: "When you are hesitant to act, or feel a failure of nerve coming on, when courage lags, or even if laziness and the 'I don't care' blues get you down, may the words of Mordecai to Esther burn in your hearts and minds: 'And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?'" (See Esther 4:14.)

Max Lucado offers a similar reminder in *You Were Made for This Moment*. "God always has his person," he writes, also citing the book of Esther. "When we feel as though everything is falling apart, God is working in our midst, causing everything to fall into place. He is the King of quiet providence, and he invites you and me to partner with him in his work."

Lucado continues: "[God] has a Joseph for every famine and a David for every Goliath. When his people need rescuing, God calls a Rahab into service. When a baby Moses needs a mama, God prompts an Egyptian princess to have compassion. He always has his person. He had someone in the story of Esther. And in your story he has you."

## ***Listen to the loving voice...***

Figurative thieves are all around: Illness steals time and energy. Inflation robs many of financial stability. The bandit of social media chips away at our productivity, self-esteem, quality time with loved ones. Prejudice and oppression prey on certain groups of people. Doubtless, you can think of other thieves and bandits.

But above their noise, listen for another sound: A warm voice whose loving tone calls us by name. A voice that puts us at ease because it's familiar as a favorite blanket, a path we can walk in the dark, a song we know by heart. That voice rising above any force that would steal and kill and destroy is, according to John 10, the loving voice of God made known in Jesus, caring for us as a good shepherd does his sheep. And lest you get confused, thinking God is angry and judgmental, think again. That is the sound of thieves and bandits; don't listen to them, don't follow them, don't give them your heart! "I came," says Jesus the Shepherd-Gate-Messiah-Savior, "that [you] may have life and have it abundantly"

—Heidi Hyland Mann

# Solving the Parenting Conflict: Relationship or Firmness?

by BJ Meurer

Dad watched as Jacob and Mom went at it again. There was Mom letting Jacob off the hook again. Dad was convinced that all Jacob needed was some serious consequences to get him to straighten up. A few hours later, Dad had his chance, and boy did he dish out the consequences for what Jacob tried to pull this time. Mom stood by and watched quietly, feeling uneasy about how firm Dad was being with Jacob. She just knew Jacob felt disconnected and needed more support.

This went on daily but neither Mom nor Dad talked about it. They learned years ago not to. Mom felt crushed the last time Dad said anything about how soft she was with Jacob, and Dad felt disrespected when Mom tried to stop him from dishing out consequences. Both knew this wasn't what God intended, but neither had any idea how to move forward.

## Different Strengths in Parenting

God often brings together a husband and wife where one parent specializes in using relationship in discipline and the other in firmness. Early on, they try to be on the same page, but as the children grow older and misbehavior becomes more complex, each parent often defaults to what they believe is best.

At first, they will try to help each other, but that "help" often comes at the wrong times and leads to fights. Each parent learns not to say anything but believes in their heart they are right.

"She just needs to be firmer with Jacob." "He just needs to be more graceful with Jacob." They say only to themselves ... and a chasm develops. Communication about parenting either becomes negative or stops altogether.

## A Multifaceted Approach

But it doesn't have to be this way. Children need both relationship and firmness as part of a multifaceted approach to parenting that focuses on the heart.

It's important to set firm and clear boundaries, especially in areas where our children struggle. This approach teaches and nurtures them, helping them develop wisdom and character that align with God's principles. Firmness should not be cold or harsh.

But discipline should always be rooted in a loving relationship. When it becomes necessary to increase discipline, it's equally important to increase moments of fun, affirmation, and closeness. These elements must work

together. A balanced approach that includes love and encouragement creates a nurturing environment where children feel secure and valued.

## God's Example

Romans 5:8 tells us that God demonstrated His own love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us. God starts with love and builds a relationship first. God does not expect us to change prior to a relationship with Him. He began working on a relationship with us while we were still sinners.

But Hebrews 12:6 tells us that God disciplines those that He loves. There will be times when God confronts us about our sin and desires for us to change. Yet when God calls us to repentance for our sin, He has this amazing way of making clear that our sin is not acceptable and yet we are always loved. A prayer of repentance with Jesus should lead us to feeling more loved and closer to Him than when that prayer time began. This is our goal in parenting as well.

Our children don't need parents who have this perfect balancing act between relationship and firmness figured out because the truth is that these two heart tools are not in tension with one another. They are designed to work together. Our children need parents that love them deeply and are relationally close enough that when they need to be firm, those moments end in closer relationships. Even when we're correcting, we need to be connecting.

## A New Beginning

Fortunately for Jacob, his parents decided to start learning about using a heart-based approach to parenting. They began reading books and watching some videos, and this opened up lines of communication between Mom and Dad that had been closed for years.

As Mom and Dad learned about the different heart tools God's given parents, they began talking about how to use these heart tools with Jacob. The conversation was no longer about what each of them thought the other was doing wrong. Instead, it was about Jacob's heart, what it needed, and how they could start using these heart tools together to bring about lasting change. As they got to work and saw positive changes, Jacob's parents realized that their different parenting styles did not need to be at odds. In fact, God wanted them to learn from each other



Sunday, October 5, 2025

## Scripture Reading: Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4

*In faith, there is enough light for those who want to believe  
and enough shadows to blind those who don't. —Blaise Pascal*

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After WW II, the Allied powers established the International Military Tribunal (IMT) to bring Nazi leaders to justice for crimes against peace, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and conspiracy to commit any of the foregoing crimes.

Why do I bring this up? Because, in less than two weeks, we will observe the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of a major development in the so-called Nuremberg trials. On October 18, 1945, an indictment against 24 major war criminals and seven organizations was filed with the trial itself beginning on November 20. In all, 199 defendants were tried, 161 were convicted, and 37 were sentenced to death.

It is safe to say that most people who had suffered at the hands of the Nazis were relieved that those who had perpetrated untold atrocities upon other human beings were getting what they deserved. They were punished, and it was only right that they were.

Habakkuk would've approved. As it is, when we find him in our reading for today, he is in a bad mood. He does not like the way God is handling foreign affairs. He does not think God is going a very good job.

Do we ever feel this way? Have you ever looked around at the world and felt like Habakkuk — frustrated, confused, maybe even angry? You see injustice flourishing, corruption unchecked, and people who do evil seemingly getting ahead. Meanwhile, the faithful struggle, and God seems silent.

While it is unlikely we have suffered as the world did for almost a decade while the Nazis were in power, we still bridle, do we not, at the slightest provocation? Like Habakkuk, we complain, "O LORD, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen? Or cry to you 'Violence!' and you will not save?" (1:2). Habakkuk's complaint is not new. But he did learn something. God's delay is not the same thing as God's absence. God told him, "Look at the nations and see! Be astonished! Be astounded! For a work is being done in your days that you would not believe if you were told" (1:5). God sees the wickedness and is neither blind nor inactive, but we must trust God's timing, not ours. In the meantime, God says, "The righteous live by their faith" (2:4).

—Timothy Merrill

*Prayer: O God, help me to live by faith and not by sight. Amen.*

Week of October 5, 2025

## Daily Bible Readings

**Sunday:** 1 Corinthians 1-4

**Monday:** Ezekiel 22-24

**Tuesday:** Ezekiel 25-27

**Wednesday:** Ezekiel 28-30

**Thursday:** Ezekiel 31-33

**Friday:** Ezekiel 34-36

**Saturday:** Psalms 109-111

## Verse to Remember

*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;  
all those who practice it have a good understanding.*

—Psalm 111:10

## What happened and when it happened in U.S. history

**Directions:** At the bottom, fill in the letters that complete the sentences about these events in U.S. history begun in Group I. Take a letter from each group (II through IV) to complete the sentences.

### Group I

A. Alaska joins

B. The National League

C. The government approves AZT

D. The Whig Party

E. JFK,

F. George Washington is chosen

### Group II

G. the 35<sup>th</sup> President of the United States,

H. in the treatment

I. the union

J. is established

K. becomes

L. commander in chief

### Group III

M. the first professional baseball league

N. by opponents of Andrew Jackson

O. of AIDS patients

P. is born in Brookline, MA

Q. as the 49<sup>th</sup> state

R. of the Continental Army

### Group IV

S. on June 15, 1775

T. on April 14, 1834

U. on Feb. 2, 1876

V. on May 29, 1917

W. on Jan. 3, 1959

X. on March 20, 1987

A. \_\_\_\_ B. \_\_\_\_ C. \_\_\_\_ D. \_\_\_\_ E. \_\_\_\_ F. \_\_\_\_

Answers to "What happened and when it happened in U.S. History": A. IQW, B. KMU, C. HOX, D. JNT, E. GPV, F. LRS.



*"Jesus Christ,  
who unites us  
and keeps us as  
one."*

| October 2025 |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|--------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| S            | M  | T  | W  | T  | F  | S  |
|              |    |    | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  |
| 5            | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 |
| 12           | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 19           | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26           | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |    |

Sunday, October 12, 2025

## Scripture Reading: 2 Kings 5:1-3, 7-15c

***God sees our wounds, our brokenness, our weariness. And in his hands, what is shattered can be restored. —Max Lucado***

If it's not broken, don't fix it. We're familiar with this time-tested adage, and it rings true. But what about humans? Can we be repaired? Can we be healed?

When you think about it, the human body has a strong repairability index. But what about the soul? What about the mind? What about relationships? What about a marriage? What about the human heart?

The case of the Assyrian commander in today's reading is an interesting one, because here's a guy who gets a two-fer: Both his body and soul are healed! Naaman was sick. "He suffered from leprosy" (v. 1). It was a diagnosis no one wanted to hear. You can imagine Naaman seeing his doctor, and praying to himself, "Don't let it be leprosy! Don't let it be leprosy."

His fears were justified. It was a terrible, disfiguring disease. The Bible says, "Though a mighty warrior, [he] suffered from leprosy." This is the thing about disease: *it is no respecter of persons*. He was a big man. A powerful man. A wealthy man. But he had leprosy, and had to bear the social stigma that went with it.

Naaman learned that *repairs require faith*, and after humbling himself and following the prophet Elisha's prescription (dipping into the Jordan River seven times), he was healed.

This business of seeking a cure for a disease is tricky. On one hand, we are all headed for death. It is a destination none of us can avoid. At some point, the body is not fixable. But what about our hearts, souls and minds? Yes, these too can be healed and fixed.

Do you ever feel wounded, scarred, broken and falling apart? You, too, can be "repaired." That's what Jesus is all about. Repairs are guaranteed. As the gospel song puts it:

*He's the healer of broken hearts, / He'll mend your shattered dreams.  
He'll pick up all the threads / Of your broken life  
And weave them together again.  
To your soul, he'll bring peace and joy.  
A friend in need he'll be. / The healer of broken hearts  
Is Jesus of Galilee.*

—Timothy Merrill

*Prayer: Teach us to trust you as Naaman did — to walk in faith, even when your ways seem unexpected. Give us humility to obey, patience to wait, and confidence to believe that you are always at work in us. Help us to surrender our hurts, our fears and our failures into your hands, knowing that, in you, true healing is found. Amen.*

Week of October 12, 2025

## Daily Bible Readings

**Sunday:** 1 Corinthians 5-8

**Monday:** Ezekiel 37-39

**Tuesday:** Ezekiel 40-42

**Wednesday:** Ezekiel 43-45

**Thursday:** Ezekiel 46-48

**Friday:** Daniel 1-6

**Saturday:** Psalms 112-118

## Crypto-mania!

Try to decode the message below before looking up the verse in the Bible.

Clues: W=O, I=N

JEA HWN DB HVEKXWTY SW TY EIN DCBYY TY EIN  
JEMB LXV QEKB SW YLXIB TZWI TY.

—Psalm 67:1

## WORD SEARCH

These words were taken from an early 20th-century, eighth-grade spelling primer.

Find them in the Word Search below.

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | O | I | T | C | U | R | T | S | N | O | C | E | R | T |
| L | Y | V | Q | R | E | M | A | R | K | A | B | L | Y | H |
| J | A | T | S | N | E | N | O | H | P | O | X | A | S | G |
| A | S | N | U | S | O | J | O | U | R | N | J | G | U | I |
| M | E | M | O | R | A | N | D | U | M | N | E | N | P | L |
| B | I | V | E | I | B | E | C | G | Z | J | S | I | P | I |
| B | R | S | N | T | T | U | K | H | F | S | R | T | L | W |
| Y | I | P | A | N | A | R | L | J | A | L | E | H | E | T |
| S | A | W | T | E | T | P | O | E | N | L | V | G | M | N |
| A | R | N | L | T | H | V | H | P | N | Q | A | I | E | U |
| S | P | T | U | O | H | J | H | O | O | T | R | N | N | C |
| W | H | I | M | P | E | R | E | D | R | R | T | D | T | L |
| L | A | C | I | S | M | I | H | W | D | A | P | W | G | E |
| P | Y | D | S | C | R | U | P | U | L | O | U | S | L | U |
| O | O | P | H | Q | T | Q | T | A | F | N | V | U | V | S |

memorandum  
metaphor  
nightingale  
nonchalant  
nucleus  
potent  
prairies  
proportional  
reconstruction  
remarkably  
saxophone  
scrupulous  
simultaneous  
sojourn  
supplement  
traverse  
turbulent  
twilight  
whimpered  
whimsical

## Can you find a book of the Bible hidden in these sentences?

1. Piaget's theory proves there are four stages in the life of a child.
2. She sat in the snow by Muddy Creek numb with cold, barely able to feel her fingers.
3. Mother made us taste samples of gruel, otherwise known as porridge, and which we spit out on the sly.

Answers:  
1. Es+ther  
2. Numb+ers  
3. Sam+uel



Sunday, October 19, 2025

## Scripture Reading: 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5

***Want to hear God speak? Read your Bible. Want to hear God speak audibly?  
Read your Bible out loud! —Justin Peters***

Think about your favorite trip or adventure. Where did you go? How long were you gone? Where did you stay? How did you get there?

Ah, this last question is important, isn't it? To get to your destination, you needed some assistance. Someone had to give you directions, or you used a map.

Life is a journey, and every journey needs a reliable guide. For the believer, that guide is the Bible, God's voice speaking to us, offering wisdom, direction and encouragement at every stage of life. Whether we are young or old, active or slowing down, Scripture remains our moral and spiritual compass, pointing us toward truth, righteousness and hope. In today's reading, these words appear: "All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work."

*God's word guides us at every age.* The world around us changes rapidly. Many of us have watched society shift in ways we never expected — new technology, new ideas and even new attitudes toward morality. In the midst of all this change, it can sometimes feel overwhelming. But one thing never changes: God's truth. Isaiah 40:8 reminds us: "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever." While everything around us shifts, God's word remains steady and true. No matter how many birthdays we celebrate, Scripture continues to be our teacher, our source of wisdom and our moral compass.

*But Bible also teaches and corrects us.* It is "useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness." The Bible is not just for comfort, but also for instruction. It shows us how to live, corrects us when we go astray, and trains us to be more like Christ.

The ultimate goal, of course is to be "proficient, equipped for every good work." Some may wonder, "What good work can I do when I am elderly and homebound?" The answer is: Plenty! You can encourage and pray for others. You can share wisdom, guiding and inspiring the next generation.

Even in the quiet seasons of life, God is still using you, still equipping you, preparing you for works of faith, love and encouragement.

—Timothy Merrill

*Prayer: Gracious God, help me to hold fast to your word, knowing that it will always lead me on the right path and sustain me through every season of life. Amen.*

Week of October 19, 2025

## Daily Bible Readings

**Sunday:** 1 Corinthians 9-12

**Monday:** Daniel 7-9

**Tuesday:** Daniel 10-12

**Wednesday:** Esther 1-3

**Thursday:** Esther 4-7

**Friday:** Esther 8-10

**Saturday:** Psalm 119

*Verse to Remember*  
*Your word is a lamp to my feet*  
*and a light to my path.*

—Psalm 119:105

## THE WORLD OF SCIENCE

Using the code of mathematical and scientific symbols in the column at the left, decipher the names of famous scientists who advanced our knowledge of the world.

**A** =  $\neq$

**B** =  $\lrcorner$

**C** =  $\Sigma$

**D** =  $\cong$

**E** =  $\alpha$

**F** =  $\supseteq$

**G** =  $\{$

**H** =  $\}$

**I** =  $\leq$

**L** =  $\infty$

**M** =  $\leftrightarrow$

**N** =  $\pm$

**O** =  $\notin$

**P** =  $\pi$

**R** =  $\Omega$

**S** =  $\nabla$

**T** =  $\angle$

**U** =  $\sqrt{\phantom{x}}$

A.  $\{ \neq \infty \leq \infty \alpha \notin$

B.  $\neq \Omega \Sigma \{ \leq \leftrightarrow \alpha \cong \alpha \nabla$

C.  $\notin \pi \pi \alpha \pm \{ \alpha \leq \leftrightarrow \alpha \Omega$

D.  $\alpha \leq \pm \nabla \angle \alpha \leq \pm$

E.  $\Sigma \sqrt{\phantom{x}} \Omega \leq \alpha$

F.  $\lrcorner \alpha \infty \infty$

G.  $\supseteq \infty \alpha \leftrightarrow \leq \pm \{$

H.  $\neq \leftrightarrow \pi \alpha \Omega \alpha$

I.  $\Sigma \alpha \infty \nabla \leq \sqrt{\phantom{x}} \nabla$

J.  $\pi \neq \nabla \Sigma \neq \infty$

**Solution:**

A. Galileo  
 B. Archimedes  
 C. Oppenheimer  
 D. Einstein  
 E. Curie  
 F. Bell  
 G. Fleming  
 H. Ampere  
 I. Celsius  
 J. Pascal

Sunday, October 26, 2025

## Scripture Reading: Luke 18:9-14

***Humility is not thinking less of yourself; it's thinking of yourself less.***  
**—Rick Warren**

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In today's reading, Jesus tells a story about two men, a tax man and a Pharisee. He has high praise for the former and contempt for the latter. Let's take a closer look. The first thing we notice — perhaps with disappointment — is that this reading is not about taxes and tax collectors at all! *It is rather about the best way to get on God's good side.*

Jesus expressed this somewhat more theologically: "I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted" (v. 14).

We get on God's good side *by humbly confessing that we're sinners in need of God's redemptive mercy.*

The Pharisee didn't get this. Notice that everything in his prayer is true. Unfortunately, it was truth fish-wrapped in pride disguised as gratitude. "God, I thank you." So far so good. Then he crossed a line: "... that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers" (v. 11). He might've been okay if he'd stopped right there. But no, he had to keep going, "... or even like this tax-collector." This guy forgot that God loves thieves, rogues, adulterers and tax collectors! God even loves you and me!

Truth is, we don't really like people who are proud and full of themselves, do we? Sadly, it's hard for such people to get on God's good side. We prefer to be around those who can see beyond themselves, who show evident concern in the welfare of others, who take an interest in us, who seek justice and walk humbly with God, as the prophet Micah noted.

For example, I'm thinking of the leader who serves rather than bossing people around; the CEO who spends time learning employees' names, listening to their concerns, and even doing some of their tasks to understand their struggles. Or the physics teacher who corrects a student in class, only to later realize she misunderstood the situation. Instead of doubling down in pride, she publicly apologizes to the student, modeling that true humility means owning mistakes and valuing truth over ego. Or the woman who notices an elderly neighbor struggling to maintain his yard. Quietly, she mows his lawn, pulls weeds, and leaves fresh flowers by his door. She never tells anyone.

Humility. The tax collector had it when he prayed the "Sinner's Prayer." We, too, can clothe ourselves in these attractive garments when we walk humbly with God and our neighbor

—Timothy Merrill

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, open the eyes of my heart, that I may see. In your name. Amen.*

### Daily Bible Readings

**Sunday:** 1 Corinthians 13-16

**Monday:** Ezra 1-4

**Tuesday:** Haggai 1-2; Zech. 1-2

**Wednesday:** Zechariah 3-6

**Thursday:** Zechariah 7-10

**Friday:** Zechariah 11-14

**Saturday:** Psalms 120-123

## Germany Scramble

Here is the alphabet with some letters omitted. When you find all the missing letters, unscramble them to spell the name of a well-known German city. Write your answer on the line provided.

P Q S T C D E

F X Y Z I J K V

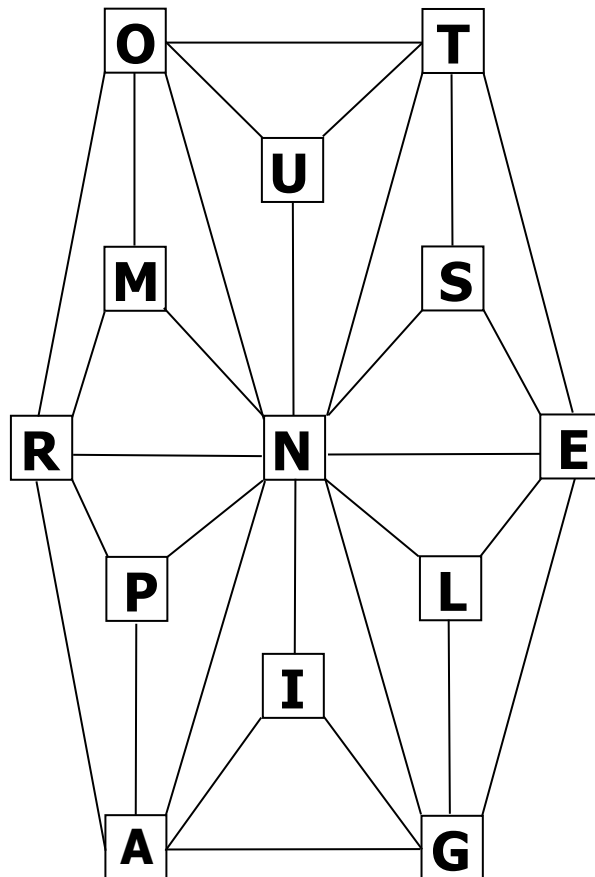
W L N O

\_\_\_\_\_

## WORD MAZE

**Directions:** Spell as many words as possible by starting anywhere in the maze and moving along the connecting lines. Do not skip letters.

For example, you cannot form the word **must**, since to get from **m** to **u** you would need to skip either **o** or **n**. You may return to use the same letter twice as when you form the word **noun**, but you cannot use the same letter twice in succession.



Four-letter words

Five-letter words

Longer words

**Word Maze, possible words:**

**4-letter words:** gain, pain, lens, mote, page, nuts, nest, sent, rant, rain, pant;  
**5-letter words:** giant, paint, tents, notes, stone, stout, motor, mount; **Longer words:** morning, raging, routes, giants, mounts, promote; **German Scramble:** Hamburg.