



# BETHANY CHURCH

## NEWSLETTER ❖ JULY '25

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Whatcha think? Should we start using them asap? What would you do if you spotted one and were exceeding the posted speeds limits? Would you stop and practice honesty? Or, maybe just slow down, instead of a time-consuming full stop complete with mug shot and fine payment? Maybe you'd be going so fast you never noticed the sign; or simply dismissed it as a joke.

How do you measure up with the solar powered digital speed sensing sign in Raymond? I've learned I can be going 31mph and get the green 30 to flash. Any higher speed earns me a red number intended to signal I need to slow down. But I've heard speed cameras could be miscalibrated by as much as 2mph. So...I should be OK cruising the curve at 33mph, right?

How easy it is to justify our lawbreaking. There are a few who think we don't need any laws...that we can all just figure it out on our own.

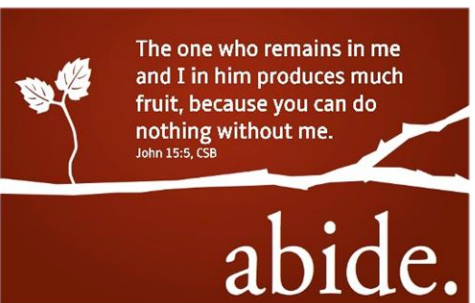
One proud college student challenged a big-name Christian evangelist/author/apologist with that belief: "no laws would be better." The instant reply to the young man was, "do you lock the door on your house when you leave?" Silence was followed by some laughter from the room of students.

Not having any rules sounds like freedom to some; but in real life we've proved it doesn't work well. Unlocked doors invite not just the curious; but the unwanted who trespass to steal and destroy, not to dust, vacuum and organize. Laws are necessary to define what is good and right and acceptable. Humans can, and do, go overboard and put too many laws in place. God's laws have always been given to show us what will bring out the best in us.

Recently I read a thought-provoking article by professor/author Collin Hansen entitled, "When Did Hitler Replace Jesus as the Reference Point for Good and Evil?" Hansen quotes historian Alec Ryrie who observes World War II exposed Christianity getting its priorities recategorized. *"In other words, the Holocaust transformed our standards for evil. In the shadow of Auschwitz, how could anyone be worried about differences between Christian denominations? Why should anyone care if two adults engage in consensual sex? A little cursing in God's name can't be a big deal when he didn't bother to stop millions of Jews from marching into the gas chambers. ...Before the war, Jesus Christ was the most influential moral figure in Western culture. ...even non-Christians measured themselves according to Jesus's example of love. He set the moral standard in his sinless life. ...So who replaced Jesus as the new moral standard? Adolf Hitler. Hansen's conclusion: "We need an objective standard of morality bigger than 'not Hitler.'"*

Friends, Jesus calls us to follow Him. It's more than abiding by the speed limits or lying, stealing, swearing, coveting, murdering less than the other person. Our standard for living is our perfect Savior; not being "better" than people like Hitler.

Pastor Rob



# Puzzle!

For this cryptogram, use the clues to decode Proverbs 27:1, NIV.

CLUES:  
O = D, T = O

   O       OT       O       T       O    T  
T D    F DO    E D B P O    B E D Y O

T O    O    O          O          O        
O D U D H H D L    Z D H    G D Y

   O       OT       O       T  
T D    F DO    N F D L    L R B O

                                              
B    T B G    U B G    E H A F M

Proverbs 27:1, NIV



## FIXER-UPPERS

Summer is peak time for home renovations and remodeling projects. Those can be super stressful, starting with the selection of a contractor.

In a blog about her own family's construction plans, Laura Elliott explains the challenge: "It's not just any builder I want. I want one who has impeccable

workmanship, is completely trustworthy and delivers our long-awaited [projects] early and under-budget." After sifting through bids and reviews, she discovered that most builders "look like they do pretty similar work for a pretty similar price."

For spiritual renovations, however, the choice is clear.

"God is the builder of everything," says Hebrews 3:4 (NIV). Elliott writes, "Jesus is not only the builder of His Father's house, but He is the buyer, and the heir as well." And what he's building, she adds, is "a better Bride," his church.

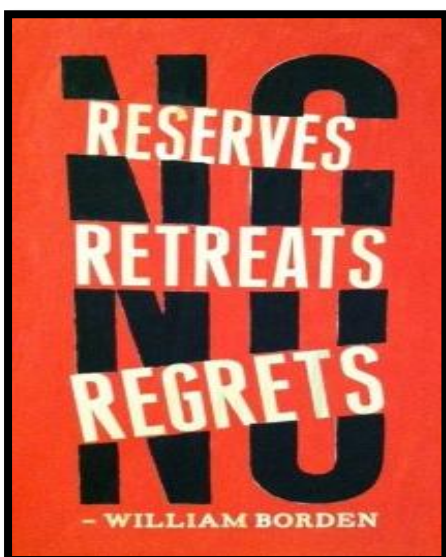
Faith upgrades are an ongoing, lifelong process. "The renewal of our natures is a work of great importance," said 18th-century minister George Whitefield. "It is not to be done in a day. We have not only a new house to build up, but an old one to pull down." It's a good thing God oversees this project! —Stephanie Martin

William Borden (1887-1913) was a Yale grad and the heir to his family's fortune. But he left behind a life of riches and comfort to become a Christian missionary. Before arriving in China, where he had hoped to share the

gospel with the Kansu people, Borden died of spinal meningitis at just 25 years old. According to legend, the words "No Reserve," "No Retreat" and "No Regrets" were later found in Borden's Bible.

Unlike the men who told Jesus they had to handle some family business before following him (see Luke 9:57-62), Borden didn't waver or stall. Some people might say Borden "didn't make a good trade," writes Kyle Idleman in his book Not a Fan. Borden "gave up his family, his fortune and a future career to follow Jesus," Idleman writes, "and he died before he reached the mission field. But this man ... knew he had made the right decision."

By committing completely to Christ, Borden inspired other mission workers and pastors, including Idleman. "Say no to self and yes to Jesus every time," Borden wrote in his journal. More than a century after his death, that no-regrets message lives on.





## Holy Ground

For me, there's nothing quite like taking off my sandals in the summer and walking through the grass. But when our sons were infants, neither shared that love of going barefoot. When we'd attempt to lower them to play outside, they'd raise their legs, trying not to touch the tickly, prickly, green ground.

"Do not come any closer," the Lord warned Moses through the burning bush. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground" (Exodus 3:5, NIV). In God's presence, Moses faced a turning point: either resist God's instructions or obey, leading the Israelites out of Egypt. Maybe taking off my sandals this summer can remind me that I'm standing in God's presence. I may not hear a booming voice, and I might just be standing at the kitchen sink doing chores. Or I might be at a barbecue, with the opportunity to truly listen to my neighbors. God's presence permeates life's big moments as well as the mundane.

How can you "take off your sandals" and enter what God has for you? —Janna Firestone



## Fire transforming us for the good

For many people, relaxing by a campfire is a favorite summer activity. Nestling into the surrounding darkness while gazing into dancing flames, we sense God's love and let the day's chaos go. In contrast, Exodus 24:17 describes, "Now the appearance of the glory of God was like a devouring fire."

Pastor Steve Garnaas-Holmes offers another take, writing about God using flames to change us. (full poem here: [unfoldinglight.net/2025/02/24/fire](http://unfoldinglight.net/2025/02/24/fire))



*God, Your presence is like a consuming fire —  
not destructive, but transformative,  
not the fire of anger but the flame of love,  
the fire of glassblowers and bakers  
the grace to make us more beautiful, strong and useful.  
Your glory is no tame campfire  
where we sit and make s'mores.  
It burns out of our control.  
The furnace of your love  
roars about our hearts, remaking us  
Teach us to be unafraid. ...*

When you bask in firelight glow — and maybe eat some s'mores! — ponder how God is transforming you with His love.

## The Power To Bless

A beloved physician of the 1600's, Sir Thomas Browne, was an example of constant prayers of blessing. He said, "I have resolved to pray more and pray always, to pray in all places where quietness inviteth, in the house, on the highway and on the street; and to know no street or passage in this city that may not witness that I have not forgotten God. I purpose to take occasion of praying upon the sight of any church which I may pass, that God may be worshipped there in Spirit, and that souls may be saved there; to pray daily for my sick patients and for the patients of other physicians; at my entrance into any home say, 'May the peace of God abide here'; after hearing a sermon to pray for blessing on God's truth and upon the messenger; upon the sight of a beautiful person to bless God for His creatures, to pray for the beauty of such an one's soul, that God may enrich her with inward graces and that the outward and inward may correspond; upon the sight of a deformed person to pray God will give them wholeness of soul, and by and by give them beauty of the resurrection."

Prayer is God's gift of power to bless others. O fill every day with prayers of blessing and take hold of the tremendous power God has given you!

Touch The World Through Prayer Wesley Duewel

# FINANCES

I've been a financial coach in my church for several years, and I've seen many financial situations. I've learned that some people pay too little attention to their financial affairs; others too much. Some routinely budget and plan and save; others don't. Some give generously; others withhold.

Most can offer reasons (or excuses) for their decisions. Yet often they're acting based on misconceptions about what Scripture teaches. We need to have an accurate, comprehensive view of biblical personal finance. To that end, here are five common misconceptions I've come across.

### **1. God cares more about my heart than what I do with my money.**

God certainly cares about the condition of our hearts. And yet there's a "faith and works" connection with money that can't be ignored. A heart transformed by the gospel will result in changes not just to what we *believe* about money but also what we *do* with it (James 2:14-17, 26).

Money is a big deal in the Bible. We're given more instruction in the Bible about money (more than 2,000 verses) than almost anything else. Jesus told many parables about it, and the apostles had a lot to say about it. We're told to avoid the love of money (1 Tim. 6:6-10) and to choose God over money (Luke 16:13), so we can be generous and ready to give (Matt. 6:2, 5, 16) and put our trust in God, not riches (1 Tim. 6:17-19). We're also encouraged to plan and save (Prov. 21:20) and look after the needs of our families and others (1 Tim. 5:8; Heb. 13:16).

### **2. I know I need to give, but how much doesn't matter so long as I give something.**

There's little disagreement among Christians that giving is encouraged, even commanded, in Scripture (Mal. 3:6-12; Matt. 23:23; 1 Cor. 16:1-2). But when we start talking about "how much," things get tricky.

Some say we're free to give as little or as much as we want based on how we "feel led," because we're free from the "legalism" of the tithe. It's true that New Testament giving shouldn't be legalistic. But Jesus and the apostles taught proportional and even sacrificial generosity from a heart of gratitude and worship, which for some may be more than a tithe (Mark 12:41-44; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:5-6).

Christians are a long way from obeying this teaching. Depending on which study you read, among professing Christians who attend church regularly, only about 5 percent give at least 10 percent of their income (the traditional "tithe"). Of those who do give, the average is approximately 2.5 percent of income.

### **3. Debt is unavoidable and not a problem so long as I pay it back and maintain good credit.**

Debt is common these days; all forms of consumer debt are on the rise. Some debt may occasionally be necessary, but most kinds can be avoided with careful planning and discipline.

Scripture doesn't explicitly prohibit lending and borrowing, but it does teach that debt is a form of "bondage," since it makes the borrower a slave to the debt payment itself (Prov. 22:7). It also makes the borrower a slave to the lender in the sense that the lender has partial "ownership" of the time the borrower must work to pay the lender back.

Unless there's an overwhelming need to borrow, we shouldn't put ourselves under the bondage of indebtedness. At a minimum, we shouldn't frequently borrow, and we should always pay off debt as soon as possible (which is the wise thing to do regardless).

#### **4. God will prosper me financially if I work hard and have enough faith.**

Historically there have been two perspectives on financial prosperity and the Christian life. The first teaches that because love of money is the root of all kinds of evil (1 Tim. 6:10), the more money you have, the less righteous you can be. The second teaches that God wants all Christians to be prosperous and wealthy. If we aren't prosperous, it's because we don't have enough faith.

A more accurate biblical perspective is that God in his sovereignty gives some people more, and others less, to steward on his behalf (1 Sam. 2:7; Matt. 26:11). How and why he does so is his business, not ours. Mature believers may be either rich or poor (Prov. 22:2).

#### **5. God has promised to take care of me, so I don't have to worry about money.**

God promises to take care of his children (Matt. 6:25-27; Phil. 4:19). But he also instructs us to take responsibility (and action) for our situation (Prov. 10:4-5). When it comes to finances, we have to do our part.

In light of his promises, we can be free from worry since we know God will take care of us. And given the wise instruction we've received, we need to resist passivity and inaction, which presume on God's kindness.

Money is an important part of our lives, so it's important that we clearly grasp what the Bible teaches about it. Take time to study the Scriptures for yourself and see how they apply to your situation. Read good books on biblical stewardship. Above all, strive to be a faithful steward of all that your King has entrusted to you (1 Cor. 4:2).

Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

2 CORINTHIANS 9:7



**Coming Soon  
to a Pew Near U**

In mid-August some new sanctuary sound equipment will be installed.

Includes: new mixer board, new sound system wiring, new computer and a custom-made desk. This project will also include a hearing assistance system that connects to personal hearing aids that have Bluetooth capability through the ListenWIFI app on your smartphones. Once the system is installed, we will train you on how to utilize it.



**GOD IS GOOD ALL THE TIME**

**ALL THE TIME GOD IS GOOD**



# WORSHIP NEWS



## SOUND UPGRADE

We will be upgrading our sound desk area with new cording, desk, computer and sound board in August!

With this upgrade we are in need of new people to volunteer to learn to run this new system (High school aged - adults).

August 17 is the main train-in date for everyone new and old. If you're interested in learning or have questions let Emily know!

## CONCERT OPTIONS

**CONTACT EMILY IF INTERESTED**  
**TRANSPORTATION MAY BE AVAILABLE**  
**FOR AN ADDITIONAL COST**

### MERCYME/NATALIE GRANT

- Friday, October 24 2025
- Denny Sanford Center, Sioux Falls
- Famous songs include:
  - M.M: Say I Won't, Best News Ever, I Can Only Imagine, Word of God Speak, Even If, Greater, Almost Home
  - N.G.: Your Great Name, You Will Be Found, Hurricane, Held
- Ticket Pricing around \$70

### ZACH WILLIAMS/CROWDER/ MATTHEW MAHER

- Saturday, November 8, 2025
- Roy Wilkins Auditorium, St. Paul
- Famous songs include"
  - Z.W.: There Was Jesus, Chain Breaker, Old Church Choir
  - C.: Good God Almighty, Somebody Prayed, Red Letters
  - M.M.: Lord I Need You, Because He Lives, Run to the Father
- Ticket Pricing around \$70

### MATTHEW WEST

- Friday, November 21, 2025
- Grace Church, Eden Prairie
- Famous songs include
  - "Don't Stop Praying"
  - "Truth Be Told"
  - "Hello My Name Is"
  - "My Story, Your Glory"
- Ticket prices around \$60

### BRANDON LAKE

- Sunday, April 26, 2026
- Xcel Center, St. Paul
- Famous songs include
  - "That's Who I Praise"
  - "Hard Fought Hallelujah"
  - "Gratitude"
  - "Praise"
- Ticket prices start at approx. \$60, have option to reserve a suite for \$100 per person



## Parenting is hard work

Sometimes the days are long and you feel challenged at every turn. You may feel like you're making no progress at all and your joy is fading. Hopelessness threatens to fill your heart. How can a parent keep moving forward, providing love, and

nurture, and direction when the path ahead looks so ominous? When you're tired or you've solved too many problems already and you're faced with yet another challenge, having your own clear philosophy of discipline will motivate you to persevere and be consistent. Your calling as a parent will give you the ability to press on no matter what.

At various times in your children's growth, you'll find some strategies working well, and others not so well. Some types of discipline will work with one child but not with another. There are no easy discipline "formulas" guaranteed to work all the time. So it's important to give yourself some grace, keep learning new things, and trust God to help you as you do the best you can.

### Even When You're Tired

All parents struggle from time to time, feeling overwhelmed or too tired to follow through with what they think they should be doing. One of the strongest things to keep you going in those moments is a clear purpose. All parents need something to hold on to when they're tired, discouraged, overwhelmed, or simply too busy dealing with the demands of life. Some parents burn out—even on a daily basis, because they don't know why they're doing what they're doing.

Once you understand and apply a clear philosophy of discipline, however, you can reverse the trend of burnout and use it to strengthen your family. This philosophy will allow love, rather than anger, to be your motivation, and your children will know what to expect. Developing a clear philosophy of discipline can give you a foundation that will energize you when day-to-day problems seem overwhelming.

### Tip 1: Focus on the Goals

You may develop a number of goals for your children over the years, but your children's primary job is to learn to obey and honor. Ephesians 6:1–3 reads, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother'—which is the first commandment with a promise that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."

Sometimes parents think that the goal of family life is closeness. But the reality is that closeness only happens when the individuals in the family have the character that contributes to that. Selfish people have a hard time with closeness. Obedience and honor help children learn to give, not just take, and contribute, not just receive.

### Tip 2: Endure the Pain

In the same way that an athlete embraces pain in order to reach a goal, parents must not be surprised by the "pain" encountered in raising children. Adjusting your expectations can help you not take resistance from kids personally but recognize that you have a goal to see your children become disciples, grow in maturity, have integrity and develop the life-skills necessary for their future. Some parents are shocked by their children's poor responses. It's as if they expect their children to say, "Thanks, Dad, for sending me to my room; I really appreciate the limits you set for me," or "I appreciate it, Mom, when you make me clean up my toys and make my bed." Children don't naturally respond this way. Parents who expect their children to appreciate their discipline will be frustrated.



### Tip 3: Look for Ways to Make it Positive

You may be thinking, "Yes, I know discipline is supposed to be positive, but how can I be positive when my kids are doing the wrong thing?" Perhaps you are tired and discouraged because you feel you're being too negative with your children. If so, it's time to break that cycle and focus on the positive.

For example, you might try to state rules and requests in positive terms whenever possible. Instead of saying, "Don't shout," you might say, "We need to talk quietly in this store." Clearly stating or restating a rule in positive terms gives your child a clear picture of what's expected and keeps your interaction on a positive note. This simple adjustment can help you as a parent focus on what you want your child to do instead of what you don't want.

### Tip 4: Think Long Term

You're training your children for the future. You're not simply changing their behavior to make present circumstances easier. One reason children need to learn to obey their parents is so that they can obey God. Obedience is bigger than a parenting issue. It's a God issue. When your daughter's ball rolls into the street and she starts to run after it, you yell, "Stop!" You don't want her to evaluate your instruction. You want her to instinctively stop at the sound of your voice. This is the kind of obedience children need to develop so they will respond to God in the same way.

Parenthood is partnership with God. Your teaching of godly character provides the basis for spiritual development in your children. Key attitudes such as obedience, submission, and honor toward God are best learned as children and practiced throughout life.

Perhaps your kids have developed some negative character traits along the way. If so, this is not a time for you to beat yourself up with guilt because of the way you've disciplined (or not disciplined). Make adjustments now and begin to emphasize different things with your children. You'll see new changes that will help to round out their development.

This parenting tip comes from the book [Home Improvement: The Parenting Book You Can Read To Your Kids](https://biblicalparenting.org/) by Dr. Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller, RN, BSN. <https://biblicalparenting.org/>



***Todd and Jen are looking to start a parenting/young couples Bible study in the near future. Contact one of us if you are interested in attending or just want to learn more.***



**Prairie Fest is fast approaching and Jen and Todd will be pulling the Bethany float through the parade. We are looking for volunteers young and old to join us. We have the candy and bubbles all set to hand out! Contact Jen or Todd if you are interested in joining us!**



Sunday, July 6, 2025

## Scripture Reading: Galatians 6:(1-6), 7-16

*Sow a thought, and you reap an act.  
Sow an act, and you reap a habit.  
Sow a habit, and you reap a character.  
Sow a character, and you reap a destiny.  
—Charles Reade*

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**M**y wife and I lived in China for 13 years, and we were fascinated by the forests of bamboo trees we encountered in our travels. They reminded us of the aspen groves of Colorado, even though an aspen is much different. Fun facts: The bamboo tree is not actually a tree; it's a tall grass. And the bamboo "tree" releases 35 percent more oxygen than any tree out there. You can feel the effects when you stand next to a clump of bamboo.

In today's reading, the apostle Paul uses the agricultural metaphor of sowing and reaping to highlight the profound truth that our choices today shape our outcomes tomorrow. The principle is simple: what you plant, you harvest.

The bamboo tree is a remarkable example of this, especially since so much patience is required! For years after planting the seed, nothing visible happens. But in the fifth year, it shoots up over 80 feet in just weeks. What was happening during those quiet years? Its roots were spreading deep and wide to support its rapid growth.

Our spiritual lives often mirror this pattern. Acts of kindness, prayer and faithfulness may seem unnoticed at first, but they are setting the foundation for a significant harvest. We reap what we sow.

Paul's encouragement to "not grow weary in doing good" is timely for those moments when spiritual fatigue sets in. The slow process of spiritual growth can feel frustrating. But remember, even a tiny mustard seed of faith grows into a tree (Matthew 13:31-32).

Paul's admonition to "do good to all people" reminds us that our faith *isn't just personal—it's communal*. Small acts of generosity can have a ripple effect. Mother Teresa once said, "Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love."

What seeds are you planting today? Are they seeds of selfishness or of service? Reflect on your daily actions and consider how they align with God's will. Trust in God's promise that perseverance in doing good will yield a harvest of eternal blessings.

—Timothy Merrill

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for the reminder that our choices matter. Help us sow seeds of love, kindness and faithfulness. Strengthen us when we grow weary. May we always look for opportunities to do good and reflect your grace to those around us. Amen.*

Week of July 6, 2025

## Daily Bible Readings

**Sunday:** Acts 1-2

**Monday:** Isaiah 25-27

**Tuesday:** Isaiah 28-30

**Wednesday:** Isaiah 31-33

**Thursday:** Isaiah 34-36

**Friday:** Isaiah 37-39

**Saturday:** Psalms 70-72

## Verse to Remember

*In you, O Lord, I take refuge; let  
me never be put to shame.*

—Psalm 71:1

## July 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		

## “I before E except after C”

This is a spelling rule we learned when we were children. Yet, there are many exceptions to this rule. Unscramble the words below to reveal words that are exceptions to the “I before E except after C” rule.

1. In the following words, the I is before the E even though it follows a C. Unscramble the words to reveal the exceptions to the rule.

nseecci	_____	ffetiecn	_____	octsyie	_____
lrcaige	_____	fniedtice	_____	cfiuitsefn	_____
nictnea	_____	ionccecs	_____		

2. In these examples, the I is NOT before the E, but there’s no C involved whatsoever! Unscramble the words to reveal these exceptions to the rule.

ehibnorg	_____	wighe	_____	iydte	_____
tetsiha	_____	gieeb	_____	roifeng	_____
tighwe	_____	szrieeu	_____	fecenfai	_____
rehite	_____	geithh	_____	ienr	_____

**ANSWERS:** 1. nseecci=science;  
ffetiecn=efficient;  
octsyie=society; lrcaige=glacier;  
fniedtice=deficient;  
cfiuitsefn=sufficient;  
nictnea=ancient;  
ionccecs=conscience.  
2. ehibnorg=neighbor;  
wighe=weigh; iydte=deity;  
tetsiha=atheist; gieeb=beige;  
roifeng=foreign; tighwe=weight;  
szrieeu=seizure;  
fecenfai=caffeine; rehte=either;  
geithh=height; ienr=rein.

## Six activities seniors can do to improve memory

1. Get better organized.
2. Make a special effort to pay attention, concentrate.
3. Eat well. Make certain you have a balanced diet.
4. Exercise the body.
5. Exercise the memory.
6. Get plenty of sleep.

—Adapted from “Six things seniors can do to improve memory,” by William Klemm, Ph.D., a senior professor of neuroscience at Texas A&M University. (*Psychology Today*, November 26, 2010).



Sunday, July 13, 2025

## Scripture Reading: Luke 10:25-37

*The first question the priest and Levite asked was, “If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?” But the good Samaritan reversed the question: “If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?” —Martin Luther King Jr.*

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Thomas Merton (1915–1968) was an American Trappist monk, writer, theologian, mystic, poet, social activist and scholar of comparative religion. And a prolific writer. He has an interesting take on the Good Samaritan. Here’s what he writes: “Let us remember that while to us all Samaritans are Good Samaritans, it was not so to those who first heard the parable. In their eyes all Samaritans were, by the very fact, bad. Indeed, that was why a Samaritan had to be the subject of the parable: since it was necessary for the hearers to realize that at least one Samaritan could be a good one.”

The parable of the Good Samaritan can be found in today’s reading. There are many lessons that can be drawn from Jesus’ parable, but Merton points us to one that is often overlooked. The kindness, generosity and compassion found in this story came from a person who was commonly thought to be devoid of these positive qualities.

The Good Samaritan was not one of “us.” He was one of “them”! Shocking!

This leads us all to reflect on who might be one of “them” from our point of view. Someone beyond our religious, political, ethnic and cultural experience (think music, tattoos, piercings, for example)?

Get this point? One of the lessons of this parable is about our prejudices we don’t even realize we have. The Good Samaritan is a story about how one of “them” helped one of “us.”

Ask yourself about persons, ethnicities, political perspectives with which and with whom you have trouble. We all have these negativities.

But the fabulous nature of the gospel is that the people who inhabit our negativities are, according to Jesus, our neighbors! And Jesus is on record as saying we should love our neighbors as ourselves!

It’s a tall order, isn’t it? I know it is for me. But God is faithful and will give me and all of us the courage to realign and redefine who is our neighbor. And when that happens, we have a huge opportunity to put a little love on them, and make their day! Thanks be to God!

—Timothy Merrill

*Prayer: O God, thank you for the Good Samaritans of the world! Amen.*



**Daily Bible Readings****Sunday:** Acts 3-5**Monday:** Isaiah 40-42**Tuesday:** Isaiah 43-45**Wednesday:** Isaiah 46-48**Thursday:** Isaiah 49-51**Friday:** Isaiah 52-54**Saturday:** Psalms 73-75

## Verse to Remember

*When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned ... for I am the LORD, your God.* —Isaiah 43:2-3a

## CAN YOU SORT IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER?

1. The American Civil War begins.
2. The Berlin Wall comes down.
3. Archduke Ferdinand is assassinated.
4. Don Larsen pitches a perfect game in the World Series for the Yankees.
5. Alexander Graham Bell makes the first phone call.
6. Queen Victoria begins her reign.
7. John Glenn orbits the Earth three times.
8. Charlotte Brontë publishes *Jane Eyre* under the name Currer Bell.
9. The Hindenburg blimp catches fire and crashes.
10. Quarterback Joe Namath predicts a victory in Super Bowl III.
11. U.S. President Nixon resigns.
12. Charles Lindbergh flies solo across the Atlantic.
13. Princess Diana dies in car crash.
14. Napoleon is exiled on Elba.
15. Composer Beethoven dies at the age of 56.

[Use this white space for figuring]

**Directions:**

Write the number of the events here in chronological order. The first one is provided for you.

**14. 1814**

**ANSWERS:** 14. 1814; 15. March 26, 1827; 6. June 20, 1837; 8. October 19, 1847; 1. April 12, 1861; 5. March 10, 1876; 3. June 28, 1914; 12. May 21, 1927; 9. May 6, 1937; 4. October 8, 1956; 7. February 20, 1962; 10. January 9, 1969; 11. August 8, 1974; 2. November 9, 1989; 13. August 31, 1997.

Sunday, July 20, 2025

## Scripture Reading: Luke 10:38-42

***Every child should be taught that useful work is worship and that intelligent labor is the highest form of prayer. —Robert G. Ingersoll***

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The story of Mary and Martha is a familiar one, and for good reason — it holds timeless lessons about priorities, distractions and the importance of worship. As Jesus visits their home, Martha busies herself with preparations, while Mary sits and listens to Jesus. When Martha complains that Mary isn't helping, Jesus responds with a gentle reminder. So, what can we learn from this?

The lesson concerns the *danger of distraction*. Martha was doing good and necessary work. Absolutely no question. She was serving Jesus and the disciples, making sure they were fed and comfortable. But she lost her focus. She forgot the “why” of her service.

How often do we let the busyness of life crowd out time with God? Our to-do lists grow longer, our schedules fill up, and even our service can distract us from what matters most: being in God's presence. Imagine a host so focused on preparing a meal that they miss enjoying their guests. Jesus essentially tells Martha, “I didn't come for the food — I came for you.”

There's another lesson: the *importance of worship*. Mary chose to sit at Jesus' feet and listen. What can be more important than to worship and study the teachings of Jesus?

This doesn't mean that work is unimportant. But it's a reminder that worship fuels our work. When we spend time with God first, our hearts are aligned with God's will, and our work becomes more meaningful.

But there's a final and deeper lesson: the *value of peace*. Martha was anxious and overwhelmed. Jesus says, “You are worried and upset about many things.” When we focus solely on our tasks or worries, we place the burden of success entirely on ourselves. Sitting with Jesus reminds us that Someone Else is in control.

Martha and Mary each have something to teach us. From Martha, we learn the importance of serving; from Mary, we learn the necessity of worship. The challenge is to balance work and worship, thus ensuring that our service flows from a heart rooted in worship.

Why not start your day by dedicating your time and tasks to God. Ask God to help you prioritize and trust him with the results. Even five minutes of prayer can shift your perspective.

—Timothy Merrill

*Prayer: Lord, help us cultivate a Mary heart in a Martha world. Give us an undivided heart that we may live in awe of your name. You are the one thing worth being concerned about that will never be taken from us. Amen.* —Taken from the website of the De La Salle Medical and Health Sciences Institute.

## Daily Bible Readings

**Sunday:** Acts 6-9  
**Monday:** Isaiah 55-57  
**Tuesday:** Isaiah 58-60  
**Wednesday:** Isaiah 61-63  
**Thursday:** Isaiah 64-66  
**Friday:** Micah 1-4  
**Saturday:** Psalms 76-78

## Verse to Remember

*“Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters;  
 ... come, buy and eat!” —Isaiah 55:1*

## SPELLING ALERT: Vowels Missing from Bible Verse!

Please look at the Scripture verses below and replace the missing vowels to reveal the verses.

Th\_r\_f\_r\_, \_s G\_d's ch\_s\_n p\_ \_pl\_, h\_ly \_nd d\_ \_rly l\_v\_d,  
 cl\_th\_ y\_ \_rs\_lv\_s w\_th c\_mp\_ss\_ \_n, k\_ndn\_ss, h\_m\_l\_ty,  
 g\_ntl\_n\_ss \_nd p\_t\_ \_nc\_. —C\_l\_ss\_ \_ns 3:12

F\_r by gr\_c\_ y\_ \_ h\_v\_ b\_\_n s\_v\_d thr\_ \_gh f\_ \_th, \_nd  
 th\_s \_s n\_t y\_ \_r \_wn d\_ \_ng; \_t \_s th\_ g\_ft \_f G\_d —  
 n\_t th\_ r\_s\_lt \_f w\_rks, s\_ th\_t n\_ \_n\_m\_y b\_ \_st.  
 —\_ph\_s\_ \_ns 2:8-9

**Missing Vowels:** There-fore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kind-ness, humility, gentle-ness and patience. —Colossians 3:12; For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God — not the result of works, so that no one may boast. —Ephesians 2:8-9. **Famous Females:** 1. UK, 2. US, 3. US, 4. UK, 5. UK, 6. US, 7. UK, 8. UK, 9. US, 10. UK, 11. US, 12. UK, 13. UK, 14. US, 15. UK, 16. US.

**FAMOUS FEMALES:** Which of these women were born in the U.S. and which were born in the U.K.?

NAME	U.S. or U.K.?	NAME	U.S. or U.K.?
1. Agatha Christie		2. Geraldine Ferraro	
3. Chris Evert		4. J.K. Rowling	
5. Theresa May		6. Harriet Tubman	
7. Julie Andrews		8. Elizabeth Taylor	
9. Joan Didion		10. Jane Austen	
11. Sally Ride		12. Beatrix Potter	
13. Kate Winslet		14. Rosa Parks	
15. Diana Spencer		16. Wallis Simpson	



Sunday, July 27, 2025

## Scripture Reading: Luke 11:1-13

*Dear Lord, so far I've done all right. I haven't gossiped,  
haven't lost my temper, haven't been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish,  
or overindulgent. I'm really glad about that.*

*But in a few minutes, God, I'm going to get out of bed.  
And from then on, I'm going to need a lot more help. —Anon.*

In today's Bible reading, Jesus teaches his disciples how to pray and encourages them to approach God with persistence and trust. The chapter opens with a simple yet profound request: "Lord, teach us to pray." Although prayer is essentially just having a conversation with God, Jesus offers a model of simplicity and depth — a prayer that focuses on reverence for God, submission to the will of God and reliance on divine and daily provision. The prayer urges us to forgive as we have been forgiven.

This teaching is then followed by a parable about a man who persistently knocks on his friend's door at midnight seeking bread. The friend eventually rises to help, not because of friendship, but because of the man's shameless persistence.

But oddly, this parable is not about encouraging us to be persistent in prayer to the point of being annoying — like the man in this story, or the persistent widow in another parable (see Luke 18:1-8).

Instead, Jesus seems to be explaining that God is not deaf. We don't need to yell at God, or beg or plea or wake him up in the middle of the night. Instead, we need simply to ask. "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you." Wow! This takes away all the pressure. We need only to ask, seek and knock!

For support, Jesus probably points to a nearby parent, and then he says, "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead?" The answer is obvious. Even flawed human parents desire the best for their children, so how much more will our perfect heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask of him?

Prayer, however, is not just about asking for things; it's about deepening our relationship with God. It's a conversation that aligns our hearts with his will, teaches us trust, and reassures us of his love.

— Timothy Merrill

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to approach you with the boldness of a child and the faith of an adult, knowing that you always hear and answer with perfect wisdom. Amen.*

Week of July 27, 2025

## Daily Bible Readings

**Sunday:** Acts 10-12

**Monday:** Micah 5-7

**Tuesday:** Nahum 1-3

**Wednesday:** 2 Kings 20-21

**Thursday:** Zephaniah 1-3

**Friday:** Habakkuk 1-3

**Saturday:** Psalms 79-81

## Verse to Remember

*Look at the proud!  
Their spirit is not right in them,  
but the righteous live by their faith.*

—Habakkuk 2:4

## WAR and HATE

The words *hate* and *war* have been removed from the following list of words. The letters of each word, when inserted in the same order, *but not always consecutively*, will give you a new word. Study the examples provided and then write the word in the space provided.

- |          |               |              |       |
|----------|---------------|--------------|-------|
| 1. sm    | <u>swarm</u>  | 11. anniil   | _____ |
| 2. sn    | <u>hasten</u> | 12. ind      | _____ |
| 3. eer   | _____         | 13. aspyxi   | _____ |
| 4. cpr   | _____         | 14. reabilit | _____ |
| 5. homed | _____         | 15. wver     | _____ |
| 6. posph | _____         | 16. cs       | _____ |
| 7. cod   | _____         | 17. ern      | _____ |
| 8. encnd | _____         | 18. exusd    | _____ |
| 9. den   | _____         | 19. se       | _____ |
| 10. rior | _____         | 20. sete     | _____ |

**Answers to Bible Books:**  
1. Acts  
2. Judges  
3. Romans  
4. Mark  
5. Luke  
6. Ruth  
7. Jeremiah

**ANSWERS:**  
3. wearer,  
4. chapter,  
5. homeward,  
6. phosphate,  
7. coward,  
8. enchanted,  
9. warden,  
10. warrior,  
11. annihilate,  
12. inward,  
13. asphyxiate,  
14. rehabilitate,  
15. whatever,  
16. chaste,  
17. hearten,  
18 exhausted,  
19. swear,  
20. sweater.

**BIBLE BOOKS:** The answer to each clue is a book of the Bible. (You might find this easier if you have a table of contents for the Bible in front of you.)

- The play "Romeo and Juliet" has five of these.
- Professions of Judith Sheindlin, Neil Gorsuch and Joe Brown
- Residents of Italy's capital
- Before the Euro, Germans had the Deutsche ...
- He had a "cool hand."
- His 714 home run record was broken by Hank Aaron.
- The most famous bullfrog ever.