



BETHANY CHURCH

NEWSLETTER ❖ SEPTEMBER '25

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A Million Miles Away is a movie on Amazon Prime based on the life of Jose Hernandez. Jose grew up in a migrant farm family who traveled wherever the whole family could find work. Starting in elementary school Jose's parents begin taking their five kids to work early in the morning for a few hours before school. As a result, it was a challenge for the kids to stay awake in class.

Nevertheless, Jose was gifted especially in math; and began to dream big about his future. He wanted to go to space and be an astronaut. One of his teachers recognized there was something special in Jose and had a hard talk with his parents. Miss Young shared it was not good to keep moving around for work because the children would never thrive—it would be like digging up a tree every year and expecting it to be fruitful. The parents eventually agreed with the teacher's insight.

As an adult, Jose's dream of being up with the stars still consumed his thoughts daily. He sends in an application to join the NASA space program but gets rejected. But he didn't let that squash his dream. Jose continued to apply, even after being rejected 11 times. The twelfth application was delivered in person and accepted.

In the long season of rejection, Jose, with the support of his wife, continued to train to better his qualifications. He learned to fly a plane, scuba dive and speak Russian. Through all the skepticism he never gave up on his dream. In 2009 he was one of the flight engineers on the space shuttle Discovery and spent time on the international space station.

The world is full of skeptics especially when it comes to being a follower of Jesus. Can you see yourself being like Jesus? Do you spend time reflecting on how you can better reflect God's character? Do you allow that idea to be in your thoughts daily? The good news is God qualifies us to be part of His family—there is no application process based on our past and present. May we make it our goal to: "Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him." (Philippians 2:12b-13 NLT) Let's be intentional about keeping our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross." (Hebrews 12:2 NIV) Pastor Rob



THINK

like Christ



BE

like Christ



DO

like Christ

REACH

LOVE

SERVE

Puzzle!

Use the words provided to complete the puzzle.
Then write the numbered words in the correct blanks
below to complete Psalm 67:6, NIV.

WORDS:

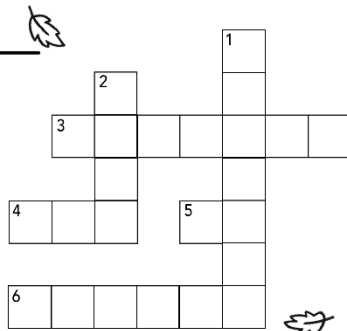
GOD, BLESSES, HARVEST,
YIELDS, US, LAND

ACROSS

3. Rhymes with farthest.
4. Rhymes with nod.
5. Rhymes with thus.
6. Rhymes with fields.

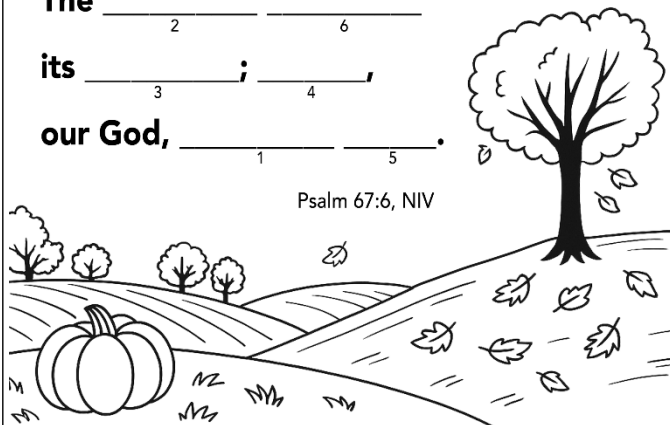
DOWN

1. Rhymes with messes.
2. Rhymes with hand.



The _____
its _____;
our God, _____.

Psalm 67:6, NIV



Seasons of Change, Signs of Grace

“While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease” (Genesis 8:22, NASB). As autumn begins, we watch the world transform before our eyes. Leaves change color, the air turns crisp, and a new rhythm settles in. In these seasonal shifts, we are reminded of God’s faithful hand over all of creation.

Genesis 8:22 assures us that the cycles of nature—seedtime and harvest, summer and winter—are part of God’s ongoing promise. Each season speaks of His order, care, and presence. Autumn, in particular, invites reflection. Just as the trees release their leaves, we are called to let go of what no longer serves us and make space for renewal.

This season also marks a return to routines—school schedules, church programs, and community events. As we step into new responsibilities or revisit familiar ones, may we do so with gratitude and trust. God is not only present in the harvest but in the quiet letting go. Let this autumn be a time to embrace God’s steady rhythm, find beauty in change, and rest in His faithful promises that never cease—even as the world around us shifts.

More than Reading, 'Riting and 'Rithmetic

You may recall that many followers of Jesus called him “Rabbi.” In essence, the word means teacher. Clearly the word describes the brilliant Nazarene who was constantly teaching his listeners about God and God’s expectations of humans.

In a secular society, it is of paramount importance that the teachings of Christ be proclaimed and affirmed wherever possible. In the early days of our country, it was customary for public schools to teach reading, writing and arithmetic as well as Christian principles. Subjects being taught were presented in a setting of morality, religion and character development.

The reading book compiled by William H. McGuffey in 1836 focused on such themes as self-denial, temperance, obedience, and warned against laziness, profanity, stealing and vanity.

In our time, however, when it is difficult to focus on God and spiritual matters in public schools, our churches and families have a great responsibility. Sunday school attendance, not only for children but for adults as well, must be of primary importance. Prayer, as well as discussion of social issues from a Christian point of view, must be practiced in the home and church. We must learn and teach about Christ.

“Learn from me,” Jesus said. “Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:29 NRSV). Where shall we learn of him or from him if not in our churches and homes?

REACH

LOVE

SERVE

The Power of Prayer Warriors

Prayer warriors are spiritual soldiers—men and women who faithfully lift others in prayer, often behind the scenes. Though their work may go unnoticed by the world, it is deeply valued by God. Their intercession can strengthen the weary, comfort the grieving, and open doors for God's will to be done. In Scripture, we are urged to "pray for one another" (James 5:16), reminding us that healing and restoration often come through the prayers of the faithful.

A prayer warrior stands in the gap, bringing needs before the Lord with boldness and persistence. The Apostle Paul recognized the power of prayer, often asking others to pray for him as he shared the gospel. In the same way, prayer warriors today uphold churches, pastors, families, and communities. Their prayers may be silent, but their impact is mighty. Never underestimate the difference a praying heart can make.

pray in the Spirit

AT ALL TIMES AND ON
EVERY OCCASION.

Stay alert AND be persistent

IN YOUR PRAYERS FOR ALL
BELIEVERS EVERYWHERE.

EPHESIANS 6:18 NLT

Take Courage:

Trusting the One Who Overcomes

A young woman was deeply troubled by the suffering she saw in the world, as well as by struggles within her own family and friendships. Unsure of how to help or where to begin, she turned to her pastor for guidance. He responded with a heartfelt letter. A portion of it read:

"Life is difficult. It is sometimes like a mindless boot camp. We seem to be rehearsing for something that is beyond our present knowing. We come from a beginning that we cannot remember, and we move toward a destiny that we cannot see. Only imagination, faith and a friend here or there give us the strength to go on.

When Jesus said that we would always have trouble in this world, he added an encouraging word that we should never forget: '*Take courage; I have overcome the world.*'

I cannot fix you. You cannot fix you. Do not put your ultimate faith in me, or in yourself, or in any human being. Trust the Lord of the Harvest. He will fix you when he comes."

Excerpted from a letter by Dr. Thomas Lane Butts



In *Faith Takes a Name*, Dwight E. Stevenson writes that if we consider ourselves to be disciples of Jesus, then we must remain "learners under the instruction of Christ."

He notes, "Quite literally, a disciple is a pupil, scholar, student or learner. In [Jesus'] world a teacher with his band of disciples was to that culture what schools and universities are to our society. To be a disciple of Jesus is to go to school with him."

.....
"Prayer is an acknowledgment that our need of God's help is not partial but total."

Alistair Begg, Made for His Pleasure
.....

"I'm a little pencil in the hand of a writing God, who is sending a love letter to the world." Mother Teresa
.....

"The best index to a person's character is how he treats people who can't do him any good, and how he treats people who can't fight back." Abigail Van Buren

Fall programing starting soon!

Adults needed to serve in various ways:

1. **Small group leaders** for 6th graders. Adults follow the new 6th grade class thru 12th grade. Materials are supplied to facilitate a once-a-month meeting. This is a special opportunity to spent time with a student and show them the love of Christ as they navigate their middle school and high school years. Talk with Todd if you are interested.
2. **Gym Time Watchers** to watch students 6:15 to 7:00 pm on Wednesdays. If there are 4-6 adults you would only have to serve once a month or less. Talk to Todd with questions or sign up on sheet by church office.
3. **Wednesday Night Meals** Serving the meal is a great way to help facilitate what God is doing with the youth mid-week programs if you don't want to teach. One lead meal person is still needed (for Sub meal) requiring an hour of setup time, 6:15 pm serving time and cleanup time part of the commitment. Meal helpers and treat makers are also needed. Talk to Todd with questions or sign up on sheet by church office.



Starts

Wednesday Sept 10

6:15 to 7:00 pm

Meal time/Gym time

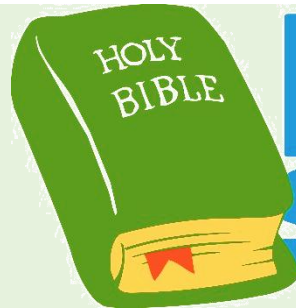
7 to 8 pm

Classes for 1st-5th & 9th-11th

Youth Group for 6th-8th

8 to 9 pm

Youth Group for 9th-12th



BIBLE SUNDAY

Bibles will be given to the incoming **3rd and 9th graders** on Sunday Sept 7 during the worship service. If you are in those two age groups please let Todd know if you will present on the 7th to receive your Bible.

MENTORING & Confirmation of Faith

10th Graders that are planning on being confirmed at Bethany Spring of 2026 please have a mentor chosen before school starts.

The first mentor/student meeting will be September 17; but adults will want to review materials before the first meeting. **STUDENTS** make sure to tell Todd who you have chosen for your mentor.

FREEWILL
DONATIONS

BETHANY REFORMED CHURCH
222 North Main Street
Clara City

BETHANY

Fall Benefit

WEDNESDAY,
SEPTEMBER 3RD

4:30 - 7:00 PM TURKEY DINNER

Drive Thru and/or Dine-In
w/ pumpkin bar in the Fellowship Hall

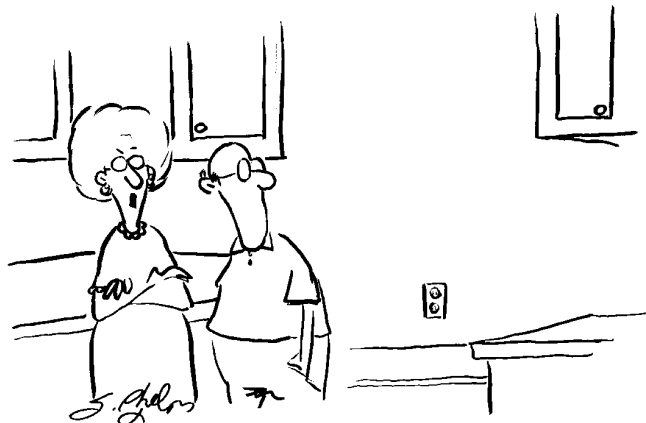
PROCEEDS WILL GO TOWARD:
CLARA CITY FIRE, AMBULANCE, AQUATIC CENTER
& CLARA CITY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

6th – 12th
graders →

Helpers for Bethany Benefit, Wed. Sept 3
2 Shifts:

4:15-6:15 pm & 6:10 pm thru clean up
Earn credit (\$\$) toward your church youth
account for working.

Sign up sheet by Todd's office



"That's the last time I tell the youth group
to help themselves to the church refrigerator!"



"Mom's in the kitchen reminding herself
that I'm a blessing from above."

REACH

LOVE

SERVE

When Feelings Lie: Helping Kids Anchor Their Lives in Truth

It's no surprise that kids today are growing up in a world that confuses feelings with truth. From the cartoons they watch to the social media they scroll, the message is loud and clear: "If it feels right, it must be right." While that sounds empowering, it's actually dangerous.

Imagine a child navigating life like a boat without an anchor—drifting wherever the emotional winds blow. One day they're confident, the next they're filled with doubt. One moment they believe in doing what's right, and the next they justify poor decisions because it felt okay at the time.

As Christian parents, our task is clear: we must help our children build their lives on something stronger than emotion. We must train their hearts to recognize truth—not just what is true, but why it's true—and to follow it even when it's hard.

Why Feelings Can't Be the Guide

Feelings are real. God created them. They help us experience joy, caution us in danger, and move us with compassion. But feelings were never meant to drive the car. They're indicators, not navigators.

When a child says, "I don't feel like going to church," or "I feel like I'm a failure," or "It doesn't feel wrong," they are often filtering life through emotion instead of truth. The world applauds that—"Follow your heart!" they say. But Jeremiah 17:9 (NIV) warns, "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" That's not a call to suppress feelings, but to guide them with truth.

Children need to know that while feelings are important, they are not always accurate. That's why God gave us His Word—to give clarity when our hearts are clouded by fear, frustration, or false narratives.

Teaching the Truth: Psalm 119:160

A key verse I recommend for every parent to teach their children is Psalm 119:160 (NIV):

"All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal."

This verse gives two powerful foundations:

1. All God's words are true – not just the comforting ones or the popular ones.
2. His laws are eternal – they don't change with cultural trends or emotional swings.

God's truth is like a lighthouse. When the sea is stormy and everything feels uncertain, His Word remains steady. Kids need that anchor. And it starts with us helping them internalize it—not just through head knowledge, but heart transformation.

What It Looks Like at Home

So how do we help children understand that truth isn't defined by how they feel?

1. Name the Lie.

Start by gently helping them identify cultural messages. For example, when they hear a song that says, "You just have to trust your feelings," use that as a conversation starter. Ask: "Do you think feelings are always right?" Get them thinking. Then help them compare that with what God says.

2. Give a Better Anchor.

Introduce verses that speak to identity, truth, and God's nature. Teach them how to use Scripture as a filter for their thoughts. When they feel discouraged or afraid, help them look for a verse that speaks to their situation.

3. Talk About It Often.

Truth-based conversations don't have to be sermons. They can happen in the car, during dinner, or right after a tough moment. Ask, "What do you think God thinks about that?" or "What does the Bible say about how we treat others when we're angry?" Help them learn to connect real-life with timeless truth.

4. Model It Yourself.

When you feel overwhelmed, say it out loud: "I'm feeling anxious today, but I'm reminding myself of what's true—that God is with me." Your example teaches them how to process their own emotions through faith.

5. Pray with Them.

When emotions are high—fear, sadness, even joy—pray Scripture together. Let them see that prayer is a place where feelings are welcomed and realigned with truth.

The Result: A Steady Heart in an Unsteady World

When children begin to understand that truth is not based on how they feel but on what God says, it changes everything. They become more resilient, more secure, and more discerning. They learn to question their assumptions and check their emotions against the unchanging Word of God.

They also become more confident spiritually. Instead of a faith that rises and falls with their mood, they build a steady walk with God rooted in His promises. This doesn't happen overnight. But each conversation, each verse, each redirected moment lays another brick in their foundation.



5 Myths About Parenting: Adam Griffin

Myth #1: There's a way to do this perfectly.

We know we can't, so why do we beat ourselves up when we mess up?

The first problem we have to address regarding this myth is that perfect might be a moving target. Next time you are trying to get to know a new couple, ask them each what the perfect thermostat setting is for their home. It's not impossible to find a couple who shares temperature preferences, but it is comically common to find a couple who can never agree on the right setting. My wife prefers a balmy 78 degrees indoors. (I regret not working some thermostat standards into our vows.) I'd say she's off by at least 10 degrees. If I can't wear a hoodie and joggers in my own home twelve months a year, then I'm not comfortable.

In a lot of family circumstances, what someone considers a perfect outcome or perfect decision is subjective. What would be perfect to one parent would be a failure to another one. What is an ideal response to one kid may not affect another. It feels like perfect is always changing.

The second problem we have is that parenting is incredibly important. Anytime something is extra important, it comes with extra pressure to get it just right. This can drive moms and dads crazy. The area of our life that we most want to get perfect is also the most important. This is a recipe for shame, guilt, despair, and conflict.

The step to overcoming this myth isn't just knowing that you aren't going to parent perfectly; it's to stop beating yourself up when you don't. Can we try to do better? Always. Can we do more? Of course. Do we want to do this well? Absolutely. But it is not the Lord's voice that torments those who fall short. He's the one who sets the standard and forgives the wayward.

There is a way to parent that honors God, that walks his narrow way, and that will require us to seek his forgiveness and help. We will need forgiveness because our sin will find its way into our families, and we will need help because the work of leading a family to follow God requires the power of the Holy Spirit. You'll never parent perfectly, but you'll always be able to lean on a perfect God.

Myth #2: There's no way to get this right.

The other extreme from the myth of believing we can find some perfection in us is believing that there's nothing good we can do at all. Maybe you'll relate to some of this that I see in me. I have no problem believing criticism, and I tend to shirk off encouragement. I speak to myself in ways I'd never let someone else speak to me. I advise others to be reassured in ways I'd struggle to receive myself. Sometimes there's nothing easier for me to believe than that "I can't" do something that requires a high level of skill and hard work. I'll readily admit that in some things I'm inept, and in some areas I'm lazy, and in many things I lack both motivation and ability. So much of the theology of my childhood was steeped in what I can't do for God because of my depravity that I began to believe that there was nothing that I could do that was good. I began to believe that good works were impossible and sinners could do nothing but bring God displeasure.

Then I had kids, and I realized that even imperfect, cranky, rebellious children are easy for me to delight in. And if I can delight in my own imperfect children, how much more so must the perfect heavenly Father be able to delight in me? I can believe more than ever that he means it when he says in 1 John 3:1, "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are." And though his pleasure is not tied to my abilities, he does empower us in our union with Christ to do good things, in faith, that bring him pleasure. **Cont.→**

Things in our home that are good that he prepared in advance for us to do. Goodness that comes to me as a fruit of the Spirit.

You'll never parent perfectly, but you'll always be able to lean on a perfect God.

Myth #3: I'm too exhausted.

Honestly, this is only a myth sometimes. Exhaustion is a very real thing. Overwork is a real problem. The reason I want to include it here is because a lot of the good work of discipleship and parenting isn't done in the name of exhaustion when, in reality, it is not energy that we lack; it is enthusiasm. We've got plenty in the tank. We can do this! We just honestly don't feel like it.

When God offers us the fruit of "patience," he offers us the tenacity to keep going even when things get hard. The New Testament is much more akin to grit than it is to timid waiting. When God offers us patience, he offers us the capacity to keep going even when things get hard. That's why sometimes that word is translated as forbearance or longsuffering.

In parenting you will get tired, and even more often you will not feel like doing what should be done. But, in Christ and walking by the Spirit, you are offered the gift of patience—the capacity to keep going even when, outside of Christ, we would otherwise give up.

Myth #4: I'm too busy.

I get it. You're working. You're balancing schedules. You're not sleeping a full night. I know you have a lot to do. I'm not saying you're mistaken about your very full life. The myth is that the reason you are not discipling your kids is that you are too busy. I hear this a lot. We don't read the Bible together or go to church together or spend time together because we are too busy. Yet I've never met the family who told me they don't ever eat because they are too busy. Or the family who said that their kids didn't have time to get an education because their family was too busy.

The truth is that we are not too busy to disciple our kids; it's that other things have become more important to us. Of course, it will cost you something to follow God together as a family! That's what a living sacrifice of worship is, something costly given to God. Whether that's our strength or our time or our preferences, we lay it all at the feet of Christ and say, The more it costs me, the more I can see that it is an act of worship.

Your family is probably busy. But let's be busy doing what God called us to do, even if it costs us everything else we would want to do.

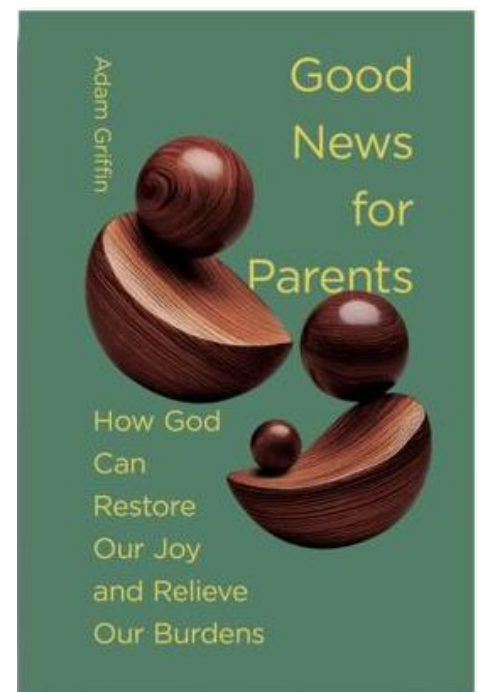
Myth #5: The more control I have, the better off my family will be.

One of the most common lies I see in young marriages is, If my spouse would just think about this the same way I do, everything would be better. We do the same thing with how we follow God in our homes. If God could just make this work out the way I want, this would all be better. In other words, the root of this myth is that I act like I know better than God what would be good for me and my household.

Our kids have wild imaginations when they are little. They see unicorns and monsters, and their toys come to life to play with them, and something is hiding under their bed. The truth is that their parents have wild imaginations too. We imagine that the more control we have over our children and their circumstances, the better off they will be. This, of course, leads to anxiety and worry because every single day we have to face the fact that we are not actually in control.

God is always good, and he can always be trusted—even while suffering. His ways are surely higher than our ways. I don't need to try to be everywhere, all-knowing, and all-powerful. I trust a God who is those things. The more I surrender to God, the better off my family will be.

Adam Griffin is the author of *Good News for Parents: How God Can Restore Our Joy and Relieve Our Burdens*.



Sunday, September 7, 2025

Scripture Reading: Psalm 1

You can easily judge the character of a person by how he treats those who can do nothing for him. —Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Have you ever had the opportunity to visit Florida or California? Perhaps you live in one of these states. As a tourist, you no doubt noticed that these states are very fruitful! California, for example, accounts for about 40 percent of the nation's fruit and nut production. Some of its key crops include: oranges, lemons, mandarins, peaches, plums, apricots, cherries, grapes, strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, avocados, figs and kiwis. Amazing. The state's Mediterranean climate, rich soil, and advanced irrigation systems make it an ideal home for all manner of fruit.

Florida, on the other hand, is known as the citrus capital of the United States, producing nearly 70 percent of the country's oranges. It's also the leading producer of grapefruit and tangerines. Florida's warm, subtropical climate is perfect for growing these fruits.

Can you think of other states famous for their fruit? Washington is known for its apples, Oregon for its cherries and Georgia for its peaches. Perhaps you can think of others.

The psalmist David believes that our spiritual health can be compared to a tree planted by water. He begins by highlighting the choices that lead to a blessed life. It's not just about avoiding the wrong influences — walking with the wicked, standing with sinners, or sitting among mockers — but actively delighting in God's law. Like a tree drawing life from a steady stream, those who stay rooted in God's word find a source of strength and nourishment that doesn't dry up. The challenges of life may come, but their "leaves" don't wither. They bear the fruit of the Spirit — love, joy, peace, patience and more — in season.

Contrast this with a tree planted in arid soil or far from water. Without a source of life, it withers. The psalmist warns that the wicked, who reject God's ways, are like chaff blown away by the wind — rootless, weightless and ultimately unproductive.

Let's be trees that bear fruit, delighting in God's word, getting constant nourishment, and drawing strength and life from the flowing stream of Scripture.

The result? You will be "like trees planted by streams of water." Your leaves will not wither, and you will prosper in all that you do.

—Timothy Merrill

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your word, the living water that nourishes our souls. Help us to stay rooted in you, drawing life from your truth and bearing fruit that honors you. When we stray or feel parched, lead us back to your stream of grace. Make us like trees planted by streams of water, flourishing in all seasons. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday: Acts 15:1–18:11

Monday: 1 Chronicles 20-23

Tuesday: 1 Chronicles 24-26

Wednesday: 1 Chronicles 27-29

Thursday: 2 Chronicles 1-3

Friday: 2 Chronicles 4-6

Saturday: Psalms 97-99

TRIVIA:

Test your general knowledge of rather unimportant facts from history and culture.

FUN WITH ROMAN NUMERALS

I After teaching his class all about Roman numerals (X = 10, IX=9 and so on), the teacher asked his class how the following equation could be true. Can you solve it?

$$I + XI = X$$

II The teacher now asked her students to write 1, 1000, 51, 6 and 500 in Roman numerals. They were surprised when they read the answer!

III Finally, the teacher asked the class to draw a single, continuous line and turn IX into 6. The only stipulation the teacher made was that the pen could not be lifted from the paper until the line was complete.

1. Which chess piece may only move along diagonals on the board?
2. What term for a non-rigid floating airship can be seen above sporting events, often sponsored by Goodyear?
3. What common condiment, often used on burgers, is made from seasoned puréed tomatoes?
4. What late 1950s fad supposedly got its name from the hip motions used in a Hawaiian dance?
5. What actress has more Oscar acting nominations than any other, but only won three times, most recently for "The Iron Lady"?
6. What is the common name of the human bone called the patella?
7. What five-letter acronymed American civil rights group was founded in 1909 by people including W.E.B. Du Bois and Ida B. Wells?
8. What bourbon-based cocktail is considered to be the official drink of the Kentucky Derby?
9. By what name was the Duke of Edinburgh, aka Queen Elizabeth's husband, better known as?

September 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			

ANSWERS TO TRIVIA:

1. Bishop,
2. Blimp,
3. Ketchup,
4. Hula hoop,
5. Meryl Streep, 6. Kneecap,
7. NAACP,
8. Mint Julep,
9. Prince Philip.

Solution to Fun with Roman Numerals:

- I. Turn the equation upside down.
- II. I M LIVID.
- III. The letter S (one squiggly line) turns IX into SIX.

Sunday, September 14, 2025

Scripture Reading: Luke 15:1-10

***Finding what was lost restores not just what you had,
but the joy of knowing it was yours all along. —Anon.***



Everyone can commiserate with those who are searching frantically for their car keys, or house or room keys, or the wallet or purse. It happens all the time.

But consider the loss of grander things, like for example, the Rosetta Stone, a key artifact that unlocked the mysteries of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs. It was lost to history for centuries until it was unearthed in 1799 by a French soldier. Its discovery transformed our understanding of ancient civilizations, and its recovery was celebrated worldwide. Sounds like something out of “Raiders of the Lost Ark.” Similarly, the “lost” Leonardo da Vinci painting, *Salvator Mundi*, disappeared for centuries before it resurfaced about 13 years ago.

I bring this up because our Bible reading for today speaks of two lost things, a lamb and a coin. In this passage, Jesus is speaking to a mixed audience: tax collectors, sinners and religious leaders. The Pharisees grumble because Jesus welcomes and eats with sinners. But by referring to the zeal with which a shepherd — who already has 99 sheep — looks for the last lost lamb, and the conscientious cleaning of a woman searching for a coin, Jesus is able to teach us something about the heart of God.

God is not content to leave even one person lost. Like a shepherd who risks everything to find one missing sheep or a woman who diligently searches for one coin, God actively pursues us, not stopping until we are found. And when found, all heaven rejoices.

The emphasis here is not on the worthiness of the lost object, but on the extravagant love of the seeker. In God’s eyes, every soul is precious. Whether we’ve wandered far from God or feel forgotten, God still sees us and values us deeply.

Sometimes, we feel like the 99 sheep — secure and accounted for — but we’re called to rejoice over those who are still being sought. At other times, we may feel like the one lost sheep, separated and far from safety. In either case, God invites us to trust in his relentless pursuit and to celebrate his unending grace.

Take a moment to reflect: Are you the one God is searching for today? Or is there someone in your life who needs to know about his love?

—Timothy Merrill

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for seeking us when we are lost and for rejoicing over us when we are found. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday: 1 Thessalonians 1-5

Monday: 2 Chronicles 7-9

Tuesday: 2 Chronicles 10-13

Wednesday: 2 Chronicles 14-16

Thursday: 2 Chronicles 17-19

Friday: 2 Chronicles 20-22

Saturday: Psalms 100-102



Global Awareness

Directions: This is a rearrangement or unscrambling exercise. Each set of letters when rearranged will spell out the name of a country. Answers below.



1. A D E K M R N

2. G R B A A I L U

3. H P E I T I A O

4. D A U R O H N S

5. O A N M A R I

6. G L E D A N N

7. S H I N I N E C L T E E T

8. H F N N A A S T G A I

9. Y N G A R M E

10. S A T N K P I A

BRAIN TEASERS

Forrest left home running. He ran a ways and then turned left, ran the same distance and turned left again, ran the same distance and turned left again. When he got home, there were two masked men. Who were they?

A man stands on one side of a river, his dog on the other. The man calls his dog, who immediately crosses the river without getting wet and without using a bridge or a boat. How did the dog do it?

ANSWERS to Global Awareness:

1. Denmark, 2. Bulgaria, 3. Ethiopia, 4. Honduras,
5. Romania, 6. England, 7. Liechtenstein,
8. Afghanistan, 9. Germany, 10. Pakistan.

BRAIN TEASER: The catcher and the umpire. The river was frozen.

Sunday, September 21, 2025

Scripture Reading: 1 Timothy 2:1-7

To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing. —Martin Luther

A quick search of the internet on the subject of answered prayers yielded a ton of responses. People reported that God had answered prayers for healing of diseases, a new job, a raise in pay, saving the lives of their dogs and cats, reconciliation with an estranged loved one, and more. These are wonderful reports, but it does make you wonder whether these testimonies capture the essence of what prayer truly is.

Prayer is one of the greatest gifts God has given us. It is not only a privilege but also a responsibility. In today's Bible reading, especially verses 1-3, the apostle Paul emphasizes the importance of prayer, calling on believers to pray for *all* people — not just those we love or agree with, but everyone, including those in positions of authority. What's startling is that he doesn't emphasize praying *on behalf of ourselves*.

Notice what he says about the types of prayers:

- Petitions — bringing specific needs before God.
- Prayers — engaging in general communication and worship with God.
- Intercessions — standing in the gap for others, seeking God's intervention in their lives.
- Thanksgiving — expressing gratitude for God's blessings and faithfulness.

By covering all people in these types of prayers, we align ourselves with God's heart for the world.

With these words, Scripture connects our prayers with the ability to lead peaceful and godly lives. Prayer changes us, softens our hearts, and aligns our desires with God's will. And prayer puts us in direct contact with God. Pastor Max Lucado puts it this way: "Our prayers may be awkward. Our attempts may be feeble. But since the power of prayer is *in the one who hears it and not in the one who says it*, our prayers do make a difference."

Take a moment to reflect: Who in your life needs your prayers today? Remember, prayer is powerful — it changes hearts, circumstances, the world and can even change you!

—Timothy Merrill

Prayer: O God, thank you for the gift of prayer and the opportunity to bring others before you. Help us to be faithful in praying for all people, including those in authority, that your wisdom and peace may prevail. Amen.

Week of September 21, 2025

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday: 2 Thessalonians 1-3

Monday: 2 Chronicles 23-25

Tuesday: 2 Chronicles 26-29

Wednesday: 2 Chronicles 30-32

Thursday: 2 Chronicles 33-36

Friday: Ezekiel 1-3

Saturday: Psalms 103-105



ACROSS

2. _____ and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.

5. Blessed are the _____, for they will see God.

6. Blessed are those who _____ after righteousness.

7. Blessed are the _____, for they will receive mercy.

8. Blessed are the _____, for they will inherit the earth.

9. Blessed are those who _____, for they will be filled.

BEATITUDES

Fill in the blanks below to complete the crossword. Answers are based on Matthew 5:1-13, New International Version.

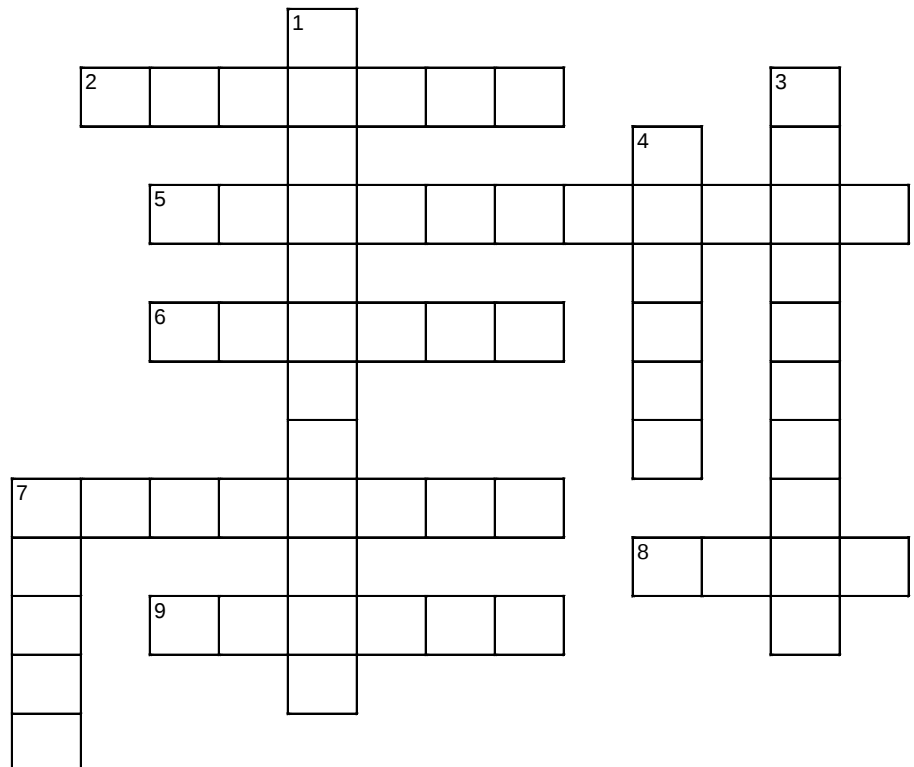
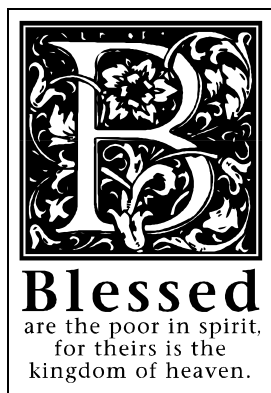
DOWN

1. Blessed are the _____, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

3. Blessed are those who are _____ for righteousness' sake.

4. Great is your _____ in heaven.

7. Blessed are those who _____, for they will be comforted.



Sunday, September 28, 2025

Scripture Reading: Psalm 91:1-6, 14-16

***The Lord's our rock, in him we hide,
a shelter in the time of storm;
Secure whatever ill betide,
a shelter in the time of storm.***

Refrain: ***Oh, Jesus is a rock in a weary land,
a weary land, a weary land;
Oh, Jesus is a rock in a weary land,
a shelter in the time of storm.***

—Vernon J. Charlesworth, alt. by Ira D. Sankey

I remember a long-distance, back country hike I took with my son. We set out from Maroon Lake (elev. 9,500 ft.) which lies at the foot of the Maroon Bells peaks, both of which are more than 14,000 feet high. We were in the Elk Mountains of the Rocky Mountains and soon were hiking above timberline at an elevation of more than 10,000 feet.

Suddenly — it seemed that there was no warning — we were caught in a torrential downpour. There was absolutely no shelter. No large rocks or boulders. No trees — not even a shrub. Just barren tundra. All we could do was to erect quickly our two-person tent, and take shelter in it as best we could. We were stuck in this tent for more than 24 hours.

No doubt you can think of those times in your life when you searched for shelter. No wonder life can feel unpredictable and chaotic. We face challenges that range from minor frustrations to life-altering crises. In moments like these, Psalm 91 offers us a profound promise: the providence of God is a fortress where we find safety, rest and protection.

The opening verses invite us to *dwelt* in the shelter of the Most High. This isn't a temporary hiding place but a permanent home — a place where we are invited to live daily. The psalm uses vivid imagery to describe this protection: God as a fortress, a shield and even a bird gathering its young under its wings.

The psalmist also assures us that God saves us from the “fowler’s snare” and “deadly pestilence.” While these might seem distant from modern life, they represent the dangers and uncertainties we face today — physical illness, emotional distress, spiritual attacks and unforeseen circumstances. Trusting in God’s providence doesn’t mean we will avoid hardship altogether, but it does mean *we are never alone in it*.

—Timothy Merrill

Prayer: Almighty God, thank you for being our refuge and fortress. We trust in your providence and rest in the shelter of your care. Amen.

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday: Acts 18:12–19:10

Monday: Ezekiel 4-7

Tuesday: Ezekiel 8-11

Wednesday: Ezekiel 12-14

Thursday: Ezekiel 15-18

Friday: Ezekiel 19-21

Saturday: Psalms 106-108

TRUE OR FALSE?

The questions below are based on the gospel of Matthew. Answer each statement **True** or **False**. Circle the letter in the correct answer column. (For example, the first statement is false, so draw a circle around the **N** in the **False** column.) Then write each circled letter on the appropriately numbered line below to discover the secret word that tells why Jesus died.

	TRUE	FALSE
1. Jesus healed Peter's wife (Matthew 8:14).	E	N
2. Jesus fed the 5,000 with 2 loaves and 5 fish (14:17).	R	A
3. Peter saw Jonah and Elijah talking with Jesus when he was transfigured (17:3).	M	S
4. The rich, young ruler decided not to follow Jesus (19:22).	T	C
5. Jesus thought the temple had been turned into a house of robbers (21:13).	I	G
6. Famines and earthquakes are some of the signs of the end of the age, according to Jesus (24:7).	V	D
7. Jesus tells a story of the six wise and six foolish virgins (25:1-13).	F	A
8. Judas betrayed Jesus with a secret handshake (26:48).	P	L
9. The Roman governor of Judea who interrogated Jesus was Polonius (27:11-14).	W	O

_____ N
 3 2 8 6 7 4 5 9 1