Hunger For Truth

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HUNGER FOR TRUTH MINISTRIES

Proverbs 7:2 – Matthew 5:6 – John 8:32 – II Timothy 3:16-17 – Hebrews 4:2

"Let us Hunger For Truth"

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It is our desire that Hunger For Truth edifies, blesses and encourages you in your walk with the Lord. Thank you all for taking the time to read this and for your prayers for us. We greatly appreciate your comments and we praise God for each and every one of you.

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I Have Sinned Against the Lord

By: Andrew Lacroix Text: II Samuel 12:13-18:33

David had just realized what he had done in the sight of Almighty God. A man after His own heart committed ten sins over a short period of time and God is now about to give him a swift chastening. The whole motto of both this devotional as well as "Thou Art the Man *(1/15/13 HFT)*" is to urge the Christian to walk extremely close to God and keep sin on a choke collar, not just a short leash. Sure, divine chastening can and may occur from just one sin, and it may not even matter if it was a small sin or a large sin, but what happens in the following portion of Scripture loomed over David and his house for the rest of his life and the trickle-down effect it had is comparable to a small snowball rolling down a large snow covered hill.

I am about to cover a large portion of Scripture. In fact, it is the largest portion I have covered to date in this ministry of writing devotionals that the Lord has greatly blessed me with. As we go through the passage, I will point out a number of verses and go into great detail concerning just what happened. There will also be a

discussion of some topics here that I may have different views than some readers. The believer who falls away from God will experience chastening, but chastening is good for two reasons: 1) It is a branding of salvation. It is a reminder that God has bought us with His blood, and we are not illegitimate (cf. Hebrews 12:6-8). 2) This is a tremendous effort on the behalf of God towards restoration between the believer and Himself. He wants and desires fellowship and your presence in the fold, and so He will do whatever it takes to bring a fallen soldier back into the fight.

Let's start with the first verse in the text. After Nathan's pronouncement following the hypothetical sinner, David responds with a repentant cry, "I have sinned against the Lord." Now all sin is against the Lord, although others, such as Joab and David's kin (who soon will find out just why this will happen to them) can be affected by sin. Note Nathan's answer to David: "The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die." David responds to this with an outpouring of genuine sorrow in penning Psalm 51. This psalm shows how deep David's love is for his Creator and how sorry he is for sinning against him. All believers should see this. No matter how we have sinned, we can always come with a repentant spirit and ask God to forgive us and wash us clean of the sins, and He will answer us. The key part to having forgiveness is the repentant spirit, which we had to have in coming to God asking Him to forgive us and start a relationship in us, in acknowledgment that we could never be saved apart from Christ's sacrifice on Calvary. We must be sorry for our sins. David showed great repentance towards God on the fact that he fell so far away in that short period of time. Now concerning if our brother or sister has ought against us, we should also strive to show repentance, and when we do, they must forgive. The same is true when we have been sinned against, and they come and ask for forgiveness. A brother or sister could seem to be repentant, but only God can judge whether or not they are truly sorry for what they did. We have no right to judge that. Would we like God to judge whether we are repentant towards Him every time we confess sin? Absolutely not. There are two reasons why a believer cannot judge another person's level of repentance: 1) "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: Who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9) 2) Matthew 18:21-22. Peter asks his Master: "How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, 'I say not unto thee, until seven times, but, until seventy times seven.'" We cannot judge if the person who offended us is truly sorry or not. Let God be the ultimate decider of their thoughts and motives. Rather, we are to forgive each time one comes and repents for an offense against us. Nathan's answer to David clearly showed that he was genuinely sorry for his sins against a thrice Holy God. Sometimes a parent will accuse their children of something and they say sorry. Could they (or anyone else for that matter) have been sorry because they were caught? Again, we cannot judge a person's motives, so if they come repentant, we must forgive them and let God be the judge as to whether or not they truly are sorry.

In the very next verse, Nathan, before leaving the scene, also tells David that because of his sins, he has given the enemies of God a great occasion to blaspheme and sin. When a Christian is a poor testimony, he or she can rub off as a normal person and not be different as God has commanded them to be. A Christian should strive to be different in their character, appearance, and demeanor. Being like the world results in many different things. Lot happens to be the example of this. His worldly ways for many years cost him his family when he did get right with God. Sure, God can and will forgive this just like David's sin, but the consequences can be eternally damning. Lost souls will see no need to change or get saved. A Christian who presents themselves as a poor testimony hurts the cause of Christ.

Note Nathan finishes his statement with this: "the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die." (v.14) This will happen to be the first event of the "Fourfold Prophecy". Remember in 12:6 (see the devotional, "Thou Art the Man" for more) when David spoke of the hypothetical sinner as needing to "restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity"? This judgment will come back on David and his house.

The child is struck with an illness of which there was no cure for in that time. David then becomes a prayer warrior, pleading that God would show great mercy and perform a miracle. However, Nathan was right, and the child shortly thereafter died. The servants of David's house feared, because they didn't know how

David would take this. However, David knew that God would not change his mind regarding his son, and he would soon eat and be comforted.

It is only fitting as we approach verses 22 and 23 that we get to a subject that is somewhat controversial in Bible-believing churches. This is a debatable topic, and I will pose it as a question: Is there such a thing as an age of accountability? Does God undertake for very young children when they suddenly die?

We know all things have and serve a purpose in God's great plan, so this can't be merely coincidence that I have originally written this section of this devotional just mere days after the epic tragedy of December 14, 2012 at a public school in Newtown, Connecticut. As I wrote this first on paper (like I do nearly every devotional, as a first draft), there are parents who are crying besides their child's empty bed, and also parents who grieve for others' losses even though their child was spared. This is obviously a situation that is way too graphic and fresh in our minds to fully comprehend how awful those citizens are feeling. May our thoughts and prayers continue to be extended to those affected, their families, and the town of Newtown, and may this continue to serve as a wake-up call to move to action and reach people for Christ. At the time of writing, there is no independent Baptist church in the town of Newtown, but there is one outside of the city of Danbury not too far away. May the Lord move in a young pastor/preacher's heart to be burdened for this specific town in western Connecticut in their greatest hour of trial.

This is obviously a very divisive subject matter I am about to deal with. As a co-editor of this Christian newsletter, I make the following statement: **Not everyone will agree with me concerning my thoughts on the issue at hand. There will be some who will slightly disagree with me, and some may even totally disagree with my thoughts and viewpoints. This is okay and I accept that. I have given much study and prayer to this matter, and have sought biblical advice from my current pastor as well as other believers, and I'd like to publicly thank them all and praise the Lord for them all. These are my final conclusions and mine only. Any errors, which I pray there are none, will be mine.**

There is no Biblical term for "age of accountability", however, there are indications throughout Scripture that deal with an individual that dies and because that person never reached the mental capability of making an eternal decision for themselves concerning their soul that they may still go to Heaven. This is only in cases where an individual that is not capable of making such a decision will be dealt in this special way. A person who is mentally handicapped from birth or shortly thereafter can no longer or may never have been able to make decisions for themselves, and I believe God undertakes for them. The same also goes true for a very young child. How young, the Bible gives no indication as to a specific age, and thus is up to the Lord and Him alone. Young children, like adults, are sinners from birth (cf. Psalm 51:5). It appears from the Bible that God does not hold accountable an individual who fails to have the capacity of making a decision to submit to God and trust Christ for their salvation. They have no knowledge or very little knowledge of good and evil.

I'd like to back up this claim with a short yet detailed study of a few passages. The first of these is Isaiah 7:15-16. This passage is just after the proclamation and prophecy of Immanuel, born of the virgin Mary. That is Jesus Christ. In the verses thereafter, Isaiah speaks of a different person when he says, "Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good: for before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings. This child he speaks of here is not Christ, but rather it is probably of his own son. That would be Mahershalalhashbaz. In the next chapter, over the first four verses, the Lord prophesied that Mahershalalhashbaz, before he would have had knowledge to cry for his mother and his father, the king of Assyria would invade and capture all the plunder of the northern kingdom and thus end it. He was to be the sign of the future destruction of the kingdom of Israel, and his name meant, "hastens to the prey". Yet there is a connection here to a young child. Mahershalalhashbaz would not yet have been able to cry and call for his parents when this happened. Depending on the development of a child (which is different in each individual case), that usually happens around their second birthday. That two year span was enough for Syria to soundly be defeated by the Assyrians, and not enough time for even a child to cry to his/her parent or guardian. How can a two year old decide what is good and what is evil? They can't even say "mama" or "dada" yet!

The second passage I'd like to look at might clear this up a little more. In the last verse of the book of Jonah, the Lord says, "And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?" (4:11) Six score thousand is 120,000. That means amongst all the people spared from God's immediate wrath in Nineveh were 120,000 children ("persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand..."). God cares for the children. That is why He has them separated, for a time, from sinful parents. If they cannot tell which hand is which, how much the more can they discern good and evil at this early junction of their lives? How can you tell if a three year old is ready to trust Christ as Saviour? Some kids that young can't even tell if they have the right shoe on the right foot? I'm not implying that they can or cannot, but this is a much larger decision than that of the shoe being on the correct foot. The God of Heaven cares for the children of the world, and just as the song speaks of them, "They are precious in His Sight." ("Jesus Loves The Little Children"). Furthermore, the Lord has equated the children here with cattle. Cattle, like other animals, do not have a soul. Children do have a soul, but at this point in their lives, like animals their whole lives, do not have moral capability. They have to be trained. Children have to be trained to know that there is a difference between good and evil, and that can in turn help them see that they are sinners and need to trust Jesus.

The next passage is from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself: "Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in Heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." (Matt. 18:14) God is not willing that any should perish, but that all will come to repentance (cf. 2 Pet. 3:9). However, many will not and they have chosen to die for their own sins when a replacement was offered. If these "little ones" happen to die physically before they become consciously aware of their sin and a full comprehension of good and evil, the Lord Jesus Christ will cover their inherited sin (cf. Rom. 5:12) and the Father will take them to be with Him. These children must meet that qualification, and as parents, we CANNOT discern when each child has reached that point. There is no set date. Each child develops differently, and as Christians, we must help them see their sin and their need for the Saviour at an early age, but we cannot rush that decision, lest they realize later on or too late that they were never born again.

There is one more thing I'd like to mention before we return to the 2 Samuel text. In the OT Sacrificial system, we must note that children never had to offer sacrifices, and they were indeed covered by the blood of that sacrifice. Does not Christ's blood from Calvary do the same? David was comforted despite the fact that his son dies. When he says, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me,", he believed God took that son to Heaven and when David dies, he will be reunited with this child. How comforting could it be to the still grieving parent in Newtown, CT, knowing for sure that their child has actually gone to Heaven? Now, the argument made today in funeral homes for everybody, not just six or seven year olds, is that they all are "in a better place". We as Christians know that is not true. If the adults, including the shooter, never made the decision in their lives to repent of their sins and trust Christ, are not "in a better place". They are in a worse place, awaiting the single worst place: the lake of fire (Rev. 20:11-15). They had time to repent. God gave them the witness of conscience and creation (cf. Rom. 1:19-20). Tragedies occur as a reminder that our judgment is coming, and it can happen sooner than you think (cf. Prov. 27:1; Heb. 9:27; Luke 13:1-5).

Sure, the "age of accountability" is not a Biblical term, but there are strong indications for how God does deal with the death of those who were incapable of making a decision for Christ and didn't have discernment between good and evil. I leave this with one last thought: the alternative to this is God sending babies and young children to Hell. Can we harmonize that with 2 Pet. 3:9, 1 Tim. 2:4, and Jonah 4:11, among other texts? I believe not, and may God help us to draw more out of His Word through this so we can help those affected by personal tragedies such as the Newtown, CT event.

Let's move on. After mourning the death of the baby, David and Bathsheba had a second child, and he was named Solomon. The Lord loved Solomon, and he, at least for a long time, would be godly and walk with the Lord (for more on what happens with Solomon and Bathsheba, please wait for a future devotional entitled, "So What Happened to Bathsheba?").

Eventually the battle of Rabbah ended. If you recall, this is the city they were looking to conquer as

chapter eleven opened. It was also where David was supposed to be, and that is when this chain reaction started. The second group, led by David, come in and finish the job, and reserved all the people left behind to be put through hard labor as chapter twelve comes to an end.

Chapter thirteen starts with the second event of our "Fourfold Prophecy". Absalom was a well respected son of David, from another wife he had (I Chronicles 3:1-9 goes into detail concerning his genealogy), and Absalom's sister is Tamar. However, another one of David's sons falls in love with Tamar. Amnon knew consciously ("thought it hard for him to do anything to her", v.2) that he possibly shouldn't interfere with her personal life. However, he consults Jonadab, a friend, who concocts an evil way to get her really close to him. Amnon fakes an illness and loses weight because he fails to eat like he should. David falls for this set-up and requests Tamar to make cakes for him. She does as is told, but then he requests everyone to leave but her. As she draws close, Amnon grabs her and requests an improper relationship. She knows this is dead wrong, and tries to persuade him to change his mind. It is far too late. The act is committed in verse fourteen, and shortly thereafter he realizes his sin and now does a 180 degree turnabout and asks her to leave. She does not, and Amnon gets help to rid her of his presence. She is crying immensely until Absalom consults and consoles with her in verse twenty.

This absolutely vile act is known to us as incest. This was strictly forbidden in the laws laid out in Leviticus. It is found and described in 18:9-11 as well as 20:17. Amnon needs to be put to death for this sin, but notice 13:21. David is biblically angry (as opposed to an unbiblical anger he had after Uriah wouldn't go home to Bathsheba, cf. 11:10), and Absalom developed a hatred for Amnon because of this deed. Now Amnon was a firstborn son of David (cf. 3:2). However, incest was a capital crime. David probably could not bring himself to put Amnon to death, because Amnon was his own son, and nevertheless a first born son. This is sad, considering he had no problem ordering his good friend and next door neighbor to die as a cover up to his sin with his now wife Bathsheba (cf. 11:15).

This brings up a question which I have been asked before, and I'd like to share with you what I found: Should Christians support the death penalty? The answer is yes. Many states, sadly, have removed the death penalty and have opted instead for life behind bars, often with no chance of parole. This is not biblical. My argument for the support of the death penalty is Genesis 9:6: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood; by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made He man." This is one of the stipulations in the Noahic covenant, which God gave to Noah after The Flood. This form of capital punishment was to be administered judicially after a guilty conviction. This was repeated to the Israelites in Lev. 24:17. Many crimes were punishable by death in the days of the wanderings (cf. Ex. 21:12, 15-17, 23, 29). If a person is convicted of such a crime and shows little to no remorse, that person should be condemned upon the verdict of guilty. A guilty plea should be treated the same, but many prosecuting attorneys will bring a "softer" sentence for one who admits their guilt. They may get off lightly before our country's judicial system, but God will not do the same. Many attorneys, before a criminal trial, interview prospective jurors, in a process called voir dire, and in a case that includes murder, often the death penalty question will be asked. If you are a Christian, you more than likely will be excused from serving in a trial in states that do not have the death penalty because they see the death penalty as barbaric, unwholesome, and wrong, and they don't want people who support something they don't support themselves. However, the basic rights of the government to exact capital punishment as the penalty for murder cannot be legitimately be revoked as far as God is concerned. "Life behind bars" for a person guilty of murder, including that of the premeditated type, is politically correct, but biblically incorrect. Furthermore, this allows for more crimes, including killing of other inmates, prison workers and guards, and escape is always possible and that can lead to even more unimaginable crimes and sins.

Now in cases like one where extreme repentance and restitution is offered, mercy may be extended, but that must be on an individual basis only. How many murderers are remorseful? Very few, if any. Does Mr. Harris, the man who orchestrated the Aurora killing, show remorse in court? No. Yet those who actually killed someone on genuine accident could get off, if they did what God told them to do. If a person accidentally killed someone in this time period, they were to flee to a city of refuge so they could be safe until a trial took place. If

they didn't go or get to a city of refuge, an avenger of blood could legally, under Gen. 9:6, seek to avenge their near kinsman's death. He could not avenge blood in a city of refuge, though. To do that would be treason, and cause their own death (we will see this happen in the future devotional, "So What Happened to Bathsheba?"). If the person was found guilty, they were to be executed. If they were not guilty, they had to remain in the city of refuge until the death of the high priest. The whole explanation is given regarding a precept known in our legal system today as "involuntary manslaughter" in Numbers 35:9-34. Christians have every right to support the death penalty, for God gave it to Noah after the flood.

Let's go back to David. Absalom is out for revenge, and he wants David to send him off with everyone else to Baalhazor. David disagrees with his son, but then Absalom pleads for only him and Amnon to go. It took a lot of convincing, but Absalom then gets his first wish, and everyone goes. Note 13:28. Doesn't Absalom's orders to his servants sound a lot like what David did after his sin (11:2)?

There are three striking comparisons between 13:28 and sections of chapter eleven, which was covered in the devotional "Thou Art The Man" (1/15/13 HFT). First Amnon gets drunk. He may have done this himself, but it could be conceivable as well that Absalom got him to drink. This is then similar to David making Uriah drunk so he would go home to Bathsheba (v.13). Bad things occur when people resort to alcoholic beverages. That is one of the biggest reasons why believers should abstain from alcoholic drinks (cf. Prov. 20:1; I Thes. 5:22). Secondly, he commands Amnon's murder, just like David did with Uriah (v.16). Neither David nor Absalom got their own hands bloody. Third, he tells them to be courageous and valiant in carrying out his evil deeds, exactly like David told Joab to be encouraged after Uriah is killed (v.25). Amnon's death at the hands of Absalom is the third event in the "Fourfold Prophecy" (12:6).

Amnon is murdered, and believing that they are next, the remaining sons of David all flee. The other sons might have feared Absalom doing to them what Abimelech did to his brothers, in hopes of being the next judge/king. Abimelech's spree, short reign, and stabbing are found in Judges nine.

It is misreported to David that all of his sons were killed by Absalom. David responds by ripping his garments. It takes Jonadab, the scoundrel who suggested Amnon get involved with Tamar (13:3-5), to give the actual facts to David. He reveals that Amnon was dead, killed at the hands of a vengeful Absalom. Now, we are unsure of David's sons' spiritual conditions, but believers need not take revenge for something evil done to them. Paul told the Romans: "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath, for it is written: Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." (12:18-19) We are to turn the other cheek and repay in kindness, only resorting to action if our life or others' lives are in imminent danger (cf. Matt. 5:38-45). If we respond in kindness, it is like heaping coals of fire upon their head (Rom. 12:20).

Absalom goes away for three years, but in chapter fourteen he returns. Joab, seeing that David was concerned about Absalom, sets it up for his return. However, I'd like to note 14:14, and this statement: "For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person; yet doth He devise means, that His banished be not expelled from Him."

This reminds us that death, unless Christ returns sooner, is imminent for us as well. Solomon made it real clear that we are not guaranteed another day (cf. Prov. 27:1). We are like water spilled on the ground. Both of these are irreversible processes. We cannot rise again. Only Christ and those specially equipped by Him were able to make others rise, such as Lazarus. If you know Christ as your Saviour, your body will be resurrected at the rapture of the saints and will reunite with your soul in Heaven. If you do not know and refuse to accept Christ as your Saviour, your body will be resurrected for the Great White Throne judgment, where it awaits the lake of fire (Rev. 20:11-15). God is no respecter of persons. God will judge your neighbor just the same as He will judge a famous athlete. Jews were judged without respect of persons and the same goes for the Gentiles as well (cf. Lev. 19:15; Rom. 2:11; I Pet. 1:17; Col. 3:25). All will be judged by their works, and will have respective places in Heaven or in Hell, depending upon their trust/rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ and His death on the cross.

It is revealed that Joab is behind the actions of this woman in the early portion of chapter fourteen, and

Absalom returns to Jerusalem, but he and David don't meet face to face. In 14:26 we read of Absalom's hair weighing two hundred shekels worth. Apparently he grew hair quickly and also only cut it once a year during the time in which he was gone. Now why is this mentioned here? Just be patient, as it will play a major role later on in this devotional.

It takes two more years to pass before David and Absalom meet face to face. When they did, they kissed. This was a formal indication that there was reconciliation or some form of mutual respect between the two. However, I don't believe that there was biblical forgiveness or forgiveness of any kind on either end. David couldn't forgive Absalom for carrying out a deed which he should have done, and Absalom couldn't forgive David for not carrying out the deed which he did and his lack of a response to the act Amnon did to Tamar. This bitterness would come to a head later. Just a few verses later, Absalom would turn on David, and steal the hearts of Israel. He was trying to undermine David's God-given authority.

As much as we may not like who God places over us, we must remember, honor, respect, and pray for those above us. It doesn't matter if they are a Christian or not. God appointed them for a reason. We may not agree with the rules or laws that are made, but as long as they fall in line with the Final Authority, we must obey and submit to them. We may disagree with America concerning the re-election of many of our current officials, but God is on the throne. We should not break laws. It is a poor testimony to knowingly break the speed limit, run a red light, not wear a seat belt, etc. It is also to us to "render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Matt. 22:21). Contrary to some public examples, like Yankees shortstop Derek Jeter and others, a Christian should pay all his/her taxes and bills on time. It furthermore is a shame when a person tries to undermine a pastor's authority as the leader of his local church. That was what Diotrephes attempted to do. He was looking to overrun the church that Demetrius and Gaius were in. The proud pastor wannabe, who was probably not a Christian, destroyed a lot of things and certainly left a bad impression on those that were attending or visiting this particular church in someone's home. The passage I am referring to is 3 John 9-12, and I will cover a lot of material relating to this in an upcoming HFT devotional entitled "Demonstrate or Destroy?" This has been covered in parts two and three of "Five More D's" (7/15/12 and 8/1/12 HFT). God has appointed people over us, and as Christians, it is a good testimony to submit when proper (most of the time it will be) and He will reward us. This is especially important in a local church setting, when rewards are very much at stake. Don't make the undershepard grieve when he gives account for you (cf. Heb. 13:17).

We pick up our study again in 15:7: "And it came to pass, after forty years..." Forty years? Isn't that the time period in which David reigned? A mistake, perhaps? No, it is not a mistake. Your Bible is accurate. The forty years probably refers to the period of popularity David enjoyed following his battle and victory over the giant Goliath (cf. I Samuel 17).

Those who translated the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek manuscripts into the Authorized Version (1611 King James Version) took extremely great care concerning the words and fit of the Old English language. They took the same great care when they had translated it previously into versions prior to the 1611 KJB (the Geneva in 1560 is one of them). From the 1611, your King James Bible has only been very slightly altered into modern everyday English for spelling differences and few other minute realignments. God has supernaturally allowed this and these translators, I'm sure, were in deep prayer and close fellowship with God when they translated the Textus Receptus into the very Words of God you have right now. You can trust what you have now, the King James, to be the most accurate translation available to modern man.

Absalom is about to sell out king David, for he has won the hearts of Israel, and they revolt, forcing David and his servants to flee Jerusalem. This conspiracy was strong. Eventually, in verse thirty, David is going to walk up the mount of Olives and weep.

The mount of Olives, or Olivet as it is sometimes referred to, has played a tremendous role and will continue to play a major role as time passes on. David here weeps as he ascends this mount, and has his head covered, is barefooted, and is in a position of deep regret, sorrow, and perhaps humility as well.

Our Lord Jesus Christ was also in a position of sorrow when He descended from the mount of Olives

over one thousand years later to make His entry into Jerusalem less than a week before He was crucified (Luke 19:37-44). It is also there where He gave His prophetic discourse (Matthew 24 and 25). From Olivet, Jesus predicted Peter's thricefold denial of Himself and then He prayed at the garden of Gethsemane, near or perhaps somewhere on Olivet (Mark 14:26-42). He also ascended to Heaven from Olivet (Acts 1:10-12). Zechariah also has prophesied that Christ will descend from Heaven unto the mount of Olives in His Second Coming (Zechariah 14) and will split Olivet (the earthquake as a result is in Revelation 16:18-19).

In 15:31, getting back to the study at hand, we learn that one of the conspirators with Absalom is Ahithophel. David then instantly turns to the Lord and prays that his once wise counsel now turns into foolishness.

Ahithophel was a wise counselor to David for many years. However, that had probably changed when David committed his sins with Bathsheba. Ahithophel was the father of Eliam, who, in turn, bequeathed Bathsheba (cf. 11:3; 23:34). David committed adultery with Ahithophel's granddaughter. Furthermore, Eliam, Bathsheba's father, was a close friend with Uriah (obviously, that is his son-in-law), and Uriah was murdered at David's call. This was his opportunity to get revenge on David for what he did.

David would leave Olivet for the town of Bahurim, east of the city. However, in this town he was attacked by Shimei, a descendant of Saul through the Benjamite tribe. He held David responsible for Saul's death (16:8) and allowed him to continue with the persecution. These stones were probably more like pebbles, and probably did nothing more than sting as they walked by. David had a peaceable reaction to this attack in verse twelve, and his response will play a role later in Shimei's life (this will be featured in the future devotional, "So What Happened to Bathsheba?").

Ahithophel will now exact his revenge upon David. In 16:23 he tells Absalom to go into all of David's concubines and lie with them. This sad event is the fulfillment of Nathan's second prophecy concerning David, when he said, "Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbor, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst it secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun." (12:11-12).

That alone probably should have been enough "revenge" for Ahithophel, even though this was clearly wrong. However, he is not satisfied. As chapter seventeen opens, he calls Absalom for twelve thousand men to pursue a weary, worn out David, in hopes that those around him will flee and they will kill David and him alone. Absalom likes this idea, but it will not work, at least to a small extent. This plan could have gone on, but with an additional loss of life, as David's men would not have flown from aiding the king in a battle for his life.

Absalom seeks more advice, though, and summons for Hushai, who declares that Ahithophel is not wise. He knows they will fight for David, so he petitions Absalom to gather more soldiers for this battle. Little did both Absalom and Ahithophel know that Hushai is actually on the side of the king, not on the side of the wannabe king. This dialogue and resolve for more men bought Hushai time to go back to David and prepare them for a battle. The Lord was going to protect David, His chosen leader, and He used Hushai mightily here. God uses those who submit to His chosen leaders, and chastens and humbles those who revolt or even attempt to revolt.

Absalom agrees with Hushai against the advice of Ahithophel. Word spreads from Hushai to Jonathan and Ahimaaz, then passed down from those to the servants of David and finally to the king himself. David listens, and he and his men cross the river Jordan (17:22) before Absalom could gather men for the fight that will ensue. As for Ahithophel, he was dejected that his advice was not followed. He saddled his donkey, went home, put everything in order as far as his household was concerned, and hung himself (v. 23). He knew that the counsel of Hushai was going to result in Absalom's defeat, and that David would kill him for treason, so he ended his life abruptly.

I'd like to take the time to bring up another issue that can result and sadly does happen in Christian homes: Should a Christian decide suicide is the right thing to do? Ahithophel, despite his wise counsel for years to David, I believe, was not a saved man, and this discussion does not apply to him. The answer to the question I proposed should be a resounding no. We have been bought with a price, and our lives are not our

own anymore. To even contemplate such a thought is wrong. No matter how bad you may have it with your job, your family, or even your health, or whatever else it may be, there is another person (or people) who have it much worse than you, perhaps compounded with the fact that they are lost and heading for a Christless Hell. If you are perhaps dealing with an illness that can or even is life-threatening, you cannot give up all hope. Miracles can still happen, and in this day and age, with all of the medical technology consistently getting better, you could deny the Lord using you in a great way to bring honor to Him, the Great Physician, and be that witness for Christ to the doctors and nurses. It is a poor testimony for one to give up hope and see their family have heartbreak as they prepare for a funeral. Furthermore if a Christian does commit suicide they lose rewards at the Bema Seat and it presents a negative testimony of the changed life one does have if they accepted Christ as their personal Saviour, and it can cause their unsaved friends and loved ones to scoff. God knows all that will happen, and if a Christian's suicide leads to dissolution in their families or others to be drawn away from God and further down the path of rebellion, it will not help that person when they do get to Heaven. Suicide does not take away a person's salvation. Instead of entertaining these thoughts, a Christian should petition the Lord to help them to be a testimony, not give up, and win those they know to Jesus Christ. Don't extinguish the candle God has called us to be, but rather, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven." (Matt. 5:16)

Absalom pursues David, just like Saul did years ago. David found a refuge in Mahanaim, who welcomed him and aided them in preparation for the battle to come.

David gives the commands, and the people who are with him tell the great king that: "thou art worth ten thousand of us". (18:3) They recognized this cause was very worthy and realized God put him in that position. Christians should defend one another, even to the point where you should lay down your life for another brother or sister.

Note 18:9. As Absalom charged the servants of David, his head caught hold of the oak tree. The mule that Absalom rode on went away, leaving Absalom hanging.

It is only fitting that Absalom is left hanging. For years he had only cut his hair once a year (cf. 14:26). Now his hair got caught up and brought his whole body up off the mule and into the oak tree in the forest outside of Ephraim. At one time, God allowed some (the Nazarites) to have long hair, at least those who were men. The most common example of this would be Samson, whose hair was his source of supernatural strength. However, when he lusted after Delilah, she cut his hair, and he lost his strength. He did get it back for a final fight and then he lost his life (Judges 14-16 is the passage with Samson). Since then, I believe, God would no longer desire men to have long hair. It is a sign of rebellion against Him, and is part of the modern unisex fad and ultimate rebellion that will continue, even after God calls His children Home to Glory. To believe our Lord Jesus Christ had long hair must be incorrect. Paul told the Corinthian church that: "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?" (I Corinthians 11:14). There should be a clear distinction between men and women. Women should have long hair ("for her hair is given her for a covering", cf. I Cor. 11:15) and men should have short hair. Men having earrings, long hair, and other traditional feminine adornments is just as bad as women having short hair. This is even worse if a Christian does it. Hollywood and the like, once again, are wrong. Josephus (the early writer, whom I don't agree with some of his writings), among others who were in the time period, wrote that most men, Jew and Roman alike, were not bearded and had short hair. Professedly Christian men should recognize that this fad of boys/men having long hair as being a sign of rebellion against God, and strive to keep their hair short, to be a testimony. It is not said how long a man could have their hair, but it is a telltale sign of a good heart that we should not question how long it can be, but rather, to honor God, let's not even reach that point and keep our hair short.

A man tells Joab what happened to Absalom, and Joab says, basically, "Why didn't you kill him then?" He responds by saying that in a hearing David charged him and others not to touch Absalom, lest they have falsehood against them that leads to death, and Joab would conspire against him. Joab takes matters into his own hands, thrusting three spears into Absalom, who is still alive, and then ten others along with Joab finish him off when he fell to the ground. This is the final thing that came to pass in the "Fourfold Prophecy"

After this Joab called off the war, and they took Absalom, cast him into a great pit, filled it with stones, and retreated. Ahimaaz wanted to tell David of this event. Yet Joab said no, and sent Cushi. After Cushi got a lead, Ahimaaz persisted, and Joab finally okays him to go to David as well.

Ahimaaz outruns Cushi to where David is. Ahimaaz tells David that he wasn't sure if the tumult that occurred had killed Absalom. Cushi then arrives and declares unto David: "the Lord hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee" (v. 31). Furthermore he tells David that Absalom is just like those who rose up against David: dead.

David became grieved and cries: "O my son Absalom; my son, my son, Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" (v.33)

Finally the "Fourfold Prophecy" against David and his family came to an end. However, behind it is a wake of family destruction and chaos. The son born out of the adultery of David and Bathsheba is dead. One of his firstborn sons has an unwarranted relationship with Absalom's sister. Absalom proceeded to murder that firstborn son, and then he himself is killed.

Joab would eventually slightly rebuke David for his perceived favoritism towards Absalom, and David would be restored to his rightful position as king.

The effects of our sin can leave a path of destruction that can affect our family and friends. Remember that our sin will find us out (cf. Num. 32:23). The only way sin does not have this effect is to keep good relationships with others and our sin accounts on choke collars. We need to confess all sin as instantaneously as possible and pray that we will not have the same issues as that of the king after God's own heart.

Not all of David's family turned out bad. For a long time Solomon has a great relationship with God, and God used him to write many proverbs, which are featured in the book with that title, as well as two additional books of Scripture. God will use us in spite of us. However, God cannot use us if we stray. May this serve as a stern reminder of our need for biblical relationships, keep sin on choke collars, and remain close to God. Amen.

Problems Can Bring Peace (Source Unknown)

James 1:3-12

The past week has been loaded up with difficulties for many people. In too many cases, frustration, irritation and agitation boil over into fits of impatience and anger. A child of God's reaction to trouble should be far different from a lost soul, but is this the case? While it is true that some of life's adversities may be of such intensity that our soul is overwhelmed, we must take hold of scriptural counsel and ***set the pillars of our faith deep*** if we will have perfect peace and not lose our testimony.

FOUR TRUTHS CAN HELP US HERE:

I. FACE THE REALITY OF PROBLEMS: (1:2)
*Godly people will not be over looked in the distribution of adversity and suffering. Godliness involves **learning how to suffer** as one of life's most important lessons. One preacher said, "to hold on the plow while wiping our tears that is Christianity." Jesus died to take away the curse of sin but not the cross of suffering.

****Remember - whoever or whatever brings adversity or affliction to your life, IT IS GOD THAT ALLOWS IT.***

II. GRASP THE REASON FOR PROBLEMS: (1:3)
*Trouble, difficulties, grieving circumstances, affliction, pain, sickness, persecution, tribulation are never an accident--but always for a divine purpose.

*Harold Sightler said, "Fiery TRIALS make GOLDEN Christians--the darker the night, the brighter the

stars; the hotter the fire, the purer the gold."
Sometimes God breaks the cistern to bring us to the fountain of blessing. (Notice These Reasons Why?)

1. It may be CONVERSION is needed -- The derision of sin's consequences can drive a sinner to Christ.
2. It may be CLEANSING is needed -- Reaping comes to break our heart and interrupt our habits from a path of stubborn choices. When our fellowship with Christ is broken, our problems will expand.
3. It may be CHASTENING is needed -- (Note Hebrews 12:4-8) Sometimes our troubles are reminders that God loves us to much to let us be comfortable in our sin.
4. It may be CHANGE is needed -- Deep waters are not meant to drown us but to develop us (Note 1 Peter 5:10-11).
5. It may be CONFORMITY to Christ is needed -- Remember the goal of the Christian life is to reflect Christ. (Eph. 4:13-16)
6. It may be CONFIRMATION is needed -- We tend to view problems as negative set-backs, hindrances, but the Lord may be proving something to us. His love, our weariness; His grace, our insufficiency.
Remember hardship and adversity does not make us frail--it only shows how frail we are.
7. It may be COMFORT is needed -- (Note II Cor. 1 and II Cor. 4) Praise God! Problems may be lasting but not everlasting.
8. It may be CROWNING is needed -- (1:12) Robert M'Cheyne said, "How soon you and I will find that everything in our history, except sin, has been FOR us. Every wave of trouble has been wafting us to the sunny shores of a sinless eternity."

III. SEEK GODLY REACTIONS TO PROBLEMS: (1:2)
*Understand that if there is no trouble in life, there can be no triumph either. The most surrendered and dedicated believers struggle with despair and distress at times, but never to the point of quitting on God. God's Spirit in us will not allow that!
It has been said, "Problems always change your relationship with God. Either they drive you to Him or away from Him."

*Note II Cor. 7:4-6 - Godly, surrendered believers should be at their best even in worst times.

*If life's happenings sweep you off your feet - "it's time to get on your knees. NO MATTER HOW SEVERE THE PROBLEM, YOU ARE A CHILD OF THE KING. The Christian life is a bed of roses--thorns and all.

IV. REMEMBER THE REWARD FOR ENDURING PROBLEMS (1:12)

*If you want God's opinion of those who faithfully endure great afflictions read the final verses of Hebrews 11. Always bear in mind, "No pain, no palm; no thorns, no throne; no gall, no glory; no cross, no crown."

*Spurgeon made this statement, **"The Christian gains by his losses. He acquires health by his sickness. He wins friends through his bereavements, and he becomes a conqueror through his defeats."**

I KNOW NOT WHY?
I know not why His hand is laid, in chastening on my life, Nor why it is my little world, is filled so full of strife.
I know not why, when faith looks up, and seeks for rest from pain, That o'er my sky fresh clouds arise, and drench my path with rain.
I know not why my prayers so long, by Him have been denied; Nor why, while others' ships sail on, mine should in port abide.
But I do know God is love, that He my burden shares, And though I may not understand, I know, for me, He cares!

"Alone" (Part #19) (By: Craig Glickman)

This is the continuation of a long, yet informative study on every appearance of the word "alone" in the Bible. This word appears 106 times in the King James Version. For sake of space, I will show only the reference but I encourage you to take your Bible and read the passages.

Romans 4:23 – This passage teaches that Abraham's righteousness was not his but rather the Lord's by his faith God. Simply put, Abraham's righteousness was by faith (vs. 16-22)! This gave glory to God (vs. 20). He was fully persuaded that God was able to perform what He had promised (vs. 21). Paul emphatically declares that justification and righteousness come "not...through the law" (vs. 13), but by God's mercy, grace, love and forgiveness (vs. 6-9), and that Abraham's faith (i.e. his believing, his attachment to God, his strong confidence and unwavering assurance in God and His promises) is counted as righteousness, by the mercy and grace of God (vs. 16-22). Paul says this imputed righteousness (being justified by faith in God alone and not our own merit) was not for his (Abraham's) sake alone but for all (vs. 23-25). All can be saved by grace through faith in Christ alone! He is the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6). All our righteousness is but filthy rags (Isa. 64:6). By faith, we have Christ's righteousness imputed unto us.

Romans 11:3- In this passage which relates to Israel, Paul quotes from 1 Kings 19:10 regarding the prophet Elias (Elijah). Elijah was alone physically and also was the only prophet left (1 Kings 18:22). Being chased by Ahab and Jezebel and fearing for his life, he was alone in a mountain cave and begins talking to the Lord about how the children of Israel forsook His covenant, destroyed God's altars, slain His prophets with the sword and that, being the only prophet left, they desired to take Elijah's life also (1 Kings 19:9-10)! God protects and provides for Elijah as we see later in the passage (vs. 11-21).

Emotions in The Bible (By: Craig Glickman)

There are many verses and passages in the Bible that relate to emotions and feelings of man and our Lord Himself in trials, suffering, affliction, and of course peace and joy. The following is an ongoing study of passages that have convicted, comforted, edified, encouraged or blessed me through hearing messages, devotions and studies over the years. I hope this is a blessing and help to you and I, and that the Lord may be honored and glorified in this series of studies on emotions in the Bible. Each issue, Lord willing, will have a verse or passage in the Bible covered. I am excited and privileged to do this. Praise God! I intend to break each passage down into the following: **Passage, Emotion(s), Cause, Effect, What does the passage say?, What does the passage say to you and I?, What should you and I do about it?, How do you and I stay accountable?**

Passage: Psalm 100:2
Emotion(s): Gladness, Thankfulness, Praise, Joy
Cause: Gladness, Thankfulness, Praise, Joy
Effect: Serving the Lord
What does the passage say?: Thankful people are a serving people. Thankful people are consumed with the understanding of the great things that God has done that their thankfulness naturally expresses itself in service to God. Just stop and think for a moment of the many blessings God has richly bestowed upon you. I am always amazed at His amazing grace He gives me every moment of the day.
What does the passage say to you and I?: In II Cor. 5:14, Paul's says, "For the love of Christ constraineth us;..." What is Paul Saying? I believe he is saying this, "When I remember that Jesus Christ shed His blood on Calvary's tree; and when I remember that He came to earth and suffered because He loved me, the love of Christ constrains me to go out and give my best, my all for Him."
What should you and I do about it?: The best kind of service we can offer to the Lord is service from a heart

of thanks. Ask yourself why do you do what you do? Is your service for God the overflow of a thankful heart? Is what you are doing willingly, or is it habit, ritualistic?
How do you and I stay accountable?: If you are serving God from a constrained heart and compelled by the love of Jesus Christ, your service will endure the test of time. If you are truly worshiping with thankfulness (Col. 3:15), then you will serve with gladness! O' let us rejoice in the Lord today!

Only Jesus Saves! (John 14:6)

Christ and the Pope Contrasted

(Reprinted from7/1/09 issue)

1. CHRIST wore a crown of thorns. THE POPE wears a crown of jewels.
2. CHRIST carried on His shoulders the cross. THE POPE is carried on the shoulders of his servants in splendor.
3. CHRIST declared the laws of His kingdom and urged His followers to do the same. THE POPE tramples them underfoot and substitutes his own instead.
4. CHRIST sent the Holy Spirit to be His Vicar on earth. THE POPE claims to be the Vicar of Christ on earth.
5. CHRIST is the Head of the Church. THE POPE claims to be the head.
6. CHRIST taught that sin should be confessed to God. THE POPE teaches that sin should be confessed to the priests.
7. CHRIST taught that He alone is the Saviour. THE POPE teaches that the Church is the Saviour.
8. CHRIST taught that there was but one Mediator between God and man (I Tim. 2:5). THE POPE teaches that there are many mediators between God and man.
9. CHRIST taught that salvation was and is by grace. THE POPE teaches that salvation is by works.
10. CHRIST claimed infallibility for Himself and the Word of God alone. THE POPE claims infallibility for himself in matters of faith and morals.
11. CHRIST had no place to lay His head. THE POPE lives in a magnificent palace surrounded by wealth.
12. CHRIST gave His gospel free to all. THE POPE sells his masses and other favors.
13. CHRIST said “Call no man father upon the earth; for one is your Father, which is in heaven” (Matt. 23:9). THE POPE commands all to call him ‘Holy Father’, and his priests feel insulted if persons do not address them as ‘Father’.
14. CHRIST was poor and lowly. THE POPE’S wealth is immense.
15. CHRIST washed His disciples’ feet, thus manifesting a spirit of humility worthy of emulation by His followers. THE POPE presents his foot to be kissed and requires genuflections and kneeling from those who have audiences with him.
16. CHRIST taught His followers to pray to God through Him. THE POPE teaches his followers to pray to Virgin Mary.

:) Children For Christ :)

Memory Verse: LUKE 2:40 – "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him."

MISSING A LETTER

Fill in the missing letter from each Bible book and use the missing letters in order to reveal what everybody, both young and old, should do at least once a day.

WORD 1: R O M A N __ __ H E S S A L O N I A N S J __ D G E S

E X O __ U S D E U T E R O N O M __ *WORD 2*: 1 T I M O T H __ J __ H N

J __ D E 1 C O __ I N T H I A N S *WORD 3:* P R O V E R __ S 1 K __ N G S

H E __ R E W S 1 C H R O N I C __ E S __ Z R A

What do the missing letters say?: __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __!

What the Word of God does for you and me: *TEXT: Psalm 119:11* 1. We realize what sin is (Prov. 14:34) 2. It guides us (Prov. 3:6) 3. Teaches and instructs (Psalm 119) 4. Comforts (1 Thes. 4:18)	**"God whispers to us in our pleasures. He speaks to us in our consciences. But God shouts to us in our pain."**
5. Tells us of eternal life (John 11:25,26) 6. We learn of the earth's beginning (Gen. 1) 7. We learn of the earth's ending (II Pet. 3:10) 8. Gives us joy (John 15:11, 1 John 1:4, Neh. 8:10) 9. We find the truth (John 8:32; 14:6) 10. Never has changed—never will (1 Pet. 1:23) 11. Reveals secrets (John 16:15, Luke 24:45) 12. Glorifies the Father (John 16:14) **By: Oren Figgins**	**Praises** • Praise God for his infinite power and holiness **Prayer Requests** • Salvation of Wendy and friend Ben, Jacob,Sybil and Bernice (Family of Craig Glickman) • Lacroix family and friend Rick (Salvation) • Rusty and family, Jose, Rudney (Salvation) • Job situation for Craig Glickman (current shift, day shift, new job)

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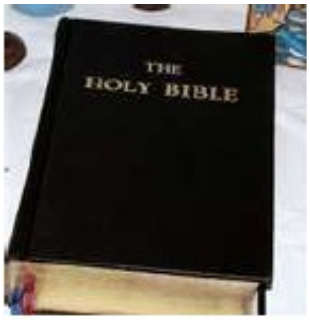
Thank you for reading this. I praise God for all my dear brothers and sisters in Christ and I greatly appreciate your prayers. May each and every one of you be richly blessed as we serve our precious Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

His Servants,

Craig Glickman ***Andrew Lacroix***

Prov. 3:5-6 ***1 Thes. 5:18***



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