



# ST. TIMOTHY'S TIMES

## DAILY DEVOTIONAL READING

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PO Box 380 Winter Park, Florida 32790

### Prayer for St. Timothy's

Most loving God, whose wisdom  
has guided St. Timothy's  
Anglican Church  
since its beginning,  
stir up your Spirit in our midst  
and lead us forward in the work  
we are called to do.

Enable this congregation to  
continue in service to you and  
in ministry within and  
beyond our walls.

Cleanse us of petty rivalries,  
sensitivities, vanities,  
discourtesies – everything  
which distracts us, thus freeing  
us to rejoice in the good  
performed by others.

Grant that we may be united in  
a common purpose and share in  
a single spirit...  
your Spirit, Lord.

Bless our work together that we  
may faithfully envision what you  
are calling us to be and to do,  
and bless our efforts to be  
faithful to your calling.

Grant that your attractive  
goodness may be seen in all our  
faces, your warm accents of  
love heard in all our words, and  
in our lives may we show  
something of you to  
all the world.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
AMEN.

### Tuesday, May 1

*Birthdays: Ian Blanchard, Nick Pellegrino*

*Prayers for: Steve & Michelle Crawford, William, Charles, Catherine; Robert & Caroline Craze*

**Psalm 45 Let the king be enthralled by your beauty; honor him, for he is your lord. (v.11 NIV)**

I remember sitting in a Beth Moore Bible Study when she read this Scripture. Looking into the camera she said, "God is enthralled with your beauty." That was a hard thing for me to believe. My entire life I've struggled with self-esteem issues. When I first came to the Healing Ministry I weighed 200 pounds. I said to my Prayer Minister that I finally felt as ugly on the outside as I'd always felt on the inside. So hearing that God was enthralled with my beauty was difficult for me. Recently, I've been watching the old "Beauty and the Beast" television series on Netflix. It is a great analogy of how God sees each of us. He sees past our outside appearance to our true beauty—the condition of our hearts (our hearts as God sees them, not as we view them in our woundedness). God doesn't care if we make *People's 50 Most Beautiful* magazine edition. He cares about how we love and serve others. Through inner healing I've come to realize that I want God to be enthralled by the beauty of my heart...not my outside!

*Exodus 32:21-34; 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10; Matthew 5:11-16*

### Wednesday, May 2

*Birthdays: Cole Johnson, Heather Seiver, Bill Taylor*

*Prayers for: Debbie Cross, Justin Boggs, Landen Ross*

**Exodus 33:1-23 When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen." (vv.22-23)**

One of my dear friends once said that many times we are like Moses in that we only see God's presence from the back of a situation. (Hindsight is 20/20.) I believe that! When I was 17 years old I was pregnant and ended up moving into BETA House (a maternity home)—living off welfare. To be honest, I couldn't see anything good about my situation at the time. In my 30's I returned to BETA to do my Undergrad Social Work Internship. I was given the opportunity to be one of the guest speakers for their annual fundraiser at the Amway Center. While speaking to the group, I saw God's presence from the back of my situation. He took an extremely stressful time in my life, recycling it to help BETA and the many young women who come through the

doors of the Glennon House. The Lord walked with me through that trial of being a pregnant teenager on welfare so that I might use it to one day help others for Him!

*Psalm 119:49-72; 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12; Matthew 5:17-20*

### Thursday, May 3

*Birthdays:*

*Prayers for: Bill & Caroline Davies, Destiny, Brianna, Dasie, Desiree', Chloe & Bianca Phillips, Dominique & Caroline Hill*

**Psalm 50 Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving... (v.14a)**

Canon Jim Glennon had a saying about how to pray for healing: "You ask once for the healing and then you pray in thanksgiving." When we pray for people at the Healing Ministry we encourage them to try to do the same thing. I can tell you that this is a "sacrifice of thanksgiving" for people who have been praying, but not seeing any improvement in their health or circumstance. A dear friend of mine has been praying for her hand to be healed for over four years. She is in constant pain, she can't make a fist with her hand, and it feels like ants are running over her hand all day long. Each time she thanks the Lord for healing her hand she is offering up a "sacrifice of thanksgiving." She is praying in faith that the Lord is at work even though she sees nothing by sight. When we pray together our prayer is this: "Lord, please let her body catch up to the healing that has already taken place. Thank You."

*Exodus 34:1-17; 1 Thessalonians 2:13-20; Matthew 5:21-26*

### Friday, May 4

*Birthdays: Paula Koehler, Rachel Tumy*

*Prayers for: Marda Davis, Maureen; Shane & Kristina Dear, Jacob; Art & Peggy DePue, Jeff; Chris & Kristin DePue, Will, Ben, Ellie*

**Exodus 34:18-35 Work six days and rest the seventh. (v.21 MSG)**

Do you know how a person trains for a marathon? It takes intense training, but it also takes *rest*. I heard a pastor the other day tell how he trained for the Boston Marathon. He followed the training regimen in *Running Magazine*. The magazine clearly instructed that he train for six days out of the week, but on the seventh day he was to rest! The magazine article explained that a runner's body needed that day of rest to restore itself. My doctor kids me that I tried to cram 60 yrs of living into 30 years of life. Having had a stroke at age 32 makes me inclined to agree. Now-a-days society almost demands that we push ourselves beyond our limits. Maybe, we should listen to God instead. God created the day of rest for us—not Him. I encourage you to try to carve out some time for rest each week. Let your body, mind, and spirit be restored. My theory: If God encourages it, why not try it! I think we all need a break from this marathon we call life.

*Psalms 40, 54; 1 Thessalonians 3:1-13; Matthew 5:27-37*

## **Saturday, May 5**

*Birthdays:*

*Prayers for: Stan DePue; Elli Detwiler; Mike & Lisa DiBiasio, Emma, Cameron, Meghan, Trevor, Alexa*

**1 Thessalonians 4:1-12** *We don't have to write you about the need to love each other. God has taught you to do this, and you already have shown your love for all of his people in Macedonia. But, my dear friends, we ask you to do even more. Try your best to live quietly, to mind your own business, and to work hard, just as we taught you to do. Then you will be respected by people who are not followers of the Lord... (vv.9-12a CEV)*

I once heard the statement, "You might be the only Bible someone reads." That really got my attention. I started thinking, what would someone learn about Jesus if they judged him only on my behavior? When I joined Facebook a couple of years ago I was "friended" by a lot of my old classmates from Elementary School through College. My early years had been years filled with very irresponsible behaviors. Back then I had unfortunately garnered some of those friends' respect by being able to out-party everyone. Their respect for me created in them a desire to party harder. That is the burden of respect. People want to do what you do or have what you have when they respect you. Coming to know the Lord has changed me completely. I hope that my behaviors create in others a desire to come to know Jesus. I want them to "read" Jesus in me—creating a longing in them to be in relationship with him.

*Exodus 40:18-38; Psalm 55; Matthew 5:38-48*

## **Sunday, May 6**

*Birthdays: Wade Fennel, Charles Scherzer*

*Prayers for: Larry & Brenda DiSano, Rebecca, Jonathan, Keila; Mike & Barbara Dowe; Mike Downs*

**Psalm 24** *The earth is the LORD's and all it contains, the world and those who dwell in it. For he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers. (vv.1-2 NAS)*

The Hebrew word used for "earth" (transliterated: "erets") means the physical planet while the word used for "world" ("tebel") refers to the "social world" or human inhabitants of the earth. These verses re-affirm the story of creation told so eloquently in the first chapters of Genesis. I love the land. I enjoy tilling the soil, pulling weeds, planting seeds, and watching things grow. Some of Jesus' most beloved parables were parables of the land about mustard seeds, weeds, the sower, workers in the vineyard, the vine and the branches, etc. Jesus used these images because he knew they would connect with his hearers. When I work in my garden, I feel a sense of joy to know that working the land is what humans have done ever since our creation. Farming (not prostitution) is really the world's oldest profession. There is no "spiritual world" versus a "physical world" because it is all a "spiritual world." Preserving the integrity of the earth—protecting the rivers, seas, soil; maintaining the forests and recycling as much as possible—is a spiritual endeavor. Make no mistake about it; God created the whole world and expects us to take care of it.

*Leviticus 8:1-13, 30-36; Psalm 29; Hebrews 12:1-14; Luke 4:16-30*

## **Monday, May 7**

*Birthdays: Patrick Anderson, Steve Crawford*

*Prayers for: Bob & Suzanne Drew, Bobby, Zachary, Kyle; Leonard & Edith Duckworth; John & Melinda Duncan*

**Psalm 56** *My foes have trampled upon me all day long, for they are many who fight proudly against me. When I am afraid, I will put my trust in thee. (vv.2-3)*

The psalmist is not paranoid because there really were people against him. After September 11, most of us were shocked to realize that so many people hated Americans. Members of the Al-Qaeda network spent their lives plotting ways to destroy us. While the reasons for their hatred are debatable, the reality of it is not. The Wall Street Journal publisher, Peter Kann, wrote in his annual report to readers: "We have all been vividly reminded (and a new generation has suddenly discovered) that there is evil in this world, not merely debatable degrees of moral ambiguity. That this should be so significant is a sad reflection on a moral relativism that has become pervasive and debilitating." M. Scott Peck, author of *The Road Less Traveled*, told stories of evil people in his 1983 book *People of The Lie*. He wrote in its introduction, "This is not a nice book. It is about our dark side, and in large part about the...members of our human community I frankly judge to be evil." No honest Christian faith can fail to recognize evil and evil people. The more responsibilities you hold and the more decisions you make that affect people, the more likely you are to have enemies. My advice: Be wise, be discerning, and be prepared for evil at all times.

*Leviticus 16:1-19; Psalms 57, 58; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18*

## Tuesday, May 8

*Birthdays: Kevin Fennell*

*Prayers for: Bill & Grace England; Gale Farquhar; Wade & Valerie Fennel, Sean, Kristen, Kyle, Lauren*

**1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 *Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you also are doing. (v.11)***

No verse in the New Testament contains clearer “marching orders” for a local church than this one. Our first duty within a body of believers is to encourage and support one another. Without encouragement, we will not have the strength or resolve to go out into the world to do works of charity and proclaim the Gospel. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German pastor and theologian who was executed by Hitler’s firing squad because of his Christian witness, wrote these words in his book *Life Together*: “The physical presence of other Christians is a source of incomparable joy and strength to the believer. God has willed that we should seek and find God’s living Word in the testimony of other Christians, in the mouths of human beings. Therefore, Christians need other Christians who speak God’s word to them.” I like going to church because there I receive encouragement, support, and appreciation from other Christians. But it’s like the mail: to get it, you also have to give it. Next time you go to church, seek an opportunity to say some kind words of encouragement to others.

*Leviticus 16:20-34; Psalms 61, 62; Matthew 6:7-15*

## Wednesday, May 9

*Birthdays: Kathy Boggs, Joey Gornick*

*Prayers for: Kevin & Dena Fennell, Kelsey, Darcy, Rory, Danielle; Barry & Sharon Firestone; Pat & Linda Flavin*

**1 Thessalonians 5:12-28 *But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction. (v.12)***

During my rebellious days as a young man, I resented some people in positions of authority, never wanting anyone to “tell me what to do.” That attitude also led to more than one job failure. When I was 27, I accepted Jesus and submitted myself to his leadership. In doing so, I learned to submit myself to the leadership of others in both secular and spiritual realms. In other words, I became “teachable.” I’ve learned to take directions from others, including pastors, supervisors, and others in leadership roles. That may have been the most valuable lesson I ever learned. While I have since held several leadership roles, there are many areas of life where I am a follower. I don’t think anyone can become a successful leader until he or she has learned to follow. Jesus’ first words to his disciples were “Follow me!”—not “help me out” or “give me some advice.” Until we learn to submit to appropriate spiritual leaders, God will never give us the opportunity to develop our leadership skills.

*Leviticus 19:1-18; Psalm 72; Matthew 6:16-24*

## Thursday, May 10

*Birthdays: Joe Blanchard, Bob Brooke*

*Prayers for: David & Linda Flower, Christina; Fr. Oscar & Alejandra Gallego, Santiago, Anthony, Sebastian; Phil & Susie Geaslen*

**Leviticus 19:26-37 *“Do not turn to mediums or spiritists; do not seek them out to be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God.” (v.31)***

Astrology is the ancient science that claims to discover the influence of stars and planets on persons or events. Its resurgence on recent years is due in part to the declining influence of Biblical principles in Western civilization. It’s not uncommon to find even professing Christians who read the astrology charts. The Bible clearly condemns the use of mediums, spiritualists, and astrology. Referring to astrologers and “those who prophesy by the stars,” Isaiah says that “they have become like stubble, fire burns them; they cannot deliver themselves from the power of the flame” (Isaiah 47:13-14). Why? They’re condemned because believers have direct access to God. We do not need to use a “medium” or study the planets in order to know what we should do or what God has in store for us. Stars and planets do not influence our lives; only God claims that kind of influence. It defies common sense to believe that those born in certain months or spans of times have similar personality characteristics. This is one of those cases where Christians have a duty to admonish and correct those who may engage in harmful practices. We’ll read more about that tomorrow.

*Psalms 70, 71; 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12; Matthew 6:25-34*

## Friday, May 11

*Birthdays: Dick Van Horne*

*Prayers for: Brandon & Candy Geer, Cathy; Jim Geer; Matt & Makinzie Geeslin, Troy; Fr. Stan & Mary Gerber*

**Matthew 7:1-12 *“You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly enough to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.” (v.5)***

This verse does not say that we should *neglect or overlook the speck* that is in our brother’s eye. There may be occasions when it’s necessary to admonish others. Paul urges Christians to “admonish the unruly” (1 Thessalonians 5:14) and even to “reject a factious man after a first and second warning” (Titus 3:10). Psychologists have long-recognized that we are most likely to feel irritated by traits in others that are also characteristic of ourselves. Jesus also knew this; so he said we should make sure we’ve purged ourselves of any flaw we might seek to correct in others. If I act resentful and grouchy, then I have no right to correct someone about not being *loving* enough towards me. What he meant was that we should judge others only with great care, and that such carefulness begins with self-judgment. I believe any kind of criticism or correction of others should be rare and taken only when necessary to correct sinful or thoughtless behavior and prevent future repercussions on others.

*Leviticus 23:1-22; Psalm 106:1-18; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17*

## Saturday, May 12

*Birthdays:*

*Prayers for: Nicholas & Hillary Gerber, Elijah; Mar Giah, Giewee Hammond; Steve & Charlotte Goetz, Tyler, Colton, Arianna*

**Matthew 7:13-21** *“Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.” (v.15)*

The past several decades have seen its share of Christian leaders who fell into public disgrace. The Bible warns Christians of the necessity of distinguishing between the *true* and the *false* prophets: “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God” (1 John 4:1). The Bible gives three important clues to aid in this discernment. First, does this leader honor Jesus? John goes on to say, “By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God.” Talking about Jesus isn’t enough, however. Next ask whether this person lives an everyday life that is full of good deeds. Does he or she produce the “fruits of the spirit” Jesus speaks of when he says, “You will know them by their fruits”? Third, what kind of relationships does this leader have with close associates? Do those who know him or her in daily life express love and admiration? Jesus says, “By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35). It may not be our job to expose the *false prophets* in church leadership positions. We should, however, recognize the signs clearly enough so that we can ignore them and look elsewhere for our leadership.

*Leviticus 23:23-44; Psalms 75, 76; 2 Thessalonians 3:1-18*

## Sunday, May 13

*Birthdays: Bill Bradbury, Carol Ann Waldrop*

*Prayers for: Joey Gornick, Emma, Sam, Grayson; Fred & Jennifer Goslin, Casey, Crizta; Ruth Gray*

**Luke 12:13-21** *“Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.” (v.15 NIV)*

What a chunk of truth to savor: our lives are not defined by what we have. What truth and comfort that brings in days when we are bombarded with news of disasters—floods, earthquakes, tornadoes, and stock market plunges. Our possessions are constantly at risk; our definition is not! We are defined by the Father who “chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of all He created” (James 1:18). What if we defined ourselves as “first fruits” of all our Father created instead of by cars, homes, financial state (low or high)? “First fruits of the full harvest of the cross!” (Vine’s Dictionary).

*Leviticus 25:1-17; Psalms 93, 96; James 1:2-8, 16-18*

## Monday, May 14

*Birthdays: Frank Stahl*

*Prayers for: Chris & Rebekah Greenwood, Wyatt, Jesse; Lara Gwinn, Mitchell; Karlan Hanley; Mark & Mary Hargis*

**Colossians 1:9-14** *As you learn more and more about how God works, you will learn how to do your work. We pray that you’ll have the strength to stick it out over the long haul—not the grim strength of gritting your teeth but the glory strength God gives. It is the strength that endures the unendurable and spills over into joy, thanking the Father who makes us strong enough to take part in everything bright and beautiful that He has for us. God rescued us from dead-end alleys and dark dungeons. He’s set us up in the kingdom of the Son He loves so much, the Son who got us out of the pit we were in, got rid of the sins we were doomed to keep repeating.” (vv.10b-13 MSG)*

When I find myself white-knuckled and gritting my teeth while doing my work, or when I find myself in “dead ends alleys and dark dungeons,” I may watch the ways God works and, following Him, I can raise my head in praise and joy!

*Leviticus 25:35-55; Psalm 80; Matthew 13:1-16*

## Tuesday, May 15

*Birthdays: Mar Giah, Warren Settles*

*Prayers for: Harry & Mary Ellen Harrington; Charlie Hartland; Bonnie Hartwell; Bill & Kris Heeter, Andrew*

**1 Timothy 2:1-6** *I urge you first of all, to pray for all people...that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity. (vv.1-2 NLT)*

What would it be like if we spent our spare time in prayer—not just devotional time everyday but using chunks of time turning to God to converse with Him in prayer for the people in our lives: family, church, and government? Conversations with God, where we share our hearts. He listens to us, and we listen to Him. What if we turned to the Father for prayerful conversation? What if that was what we turned to instead of TV, the Internet, or Facebook. What if we paid attention to the fact that He walks beside us each day, and we shared our thoughts, questions, celebrations, joys, and grief? What if we talked things through with Him and let Him lead us to the solutions we seek? What if...?

*Leviticus 26:1-20; Psalm 78:1-39; Matthew 13:18-23*

## Wednesday, May 16

*Birthdays: Brian Cahill*

*Prayers for: Dar & Michelle Heinze, Galen; Steve & C. C. Helmick; Bill Hendrickson; Patrick & Susan Howard; Ben & Jeanette Hoyt*

**Leviticus 26:27-42** *“On the other hand, if they confess their sins and the sins of their ancestors, their treacherous betrayal, the defiance that set off my defiance that sent them off into enemy lands; if by some chance they soften their hard hearts and*

**make amends for their sin, I'll remember my covenant with Isaac, and yes, I'll remember my covenant with Abraham. And I'll remember the land.” (vv.40-42 MSG)**

I've experienced the relief and reconnection that follow sincere confession—confession that shows evidence of a heart broken on recognition of harm done (repentance). Have you heard the saying, “Never trust anyone without a limp”? It is literally true that no one is perfect. We won't be perfect till we join God above. Yet we can receive precious release and new life by recognizing we have done harm, committed a wrong. When we sin and reveal our “limp,” confession and repentance are basic steps to earning trust.

*Psalm 119:97-120; Ephesians 1:1-10; Matthew 22:41-46*

#### **Thursday, May 17**

*Birthdays: Wylie Bryant, Katie McKinley*

*Prayers for: Molly Hudson; Ify Ibekwe; Ann Jackson; Terry & Sarah Jacobsen; Ralph & Jeanne Janisch; Steve & Barbara Jeffries*

**Daniel 7:9-14 “I saw a human form, a son of man, arriving in a whirl of clouds....His rule would be forever, never ending...” (v.13 MSG)**

How I want to be part of that “forever”! Part of “everyone praising Him”—serving God. I celebrate the forever. I thank You, Lord, and praise You. Thanks to Your grace, I may make the choice, day by day, task by task, to serve You until the day comes when I go home. Sometimes, Lord, I am homesick for heaven! I sing in my heart to praise You. “Oh, Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth...when I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers...who am I, Lord, that You would care for me!” (Psalm 8:1, 3, 4). I hear You, Lord; I am commissioned to “go and make disciples.” You have said to do so and You also said, “And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:19). He is risen. He is risen indeed!

*Hebrews 2:5-18; Mathew 28:16-20*

#### **Friday, May 18**

*Birthdays: Tommy Lamb, Carol McBee*

*Prayers for: Richard Jennings; Brian & Yoanna Jernigan, Christopher Harris; Ken & Jeannye Jobes; Ted & Mary Jodzio*

**1 Samuel 2:1-10 “My heart rejoices in the LORD; in the LORD my horn is lifted high....There is no one holy like the LORD; there is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God.” (vv.1-2 NIV)**

Rocks can be small or huge. I can picture a huge rock in a glacier my family visited in Alaska; it was at least 12 feet high. My grandchildren pushed, pulled, and hoisted each other up to stand triumphantly on that massive rock. The rock had toe and handholds to assist the climb. Aren't our lives like that? Climbing the Rock is work! What are some of the toe and handholds God provides to help us to stand on His word, His promises, His presence and relationship? Who are the brothers and sisters we pull and push, and who pull and push us? How exhilarating when we stand on the Rock! Day by day we can be builders who stand on the Rock rather than fools who build on sand (Matthew 2:22).

*Psalms 85, 86; Ephesians 2:1-10; Matthew 7:22-27*

#### **Saturday, May 19**

*Birthdays: Margaret Carl*

*Prayers for: Phillip & Rachel Johnson, Chelsea, Cole, Clayton, Casey; Judith Jordan; Sue Kalb; Larry Kennard*

**Psalm 90 Teach us to live wisely and well! (v.12 MSG)**

How God's word weaves together in today's readings. In Numbers 11:29 the Lord puts His Spirit on elders. Psalm 90:12 asks for teaching to “live wisely and well.” Finally we are told in Ephesians 2:19a-22 (NCV) “You belong to God's family. You are like a building that was built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Christ Jesus Himself is the most important stone in that building and that whole building is joined together in Christ. He makes it grow and become a holy temple in the Lord. And in Christ you, too, are being built together with the Jews into a place where God lives through the Spirit.” Joy and peace; not a stranger; belonging to a family built on the truth, faith, perseverance and love of the apostles and prophets all joined together by Jesus who teaches us to grow and become holy, where the Spirit of God lives. Soak in these truths. We belong to God's family!

*Numbers 11:16-17, 24-29; Psalm 87; Ephesians 2:11-22; Matthew 7:28—8:4*

#### **Sunday, May 20**

*Birthdays: Sandra Mann*

*Prayers for: Joe & Penelope Kenney, Joshua, Aiden, Grace; Jim & Judy Kirk; Eunice Kirwin; Nancy Kison*

**Exodus 3:1-12 “Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.” (v.5 KJV)**

“Take off thy shoes,” the Angel said, “for this is holy ground.”

Yet in the church we plump ourselves, and gawk and gaze around.

We sit with all our twisted thoughts, we slouch in all our sin.

And yet we think that God should be delighted we dropped in.

We treat the Lord as just a Chum, we're bored before we start.

And words that pass between our lips are foreign to our heart.

O God of holiness and light, scorch all our sins away.

Revive in us Your warmth of love and turn our eyes today—

Upon the weary, weak and wronged, the slaves of moods and acts;  
Those gripped by structures, habits, drugs, who've swallowed lies for facts;  
The sick and sad and poor and bad, who know not what they need;  
They're trapped in routines, caught in gangs—all prisoners to be freed.  
Then send us, Lord, like Moses here, to promise them release.  
That we, like him, might lead them out—to freedom, life, and peace!  
*Psalms 66, 67; Hebrews 12:18-29; Luke 10:17-24*

### Monday, May 21

*Birthdays: Allison Pellegrino, Julie Stevenson*

*Prayers for: Roger & Paula Koehler, Emily, Michael; Bill & Anthea Kotlan, Rachel, Erin; Barbara Laake; Robert & Heather Lacey*

#### **Ephesians 3:1-13 "The manifold wisdom of God." (v.10)**

Throughout this week the Epistle to the Ephesians will show us various aspects of God. Today it draws our attention to His wisdom. Contrary to some people's opinion, God is not a blind force, operating as an indiscriminate Power. "Having made all things" (Genesis 1:1), He knows all things. As John 1:3 declares, "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." Yes, all things, the greatest stars and the cosmic sweep of history, and any thing, the smallest particle of light and the momentary thought that you and I had yesterday. This wisdom is manifold. As we open up its layers, we keep finding new truths. Elsewhere, Paul marvels at "the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God" (Romans 11:33). No computer on earth, nor all of them put together, can contain the knowledge that God has about His creation. So we're all included. There is no creature that "is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:13). No Bin Ladens can hide from Him! Alleluia!

*Joshua 1:1-9; Psalm 89:1-18; Matthew 8:5-17*

### Tuesday, May 22

*Birthdays:*

*Prayers for: Tommy & Kathryn Lamb; Bob & Pat Landgren; Paul & Caye Lankford; Robert & Mary Legler, Emily, Hannah, Hayden*

#### **Ephesians 3:14-21 "That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." (vv.17-19)**

Here is God's love described in four dimensions. It has breadth, encompassing the whole world, with all its diversities of races, cultures, and languages. No one can go outside it. Then it has length, going back to our very beginnings and stretching to our infinite future. We can't go before it or come after it. Also it has depth, reaching down to our deepest needs and our vilest sins. Nothing is too low for it to stoop down and cleanse (John 13:5). And finally it has height, lifting us up to noble living and pure visions of God. In fact, one day it will lift us to Heaven itself. We can never fully understand it. It passeth knowledge. Yet there is a word that helps us to glimpse it. It is compassion. It's what Jesus had for both individuals (Mark 1:41) and multitudes (Mark 6:34); an embracing love that reaches out, drawing us up and bringing us closer to himself, warming us, soothing us, supplying our needs and keeping us from all danger! Can we bask in it today?

*1 Samuel 16:1-13a; Psalms 97, 99, 100; Matthew 8:18-27*

### Wednesday, May 23

*Birthdays: Nancy Rowland*

*Prayers for: Paul & Stephanie Leonard; Chris & Beth Levitz; Sue Little; Linda Llewellyn; Fr. John & Marcella Lohmann, Mark*

#### **Ephesians 4:1-16 "There is one body, and one Spirit...One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all." (vv.4-6)**

Besides being wise and loving, God is "One." There are no other gods but He. No picture can represent Him, nor any object take His place. Yet, though one Being, He is three Persons, Whom we call the Holy Trinity. A blessed unity exists among the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, where wisdom and love freely flow. This unity is what God wills to be reflected in the Church called His body on earth (1 Corinthians 12:27). But how much does it do so? For one thing, He does not change. He is the same yesterday and today and forever (Hebrews 13:8, Malachi 3:6). Take comfort in that fact. Secondly, His will is constant, for our good and His glory. Take light from that fact. Thirdly, His word can be depended on because it is written for our benefit (2 Timothy 3:16). Have confidence in that fact. Lastly, His Church, which branches out everywhere, is united inwardly, drawing its nourishment from Him. So in Him, be refreshed. Jesus prayed for his church to the Father when he asked, "that they all may be one, as we are" (John 17:11). How can we show that unity?

*Isaiah 4:2-6; Psalms 101, 109; Matthew 8:28-34*

### Thursday, May 24

*Birthdays: Sue Little*

*Prayers for: Katie Lozo; Darlene Lyons; Andrew & Sandra Mann, Marian, Maggie; Veronica Mann; Galen & Jody Mansee*

#### **Ephesians 4:17-32 "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." (v.30)**

God is holy. Yet how easily we may forget this fact! When the heavenly beings praised God (Isaiah 6:1-8), they did not sing "wise, wise, wise, is the Lord of hosts," nor even "loving, loving, loving, is the Lord of hosts," but "holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts." His holiness was what inspired their praise. We must ask, "How are we inclined to grieve Him?" The answer is in various ways. By regarding Him as a being like ourselves, a danger we face in our belief. By not recognizing this holiness, and treating

Him as just a pal, is a danger we face in our worship. By assuming that as long as we love Him our behavior doesn't matter, is a danger we face in our conduct. By assuming that little sins don't count, is a danger we face in our priorities. Understanding must lead to belief, faith should lead to imitation, love must seek to please, and gifts ought to result in gratitude. Didn't He say, "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:15)?

*Zechariah 4:1-14; Psalm 105:1-22; Matthew 9:1-8*

### **Friday, May 25**

*Birthdays: William Crawford, Larry Kennard*

*Prayers for: Yesenia Martinez; Mike Mason; Mickey & Martha Ann Matkin; Jim Maxey & Barbara Garney*

#### **Ephesians 5:1-20 "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." (v.17)**

God has a will. Though Muslims believe that it is basically inscrutable, Christians realize that it has been made known in Christ (1:9). He revealed it as he went about teaching, doing good, healing, and seeking to restore people to the Father. In the Scriptures it is described as good (Ephesians 1:5), acceptable, and perfect (Romans 12:2). Boiled down, it is expressed in His commandments. But because we have broken them, it now includes wanting us to be saved. As Jesus said, "It is not the will of your Father...that one of these little ones should perish" (Matthew 18:14). And he proclaimed, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). Is it harsh? No, it is pleasant and fulfilling. But if we resist it we shall find, like those who resist the rules of the road, that it can be painful until we return to it. In order for us to do His will, we need to abdicate our personal throne and Jesus needs to be placed on it. We should pray "not my will, but thine, be done on earth as it is in heaven...." (Luke 22:42).

*Jeremiah 31:27-34; Psalm 102; Matthew 9:9-17*

### **Saturday, May 26**

*Birthdays:*

*Prayers for: Francesca MBA-Jonas, Rollins, Jacquelyne; Carol McBee; Rob & Krista McKinley, Katie, Emilie, Sara*

#### **Ephesians 6:10-24 "The word of God." (v.17)**

All the attributes of God that we've recognized this week are expressed by the Word of God. This Word is called the Bible or, more properly, the Holy Bible. "Being inspired by the Holy Spirit" (2 Timothy 3:16), it's on a higher level than other books. It's not called the words of God, though that would be true. Instead it's called the Word, for all Scripture speaks with one voice. It is congruent and when interpreted by the Holy Spirit, the author, it speaks in unison. Sixty-six human writers, over a period of hundreds of years, combined to describe the One who is behind it, "the Incarnate Word" (John 1:1, 14). Some do so faintly, as in the Old Testament with its analogies and prophecies, and others starkly, as in the Gospels and the rest of the New Testament. Why did God give us the Bible? Not only to reveal Himself, but also to equip us to resist the devil. It's a sword (v.17), and is the only weapon offered to us. By it we can defend ourselves, send the great terrorist flying, and advance in God's service as Jesus himself did in Matthew 4:4, 7, 10. Let's use it daily!

*Ezekiel 36:22-27; Psalms 107:33-43, 108; Matthew 9:18-26*

### **Sunday, May 27**

*Birthdays: Valerie Fennel*

*Prayers for: Troy & Sandi McMahon, Tatum, T.J. Ty, Trace; Jim & Marty Medford; Patricia Medina; Ernie Midgley; Lloyd Miles*

#### **John 4:19-26 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit and his worshipers must worship in spirit and truth. (vv.23-24 NIV)**

These verses lead me to ask myself if I am a "true worshiper," as described here. When I kneel or bow my head to pray, or sing praises to the Lord, am I worshiping Him "in spirit and truth?" Have I asked the Holy Spirit to fill my heart and guide my prayers? Am I being ruthlessly honest with God and myself? Or am I being a phony? It is easy to go through the motions in church without really being engaged, and all of us are guilty of this at one time or another, aren't we? We sit in the pews daydreaming or stand and mouth the words of songs while our minds are a million miles away. Similarly, sometimes in our personal prayers we fail to tell the Lord what is really on our hearts and minds—as if he didn't already know. But the really good news is that all we have to do is recognize and confess our wanderings, repent, and believe that He cleanses and forgives us. Then we are free to enjoy the great blessings he gives us when we worship in spirit and in truth. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

*Deuteronomy 16:9-12; Psalm 118; Acts 4:18-21, 23-33*

### **Monday, May 28**

*Birthdays: Jackie Austin*

*Prayers for: Keith & Julie Miracle, Sarah, Maggie, Gwynn; John Moran; Christie Moritz; Jeff & Lisa Musick, Alex, Zach, Ben*

#### **Matthew 12:22-32 Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand." (v.25)**

"Jesus knew their thoughts." Wow! That blows me away. In this passage, the Pharisees are accusing Jesus of doing his healing work through the power of Satan, but they have no idea who they are dealing with. They are smug, prideful, arrogant, scornful, and deceitful, thinking themselves smarter and wiser than Jesus. However, being the all-mighty and all-powerful Son of God, Jesus sees into their minds and hearts and is able to expose them for who they really are and logically explain the errors in their

thinking. And now, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Jesus *also* knows all of our thoughts. We find this to be comforting in those times of sincere prayer when we are struggling to adequately tell him of our fears and concerns. But when we think we have hidden our sinful thoughts from him, we find that we have deceived ourselves. Jesus knows us better than we will ever know ourselves! He also loves us more than we can ever fathom and stands ready to forgive and restore. Thank you, Jesus, for your love, mercy, and grace.

*Proverbs 10:1-12; Psalm 25; 1 Timothy 1:1-17*

## **Tuesday, May 29**

*Birthdays: Cynthia Aringo, Lee Stein*

*Prayers for: Blake & Lauren Musket, Ethan, Parker; Carol Ann Musket; Gwen Nix; Dennis & Terri Norris; Lou Padilla*

### **Matthew 12:33-42 For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. (v.34b)**

Oh, the anguish of misspoken words! I cringe when I remember the times I have spoken sharply, harshly, or unkindly to an undeserving soul. As soon as those words left my mouth I regretted them. The problem with such a situation is that you can apologize all you want, but the hurt remains and the words are still out there and cannot be retrieved. And as Jesus' words so aptly put it, our words issue from our hearts and reveal the true condition of our hearts. I am so grateful for the working of the Holy Spirit in my life today, quickly convicting me when my heart begins to grow dark and I am tempted to speak unkindly. I feel ashamed when I consider that my hurtful words don't just inflict pain on another person, but they also grieve my precious Lord *and* do nothing to further his kingdom. Help me, Lord Jesus, to stay continually focused on you rather than on myself, so that my heart is full of your love and produces words of loving-kindness.

*Proverbs 15:16-33; Psalms 26, 28; 1 Timothy 1:18—2:8*

## **Wednesday, May 30**

*Birthdays:*

*Prayers for: Paul & Heather Palmer, Hunter; Tripp Palmer; Mike & Jane Pavelka; Liz Pearsey; John & Tracy Pegues*

### **Proverbs 17:1-20 The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but the LORD tests the heart. (v.3)**

Just as fiery heat refines and removes impurities from gold and silver, so God uses "fiery trials" to refine us and purify our hearts. In 1 Peter 4:12 we hear Peter caution believers, "Beloved, do not be amazed and bewildered at the fiery ordeal which is taking place to test your quality, as though something strange—unusual and alien to you and your position—were befalling you" (Amplified Bible). Further, James writes, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything" (James 1:2-4). All the difficult times of my life have served God's purpose well by smoothing, correcting, and polishing the rough edges of my character and have brought me closer to my precious Lord and Savior. If we are truly honest about it, none of us *wants* to wrestle with difficulties, and we would prefer to live in calm waters. But life will always involve storms, so we may as well face them holding tightly to the Lord and let him take us through them. "Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him" (James 1:12).

*Psalm 38; 1 Timothy 3:1-16; Matthew 12:43-50*

## **Thursday, May 31**

*Birthdays:*

*Prayers for: Greg & Linda Pellegrino, Nick, Allison; Cathy Pennington, Jason Talley; Adam & Catelyn Pevehouse*

### **Proverbs 21:30—22:6 The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but victory rests with the Lord. (v.31)**

Preparations for battle must be done by us, but the victory over our battles comes from God. A lot of times (more often than not, I suspect) we take all the credit for our victories and successes in life. We talk about the difficulty of a particular fight and describe all the things we did to help assure victory and, when it is won, we congratulate ourselves! How foolish we are. We won the battle because God ordained it. I didn't grasp this principle when I was younger; I thought that with enough training, education, resources, determination, and proper planning, I could conquer anything. I was self-confident and self-reliant and gave myself much more credit that I deserved. Now, as a sixty-something-year-old mother of three and grandmother of eight, I have been walking with the Lord for nearly forty years and have *finally* come to understand that victory in any arena is a gift from God. I must do my part, preparing as needed, and then leave the outcome to Him. Moreover, I must pray for the victory, which God desires, and give Him thanks and praise when I receive it. Thank You, Father, for always taking care of me.

*Psalm 37:1-18; 1 Timothy 4:1-16; Matthew 13:24-30*