



**GROW
IN
GRACE**
NEWSLETTER

Volume 41, No. 1, January 6 , 2015 / Southside Baptist Church & Christian School / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / The Grow in Grace Newsletter is **a weekly Bible Study**, plus local church news notes— designed first and foremost for members and those attending services at Southside Church. It is sent forth with the desire to aid one and all, (including friends far and wide), in the experience of 2 Peter 3:18. ***"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."***

The Year of 2015— A Call to Become Much More SERIOUS About Reading, Studying, Meditating upon, Heeding, and Sharing/Ministering the Word of God!

In the year 2015— will we receive our perspective as to what's happening in our world from fallen men or from GOD? Increasingly, **FEAR is gripping Americans** as they look at what is coming and/or what may be coming. It is critical that the saints of God in Christ be ***"... steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."*** (1 Cor. 15:58)

I. WHAT IS MY BIBLE READING/STUDY/MEDITATION PLAN?

HERE is an ENCOURAGEMENT to OFTEN read: Matthew 24-28; Mark 13-16; Luke 21-24; John 17-21; all the New Testament Epistles; and especially, the Revelation; and to be regularly reading through one of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles!

Obviously, not all of these, all at the same time— we are simply encouraging a definite focus. WHY?

The above mentioned Gospel **sections** unveil the death, resurrection, ascension, and second coming of Jesus Christ; **as well as** the believer's Great Commission assignment!

1. As we read straight through Matthew, Mark, Luke and/or John, we are privileged by the Holy Spirit to behold the LAMB OF GOD, to sit at His feet, hear His voice, marvel at Him, and experience the Holy Spirit calling us to faith/obedience. ***Should we not read the Gospels often and deeply?***

2. The Acts of the Apostles and all the various letters by the Apostles unveil how the Holy Spirit wants us to **'be the church' and 'FUNCTION as the church'** before a watching world. ***Should we not read these God ordained patterns and instructions for Christians... often and deeply?***

3. Moreover, the Epistles reveal glorious revelation as to our **position of being 'IN CHRIST'!** They give detailed revelation as to spiritual warfare; **and** abundant revelation as to how to live so as to not bring shame to the name of Jesus. **THEY GIVE** glorious, practical ways to adorn the gospel by Christ-like living; **and** powerful warnings against FALSE PROPHETS; **and** clear calls to gladly suffer for righteousness sake. ***Should we not read these often and deeply?***

4. The Revelation is the glorious unveiling of Jesus Christ, the Sovereign Lamb of God— as He is today! The Revelation 'unveils' what Jesus Christ **is doing** at this present time; what He **will be doing** in days ahead and the reality of His ultimate intentions. ***Should we not read the UNVEILING of Jesus often?***

READ THE REVELATION LOOKING FOR THE SOVEREIGN LAMB OF GOD!

1. Revelation, chapters 1-3 — The Sovereign Lamb is in Heaven working through His blood bought redeemed saints on earth.

2. Revelation, chapters 4-19 — The Sovereign Lamb from heaven is ruling and over ruling present and coming events on earth, including Kings and Kingdoms, Presidents, Dictators, and secret rulers even of this present hour. ***JESUS is moving them ALL toward that great and glorious day when He, the Lord Jesus Christ, will come back to this earth as King of Kings and Lord of Lords; and gloriously display more of the good pleasure of His will!*** (Eph 1:9-11; 2:7)

In the midst of all these events (over the last thousands of years and in the present and in days to come!) those redeemed by the blood of the Lamb often suffer the wrath of men and satan, but never the wrath of God!

3. Revelation, chapters 20-22— The Sovereign Lamb is eternally enthroned and His holy Bride will be with Him in the New Earth and the New Heavens. **LET US NEVER FORGET:**

The ultimate goal of all history is a REDEEMED BRIDE for Jesus, comprised of all those saved by God’s amazing grace during all time periods of history from Genesis through the days of the Revelation. (Rev. 21:9-27 clearly reveals the eternal oneness of ALL the redeemed as being the one Bride of the Lamb!)

READ THE REVELATION LOOKING FOR THOSE REDEEMED BY CHRIST!

1. Revelation, chapters 1-20— ALL through the Revelation, **those redeemed by the blood of the LAMB** [They are called: God’s elect, God’s called out ones, those who follow the Lamb, those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ] **are seen on earth**, moving through tribulations and martyrdom; **and they are seen IN HEAVEN.**

AGAIN, while on earth the redeemed are often the subject of man and satan’s HATRED AND WRATH. They are often PRESENT when God pours out some expression of His wrath, even as was Noah during the flood and even as was Israel on the night of Passover. **But although affected**, they were never the subjects or objects of the wrath of God— not then, not now, not ever!

The Revelation has ESPECIALLY been given **to encourage** the true SAINTS OF GOD IN CHRIST who have always BEEN and WHO ALWAYS will be persecuted. (Revelation 1:9; 2:9-10) Jesus said, ***“In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”*** (John 16:33) The Revelation could well be called **Jesus’ commentary on John 16:33.**

The Revelation is a reminder **that joy is not the absence of suffering but the presence of God and confidence in God** in the midst of the

most trying of circumstances. **AGAIN**, the Christians who first read the Revelation were in a time of severe persecution with thousands being MARTYRED. And so it has been for 2000 years of church history! The freedoms and liberties enjoyed by many Christians in the west is an exception — but this is changing... rapidly!

REALITY: The Revelation SHOUTS, "***Be thou faithful unto death; and I will give thee the crown of life!***" (Revelation 2:10) LET US HIDE THIS SECURELY and 'front burner' in our hearts— it is also powerful in these present hours of testing! O WE MUST BE FOUND FAITHFUL! MANY are already falling away! (Matt. 24:12-13)

2. Revelation, chapters 21-22— ULTIMATELY, OUR LORD'S REDEEMED ON EARTH become the complete BRIDE of the LAMB triumphant in Heaven, the Bride adorned for Her Heavenly Husband, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Revelation gives needed re-assurance that Jesus is SUPREME, SOVERIGN AND SUFFICIENT. AS 2015 begins, couldn't we use some of that same reassurance?

II. ASK YOURSELF: WHAT IS MY BIBLE READING/STUDY/MEDITATION PLAN?

There are many 'online' helps showing a variety of OPTIONAL ways to systematically read the Word of God. (IF YOU ARE NOT ONLINE, and desire some help in this area, just let me know! Here is a link that shows many options:

<http://www.ligonier.org/blog/bible-reading-plans/>

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS: For whatever else you may be reading from God's Word— it is very helpful to also do the following: **Read 5 Psalms each day.** Example: **On January 8—** read Psalm 8, 38, 68, 98, 128 and read Proverbs, chapter 8. In other words, whatever the day is, start with that Psalm and then add 30 each time... **as on January 9:** Read 9, 39, 69, 99, 129 and Proverbs 9. You can make slight adaptations on months with different amounts of days.

The BENEFIT of this plan? **The Proverbs** are filled with practical wisdom on many of life's daily issues, temptations, etc. **The Psalms** empower prayer and praise to God. **(The persecuted N.T. church set portions of Psalm 2 before the LORD as they prayed: Acts 4:23-**

33)

III. RECEIVING MORE BENEFIT FROM BIBLE READING/STUDY/MEDITATION

On January 8 @ 11:00AM, the Ladies Bible Study will begin an every other week study in the life of David. **The MEN'S FELLOWSHIP**, starting on January 10 @ 8:00AM, will begin an EVERY SATURDAY study of 1 Thessalonians. **THOUGHT: Prayerfully consider 'adapting' some of the following** for those studies, for personal Bible studies, for Sunday School Classes, Home Groups, etc.

1. To 'get more out'... we have to 'put more in!'" It starts with having a vision and hunger for God! Without question, Jesus calls us to Christ-likeness, to discipleship; and He calls us to HELP EACH other in that process. In other words **we are called to be Disciples and Disciple-makers.**

Helping each other to GROW as Disciples is a Work Achievable ONLY by the Word of God, quickened to us by the Holy Spirit.

Growth in Christ-likeness happens as, (1) God's Word more and more saturates the lives of Christians **who are;** (2) Joining themselves together in **intercessory prayer** for each other **and who are;** (3) Yielding to and encouraging **accountability** so as to help each other to win spiritual battles and grow in the grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

The FRUIT will be that more and more— we, our families and church will ADORN the gospel and not BLASPHEME the gospel before a watching world! Moreover, such *growing in grace saints* will also boldly proclaim the gospel!

WHEN READING, STUDYING, MEDITATING UPON THE WORD OF GOD— IT WILL BE GOOD TO ASK QUESTIONS LIKE,

1. What did I learn/see and/or discover **that can make a real difference in my life— SO THAT** I can be empowered to live for the GLORY OF GOD, AND be empowered to help BUILD UP other believers, AND be empowered to TELL THE GOOD NEWS to the lost in my world?

2. WHAT did I see that the Holy Spirit will DESIRE to use to help me ADORN the Gospel and AVOID blaspheming the Gospel?

3. Is there any temptation or sin I have battled this week about which it would REALLY BE WISE for me to share with a fellow saint (brother to brother; sister to sister)?

4. What lost person in my sphere of influence SHOULD I AND OTHERS team up to pray for this week; and how can I be salt and light to them? WHICH SAINTS should I and/or others and I TEAM UP to serve, minister, encourage this week?

5. What personal praises/personal prayer needs can we (IN BIBLE STUDY groups) TEAM UP to pray for?

EMBRACE this reality: If you are a Christian, then, you are a BELIEVER PRIEST. You have within you the MASTER TEACHER, the Holy Spirit. **Therefore, wholly embrace the need and call to be a WORKMAN:**

“Study, give diligence, aim at winning God’s approval, a WORKMAN with no reason to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. [Accurate in delivering the Message of the Truth; correctly analyzing, delivering the Message of the Truth.]

MOREOVER, let us EMBRACE SOUND Preparation for good Bible Study!

1. Every time we open our Bibles to study the Word of God — WE MUST COME WITH PROPER HEART ATTITUDES! Let us Pray and proceed with Reverence, Expectancy, Dependency, Alertness, and a willingness to OBEY what God reveals! **LET US EVER REMEMBER THAT...**

The Word of God is for:

a. DOCTRINE/TEACHING— teaching us the Faith, teaching us the truth of both doctrines to believe and the true paths on which we are to walk.

b. REPROOF/refuting error— showing us where we got off the Straight and Narrow Way.

c. CORRECTION/resetting— showing us how to get back on the right path.

d. INSTRUCTION IN RIGHTEOUSNESS— showing us how to stay on the right path.

e. ALL FOR THE GOAL that we be completely prepared and equipped for all good work, to the glory of God! (2 Timothy 3:15-17)

REJOICE, for as John Murray has stated: “There is no situation in which we [as men of God or women of God] are placed, no demand that arises for which Scripture as the deposit of the manifold wisdom of God is not adequate and sufficient!” REMEMBER TO BE HUMBLE: JUST BECAUSE I am not ‘plugged into and experiencing present deliverance does not mean that the Word of God and the Holy Spirit are not adequate! **BOTTOM LINE:** When we open our Bibles to read a chapter or passage, the above points reveal what God will be up to in our lives! **Therefore:**

(1) We must not merely read— we must also prayerfully STUDY and search for accurate UNDERSTANDING of what the Bible is actually saying and/or teaching; and,

(2) We must be LISTENING for the Holy Spirit to QUICKEN personal applications of the Word of God to our lives.

Here are some excellent questions to keep in mind as WE read Scripture:

1. Are there SINS I need to confess? **2.** Are there PROMISES I need to claim?
3. Are there ATTITUDES I need to change? **4.** Are there COMMANDS I need to obey? **5.** Are there EXAMPLES I need to follow? **6.** Are there PRAYERS I need to pray? **7.** Are there ERRORS I need to avoid? **8.** Are there TRUTHS I need to believe? **9.** Are there thing for which I need to PRAISE God and/or Give Him THANKS?

The point being that as I read the Word of God— it is very likely that I will find teaching about Godly attitudes, or commands, or errors, etc. Moreover, as I read a chapter over, day after day— the Holy Spirit will see to it that the Chapter births PRAYERS of confession, repentance, petitions, praise, and worship!

REALITY: With this sort of prayerful and careful study of the Word of God — we will be gaining **INSIGHT**, we will be gaining **UNDERSTANDING**, we will be gaining **REVELATION** as to the will of God in various situations.

REMEMBER: The goal is not mere reading. The goal does not stop with correct interpretation. Our goal is **application and transformation**

MORE and more into Christ-likeness!

OBJECTION: This is all too involved; too serious. WHAT YOU HAVE SET FORTH IN THIS NEWSLETTER will require too much time!

REALITY:

1. The hour is so late!
2. The spiritual war zone is so deadly!
3. MANY MEN, WOMEN and YOUTH are FALLING BY THE WAYSIDE throughout the land!

The stakes are so high—

that only a great fool would NOT approach personal Bible Study in the coming

year in a much more serious way than has been our custom!

Grace to one and all! James Bell

SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES!

TUESDAYS: Come and sing every Tuesday night at Gallatin Health Care nursing home. Meet at the front door at 5:30PM. Questions call Bradley Pennington at 615-804-3054.

**** WEDNESDAYS:** PRAYER SERVICE at 7:00PM; **IN Ladies Sunday School Room**

**** NOTE:** Jody Allen is ministering to **young Children**, up to about age 10 during Prayer Service. Older children, but not old enough for the Youth Group... will be with their parents in the Prayer Service. **YOUTH GROUP:** Wednesdays 6-8pm... led by Byron Smith

☐ LADIES BIBLE STUDY— Resumes January 8, 11:00am,

New Study: The Life of David! Cindy Bell, teaching {Meet in Ladies Sunday School Room: Come in FRONT doors of the church auditorium or the SIDE door at the top of the IRON STEPS!}

* **EVERY SATURDAY MORNING @ 8am: Men's Fellowship/Bible Study!** {Starting a study in 1 Thessalonians, 1/10/15}... Come to back of Church building... Come in under the drive-thru awning... walk forward... till you smell the coffee!}

SUNDAYS IN JANUARY, 2015— 11, 18, 25

1. 9:30am Sunday School
2. 10:45am Worship Service
3. Noon— Fellowship, Covered-dish lunch
4. 1:00pm— Early afternoon worship service

[THIRD SUNDAY: January 18: LORD'S SUPPER // NO LUNCH

HOME MEETINGS IN THE EVENING— (1/18/15) Held at the Allens, the Browns, and the Allens]