

## **Bible study for this week** 1/09/12~1/15/12

**\*January 09 (Monday), 2012** {[Hebrews 11:8~12](#)} Key: By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called . . . . And he went out, not knowing where he was going. ([Hebrews 11:8](#)) “Fear Of The Unknown” Bible In One Year: [Genesis 23~24](#); [Matthew 7](#)

Has God ever asked you to do something that seemed unreasonable? Something that took you into the territory of the unknown? What if He asked you to refuse a long-awaited promotion or resist a longed-for relationship? What if He called you to a remote part of the world or asked you to release your children to serve Him in a faraway place?

The unknown is full of haunting “what ifs.” Yet God often calls us to chart unknown territory as we follow Him. Obeying His commands to forgive, to give away our treasures, or to give up things that provide security and pleasure often leave us in the scary territory of unknown outcomes.

Imagine how Abraham felt when God asked him to move his whole family without telling him where they were going ([Gen. 12:1~3](#)). God also asked Abraham to persevere—to stay in an unknown land even when the lure of past comforts may have threatened to seduce him and his family back to their comfort zone in Ur.

Entering a new year is like entering uncharted territory. The fear of the unknown could cripple our capacity to follow God’s leading through the days ahead. Yet, like Abraham, when we cling to the One who knows all things, we’re in good hands—regardless of where He leads.

***Meditate:*** Many things about tomorrow I don’t seem to understand; But I know who holds tomorrow, And I know who holds my hand.

***Aphorism:*** Never be afraid to entrust the unknown future to the all-knowing God.

**\*January 10 (Tuesday), 2012** {[Hebrews 11:32~40](#)} Key: We are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses. ([Hebrews 12:1](#)) “Register Rock” Bible In One Year: [Genesis 25~26](#); [Matthew 8:1~17](#)

Along the old Oregon Trail in Idaho there is a marker—a giant lava boulder known locally as Register Rock. It’s located in an area which was one of the favorite overnight camping areas for westbound immigrants who traveled the trail in the 19th century.

Travelers often inscribed their names on the rock as a memorial to their passage. Register Rock stands as a monument to their courage and tenacity.

When I think of Register Rock, I think of other pilgrims who have passed by us on their journey. Hebrews 11 lists some of those hardy souls—Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, and Samuel, to name a few.

But there are other more recent pilgrims: my mother and father, my fifth-grade Sunday school teacher Mrs. Lincoln, my youth leader John Richards, my mentors Ray Stedman and Howard Hendricks, and a host of others I could name. They may not have inscribed their names on rocks, but they’re written in my memory.

The author of Hebrews reminds us to remember “pilgrims” who have gone before us, especially those “who have spoken the Word of God” to us and to consider “the outcome of their conduct” ([Heb. 13:7](#)). And, most important, he encourages us to follow their faith.

***Meditate:*** The paths of leadership are trod By those who fix their eyes on God; Their steadfast spirit points the way For us to follow day by day.

***Aphorism:*** People who follow Christ lead others in the right direction.

**\*January 11 (Wednesday), 2012** { [1 Timothy 4:12~16](#) } Key: Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers. ([1 Timothy 4:12](#)) “Following Our Example” Bible In One Year: [Genesis 27~28](#); [Matthew 8:18~34](#)

Alyssa, who is 6 and just learning to read, often saw her parents and grandparents reading their Bibles in the morning. Early one day, she woke up before everyone else. Grandma found her sitting on the couch, with her Bible and a devotional booklet on her lap. She wanted to follow the example of spending time with God at the beginning of the day.

Timothy, a young pastor, faced heavy responsibilities in the church at Ephesus—training believers, leading in worship, countering false doctrine. The older, experienced apostle Paul gave him instruction on leading the church in these areas, but he also mentioned the importance of personal conduct. He said, “Be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity” ([1 Tim. 4:12](#)).

Paul challenged Timothy: “Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine” (v.16). If he paid attention to his own spiritual life and to solid doctrine, he would be a godly example to the church family.

We all have others who are observing us. Even little Alyssa has younger siblings watching her. Let’s live our lives in such a way that those who follow our example will help others in their walk with God.

**Meditate:** Lord, help me live a godly life Of faith and love and purity So those who follow what I do Will grow in their maturity.

**Aphorism:** A good example has more value than good advice.

**\*January 12 (Thursday), 2012** { [2 Timothy 4:1~8](#) } Key: I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ([2 Timothy 4:7](#)) “Finishers” Bible In One Year: [Genesis 29~30](#); [Matthew 9:1~17](#)

When I was a kid, I dreamed of becoming a black belt in karate. Several years ago, I began training and came close to fulfilling that goal. However, two belts away from my goal, I quit. There were two reasons—my teacher changed styles in the middle of my training, and I got so busy that I could not devote adequate time for training.

Almost every week, I am nagged by the thought that God wants me to be a finisher in all aspects of my life—but especially in my service for Him.

As Paul spoke of the conclusion of his life, he did not have any nagging thoughts of unfinished business about his ministry. In this final farewell ([2 Tim. 4:7](#)), Paul used imagery-rich words to talk about finishing his service for Christ. He described his life and ministry in terms of a fight: “I have fought the good fight.” The fight was good because he had engaged in it for God and the gospel. Then he used the imagery of a race as synonymous with his ministry: “I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” Paul affirmed that by God’s grace he had finished all that God had given him to do.

As followers of Jesus, let us strive to be finishers, persevering in our service for Jesus Christ.

**Meditate:** For every follower of Christ There is a race to run; And when we cross the finish line, We’ll be with Christ, God’s Son.

**Aphorism:** Run the race with eternity in view.

**\*January 13 (Friday), 2012** { [1 Peter 2:11~21](#) } Key: [Have] your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that . . . they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God. ([1 Peter 2:12](#)) “Credibility” Bible In One Year: [Genesis 31~32](#); [Matthew 9:18~38](#)

The recent global financial crisis caused people to pay closer attention to their credit report. When credit was easy to get, some people became careless about how they used it. They didn't bother to save for what they wanted; they just borrowed. Being in debt was no big deal. But in a crisis, that is no longer the case. Having good credit is suddenly very important.

After an advertisement for a credit repair service, a local newscaster said, "Credit repair isn't something you can buy; it's something you have to work for."

The same principle applies to the credibility of our lives. We can't buy it; it's something we have to work for. We may be able to "borrow" credibility for a while by associating ourselves with credible people, but sooner or later we will need our own.

Credibility has to do with the ability to elicit belief. The reason it's essential for Christians is that our lives affect God's reputation ([1 Peter 2:12](#)). When we call ourselves by Christ's name, His reputation is tied to ours. If people have reason not to believe us, they may not believe God.

The way to earn credibility is to live honorably. Then others will believe and glorify God.

***Meditate:***How can you live the way He did?

***Aphorism:***If we take care of our character, our reputation will take care of itself.

**\*January 14 (Saturday), 2012**{[1 John 1:5~10](#)}Key: We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. ([2 Corinthians 4:7](#))“The Sin Buildup”Bible In One Year: [Genesis 33~35; Matthew 10:1~20](#)

For hundreds of years, windmills around the world have been used to pump water and to process grains. But in the last few decades, as wind turbines producing electricity have become more prevalent, a “fly in the ointment” unexpectedly occurred.

Researchers discovered that windpower generators worked fine at slow speeds, but at high-wind velocity, bugs on the blades reduced power output. Operators found that it was necessary to regularly wash off the buildup of dead insects to avoid having them slowly decrease the turbine's power.

A buildup of sin in a Christian's life can be a problem as well. God has provided a way to clear the accumulation of sins from our lives. [First John 1:9](#) reminds us: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” But unless we do that often, we'll be running on diminished power. That's because the power for living comes from God and not us ([2 Cor. 4:7](#)). When we try to live the Christian life in our own strength, we'll feel defeated—like windmills robbed of their energy.

God's power can be more easily seen and experienced in our lives when we get rid of sin's buildup every day.

***Meditate:***The power in our Christian life Will be diminished by our sin; Confession will restore our strength—When we're forgiven, cleansed within.

***Aphorism:***Sin drains our spiritual power; confession restores it.

**\*January 15 (Sunday), 2012**{[Lamentations 3:22~33](#)}Key: His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. ([Lamentations 3:22~23](#))“A Second Chance”Bible In One Year: [Genesis 36~38; Matthew 10:21~42](#)

A year ago today, 155 people on US Airways Flight 1549 thought they were going to die. During take-off from New York City, their plane struck a flock of geese, disabling both engines. In a powerless glide, the captain maneuvered over the densely populated area,

then announced: “Brace for impact.” Less than 90 seconds later, the crippled plane made a water landing in the frigid Hudson River, where boats and ferries quickly arrived to rescue the passengers and crew, all of whom survived. People called it the “miracle on the Hudson” and praised the pilot and crew. One grateful passenger said simply, “We have a second chance in life.”

In times of crisis, we grasp the importance of every hour. During our ordinary routine, however, we often forget that each day is a second chance. “Through the Lord’s mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. ‘The Lord is my portion,’ says my soul, ‘therefore I hope in Him!’” ([Lam. 3:22~24](#)).

We can choose to live with thankfulness for God’s mercy and grace, with confidence in His faithful care, and with hope because He is with us forever. Today, God offers us a second chance in life. Let’s make the most of it!

***Meditate:*** As shadows of night give way to dawn’s light, God opens the door to a brand-new day; And with it come mercies from His gracious hand For giving new mercies is always His way.

***Aphorism:*** Our God is a God of second chances.