

Bible study for this week 1/16/12~1/22/12

***January 16 (Monday), 2012** {[Acts 14:8~18](#)} Key: I will not give My glory to another. ([Isaiah 48:11](#)) “Glory Deflectors” Bible In One Year: [Genesis 39~40; Matthew 11](#)

Barbara Mertz has a complaint about Egypt’s Pharaoh Ramses II. In her book *Temples, Tombs, and Hieroglyphs*, archaeologist Mertz writes, “One gets so tired of Ramses; his face, his figure, and/or his name are plastered over half the wall surfaces still standing in Egypt—at least it seems that way.” Insatiably thirsty for glory, Ramses reveled in Egyptian religion, which taught that the pharaoh was divine.

Contrast Ramses’ desire for glory with the attitude of Paul and Barnabas. On one of their missionary journeys, they faced a situation during which they refused to accept vainglory. When a crowd in the idolatrous city of Lystra saw them heal a crippled man, the people exclaimed, “The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!” ([Acts 14:11](#)). They immediately prepared animals to sacrifice in honor of Paul and Barnabas. But the two quickly objected, saying, “We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God” (v.15).

We do not rival the apostles in our accomplishments for God, but we all have things we do for Him. It’s then that we must be “glory deflectors,” making sure God gets all the glory for everything we have done.

Meditate: May everything we do—By word or deed or story—Be done to please the Lord; To Him be all the glory.

Aphorism: Man’s greatest goal: Bringing glory to God.

***January 17 (Tuesday), 2012** {[Psalm 139:13~16](#)} Key: I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. ([Psalm 139:14](#)) “Respect For Life” Bible In One Year: [Genesis 41~42; Matthew 12:1~23](#)

In Psalm 139, David describes God as fashioning his tiny body together in the darkness of his mother’s womb. God loved David before he ever existed.

God designed the person David was to be, and He brought that person into being according to His predetermined plan. In this psalm, David used the intriguing metaphor of a journal in which God first wrote His plan and then brought that plan into fruition through His handiwork in the womb: “Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written” (v.16).

Put another way, David was shaped by his heavenly Father’s love into a unique creation. He came from the inventive heart and hand of God. What was true of David is true of you. You are special—along with everyone else in the world.

This being true, we must be pro-life in the purest sense of the word. We are to respect and cherish all human life: the born and those still in the womb; winsome children and weary seniors; the wealthy executive and the financially destitute. All persons are unique productions of our Creator’s genius. With David, let’s exclaim: “I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made” (139:14).

Meditate: By God’s wise designing We are wonderfully made, Every part essential And in perfect balance laid. All life is created by God and bears His autograph.

Aphorism: All life is created by God and bears His autograph.

***January 18 (Wednesday), 2012** {[Leviticus 19:11~18](#)} Key: You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge . . . , but you shall love your neighbor as yourself. ([Leviticus 19:18](#)) “It Is My Business” Bible In One Year: [Genesis 43~45; Matthew 12:24~50](#)

In 1955, when the South was still highly segregated, Emmett Till, a black teenager from

Chicago, visited relatives in Mississippi. After Emmett “dared” to talk to a white woman, two white men brutally murdered him. An all-white, male jury found the two “not guilty”—after deliberating for barely an hour. The two men later confessed to the crime in a *Life* magazine article.

Following the verdict, Emmett’s mother said, “Two months ago I had a nice apartment in Chicago. I had a good job. I had a son. When something happened to Negroes in the South, I said, ‘That’s their business, not mine.’ Now I know how wrong I was. The murder of my son has shown me that what happens to any of us, anywhere in the world, had better be the business of us all.”

Making another’s concerns our own is what [Leviticus 19:18](#) calls us to do: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus quotes this verse and interprets it as not placing any limitations on loving those around us ([Matt. 22:39](#); [Luke 10:25~37](#)). Our neighbor doesn’t just mean someone close by; it’s anyone who has a need. We are to care for others as we care for ourselves.

To love our neighbor means to make the persecution, suffering, and injustice of our fellow human beings our own. It is the business of all who follow Christ.

Meditate: How can we be a good neighbor? Be respectful to all. Lend a hand. Volunteer. Join a neighborhood association. Speak up when others are treated unjustly.

Aphorism: Compassion puts love into action.

***January 19 (Thursday), 2012** { [Psalm 119:129~136](#) } Key: Direct my steps by Your Word, and let no iniquity have dominion over me. ([Psalm 119:133](#)) “A Constant Companion” Bible In One Year: [Genesis 46~48](#); [Matthew 13:1~30](#)

When my wife and I are preparing for a trip, one of the first things we do is get out the road atlas. We study it intensely to learn the best routes, determine the number of miles we’ll have to travel, pick out interesting places to visit, decide how far we can get in a day, and estimate expenses. On the journey, the atlas is our constant companion, and we consult it many times a day. We couldn’t get along without it.

For Christians, the Bible is an atlas for their spiritual journey, but it is much more. It is described as:

- sweeter than honey ([Psalm 19:10](#); [119:103](#))
- a lamp ([Psalm 119:105](#))
- rain and snow ([Isaiah 55:10,11](#))
- a fire ([Jeremiah 23:29](#))
- a hammer ([Jeremiah 23:29](#))
- water ([Ephesians 5:26](#))
- a sword ([Ephesians 6:17](#))
- solid food ([Hebrews 5:12](#))
- a mirror ([James 1:23](#))
- milk ([1 Peter 2:2](#))

Like the highway traveler, we as Christians are on a long and sometimes hazardous journey. We face many decisions and will have many needs on our pilgrimage to paradise. The Bible has been given to us to help us make those decisions and to meet those needs. It should be our constant companion—studied diligently and consulted often along the way. We can’t do without it.

Meditate: I have a companion, a dear, faithful friend, A union of blessing that never shall end; Till Jesus returns with His saints from on high We’ll travel together, my Bible and I.

Aphorism:The Bible is like a compass—it always points the believer in the right direction.

***January 20 (Friday), 2012**{[Genesis 39:1~10](#)}Key: The Lord was with Joseph. ([Genesis 39:2](#))“Redirected”Bible In One Year: [Genesis 49~50; Matthew 13:31~58](#)

At the age of 16, pianist Leon Fleisher made his formal debut at Carnegie Hall with the New York Philharmonic. He went on to win prestigious international competitions and played in the world’s finest concert halls. But at the age of 37, Fleisher was struck with dystonia, a neurological condition that crippled his right hand. After a period of despondency and withdrawal, he turned to teaching and conducting, because, as he said, he loved music more than he loved the piano.

When our dreams are shattered, how do we react? After Joseph, the favored son of Jacob, was sold as a slave by his brothers ([Gen. 37:12~36](#)), he could have given in to self-pity and self-indulgence. Instead, Joseph remained true to the Lord. Four times in Genesis 39, we read that “the Lord was with” Joseph (vv.2~3,21,23), and his actions revealed his own faithfulness to God. By his exemplary life, those he served in Egypt recognized God’s presence with him.

Do we love God more than our own dreams? Although Joseph must have grieved the loss of his past and what his life could have been, the Lord led him to a calling he had never imagined. Today, the Lord longs to lead us. Are we willing to be redirected by Him?

Meditate:My cherished plans may go astray, My hopes may fade away; But still I’ll trust my Lord to lead, For He doth know the way.

Aphorism:A man’s heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps. —[Proverbs 16:9](#)

***January 21 (Saturday), 2012**{[John 15:9~17](#)}Key: I have called you friends.([John 15:15](#))“A Mutual Friend”Bible In One Year: [Exodus 1~3; Matthew 14:1~21](#)

Imagine being a visitor in a foreign land, showing up unannounced at a gathering of people you have never met and who have never heard of you—and then being allowed to address that group just a few minutes later. That can happen only if something breaks down barriers— something like mutual friends.

It happened when I took a missions team to a church service in Discovery Bay, Jamaica. Before we left the US, my friend Dorant Brown, a Jamaican pastor, recommended a church to attend. So when we arrived at the church, and I mentioned Pastor Brown, we were not only welcomed, but I was also asked to speak briefly and our team was asked to sing.

While sharing Dorant’s name was vital, I really don’t think it was that mutual friend who got us such a warm welcome. I think it was our shared Friend and Savior Jesus who opened our Jamaican friends’ hearts to our visit.

Have you experienced a connection with someone you just met when you tell them you too know Jesus? He’s a friend who laid down His life for us ([John 15:13](#)), and He makes brothers and sisters of all who believe ([1 Peter 2:17](#)).

Jesus. Our Savior. Our mutual Friend. He joins hearts around the world under the banner of His love.

Meditate:Join hands, then, brothers of the faith, Whate’er your race may be; Who serves my Father as a son Is surely kin to me.

Aphorism:Those who are drawn to Christ are drawn to each other.

***January 22 (Sunday), 2012**{[Luke 10:29~37](#)}Key: You shall love the Lord your God . . .

and your neighbor as yourself. ([Luke 10:27](#)) “Neighborly Love” Bible In One Year: [Exodus 4~6; Matthew 14:22~36](#)

It would have been simpler just to buy a new hair dryer. But determined to save a buck, I decided to fix it myself. In order to loosen the screw that was buried deep in the handle, I took out the ultimate handyman’s helper—my pocket knife. As I put pressure on the knife to turn the screw, the blade folded back—on my finger.

I learned a lesson that day: I love myself. And I am urgent about meeting my needs. There was no thought of, “Well, I don’t really have time to stop the bleeding now. I’ll get to it later.” Also, there was a tenderness about how the need was met. I instructed my first-aid team (my wife and kids) to wash my finger gently and then to put the bandage on in a way that would avoid having the hairs on my finger pulled up when it was removed. My thoughts, words, and actions were driven by my love for myself.

To love “your neighbor as yourself” ([Luke 10:27](#)) requires the same urgent kind of love. It’s a love that notices the need of another person and won’t rest until it’s been met. It’s a gentle, tender love that thinks and acts carefully. It’s the sacrificial and compassionate love that a nameless Samaritan had for a fallen traveler. It’s the kind of love God wants to share with your neighbors through you.

Meditate: Lord, help me see the heartfelt needs Of those within my care, And grant that through my words and deeds Your love with them I’ll share.

Aphorism: You cannot touch your neighbor’s heart with anything less than your own.