

Bible study for this week 1/23/12~1/29/12

***January 23 (Monday), 2012** {[1 Kings 19:11~18](#)} Key: I alone am left; and they seek to take my life. ([1 Kings 19:10](#)) “Giving Up?” Bible In One Year: [Exodus 7~8](#); [Matthew 15:1~20](#)

Have you ever felt like giving up? Elijah did. The Lord had just used him to show the nation of Israel that the Lord is God (1 Kings 18). Yet, the threats of Queen Jezebel so alarmed him that he ran to Beersheba, 100 miles south (19:3). Then he walked another 150 miles south to Horeb, the mountain of God.

Twice God asked Elijah what he was doing there (vv.9,13). Both times he answered with identical words—“I alone am left; and they seek to take my life” (vv.10,14). He had become so preoccupied with his own fears that he had forgotten what God had done through him at Mount Carmel. Despite his great victory, Elijah plunged into the depths of discouragement. How easy it is for us to do the same.

God did not accept Elijah’s notice that he was quitting. Instead, He commissioned his tired servant to handle three major tasks (vv.15~17). And by the way, Elijah was wrong when he said he was the only faithful one left. God had 7,000 others who had not bowed to Baal (v.18).

Perhaps, like Elijah, you are despairing at the circumstances in your life. Let God speak to you (v.12). Instead of allowing you to quit, He will show you what you can do through His strength.

Meditate: Our strength and hope is in the Lord—We rest secure in His sure Word; And though we’re tempted to despair We know we’re kept within His care.

Aphorism: When you’re working for Jesus, it’s always too soon to quit.

***January 24 (Tuesday), 2012** {[Hebrews 4:12~13](#)} Key: The Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword. ([Hebrews 4:12](#)) “A Powerful Word” Bible In One Year: [Exodus 9~11](#); [Matthew 15:21~39](#)

A person who says shares: When a teenager named Poh Fang learned about Jesus’ love for her and received Him as her Savior, her parents weren’t sure about the merits of Christianity. So they sent her older sister with her to church to keep an eye on her. But something happened that they didn’t expect. The powerful Word of God penetrated the heart of the older sister, and she accepted Jesus as her Savior as well.

The psalmist said of the Word of God, “Your precepts . . . have given me life” ([Ps. 119:93](#)). That’s the testimony of Poh Fang and her sister and of all who know Christ as Savior. His Word is “powerful . . . and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” ([Heb. 4:12](#)).

God’s Word shows us our sin and its consequences: “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” ([Rom. 3:23](#)); “the wages of sin is death” (6:23). It tells us of God’s love and salvation: “God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, . . . made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)” ([Eph. 2:4~5](#)). And it gives wisdom for daily living: “Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” ([Ps. 119:105](#)).

Thank You, Lord, for Your powerful Word, which gives us life and direction for daily living.

Meditate: The Bible stands like a rock undaunted ’Mid the raging storms of time; Its pages burn with the truth eternal, And they glow with a light sublime.

Aphorism: Many books inform, but only one transforms— the Bible.

***January 25 (Wednesday), 2012** { [John 16:17~24](#) } Key: You now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you. ([John 16:22](#)) “Deadly Sins” Bible In One Year: [Exodus 12~13](#); [Matthew 16](#)

You may be familiar with the list of seven deadly sins that was formulated during the sixth century: lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, vengeance, envy, and pride. But you may not know that the original list compiled during the fourth century also included the sin of sadness. Over the years, that emotion was omitted from the inventory.

Some people are blessed with a cheerful disposition. They always seem to be happy. They wear a perpetual smile almost as if they were advertising toothpaste. But then there are others who seem to be chronically sad. They continually complain about life and its burdens. And who can deny that afflictions are discouraging?

While we acknowledge that not everybody is blessed with a bright outlook on life, we need to remember that joy is one of the gifts Jesus promised to His followers. And we need to resist any tendency to let sadness dominate our emotional lives.

Jesus promised His disciples on the night Judas betrayed Him, “Your joy no one will take from you” ([John 16:22](#)). Remember that joy is the fruit of the indwelling Holy Spirit ([Gal. 5:22](#)). Let’s ask the Lord to help us look beyond our sorrowful circumstances and encourage our hearts by the vision of joy that awaits us ([Heb. 12:2](#)).

Meditate: You alone, Lord Jesus, can true joy impart, For You know the sorrow of the human heart; You came here from glory many hearts to win And in love for sinners suffered once for sin.

Aphorism: Joy is a fruit of the Spirit that’s always in season.

***January 26 (Thursday), 2012** { [Ezekiel 12:21~28](#) } Key: Return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm. ([Joel 2:13](#)) “Delayed Consequences” Bible In One Year: [Exodus 14~15](#); [Matthew 17](#)

As a child, I learned to behave properly when adults rewarded my good behavior and punished my bad behavior. This worked pretty well because the reward or punishment generally came quickly after the behavior, making the relationship between the cause and effect unmistakable. When I became an adult, however, life got more complex, and the consequences of my actions were not always immediate. When I behaved badly without getting in trouble for it, I began to think that it didn’t matter to God what I did.

Something similar happened to the children of Israel. When they disobeyed God and didn’t suffer any bad consequences right away, they said, “The Lord has forsaken the land, and the Lord does not see!” ([Ezek. 9:9](#)), indicating their belief that God had lost interest in them and didn’t care about their bad behavior. But they were wrong. Weary of their waywardness, God finally said, “None of My words will be delayed any longer; whatever I say will be fulfilled” (12:28 niv).

When God delays discipline, it’s not due to indifference; it’s due to His very nature—He is gracious and slow to anger. Some see that as permission to sin, but God intends it to be an invitation to repent ([Rom. 2:4](#)).

Meditate: A Prayer: Lord, thank You for being slow to anger and filled with compassion. May I not presume upon Your mercy by assuming that there will be no consequences to my sin. Help me instead to confess it. Amen.

Aphorism: The only way to make things right is to admit you’ve been wrong.

***January 27 (Friday), 2012** { [Nehemiah 1:11~2:5](#) } Key: For I was the king’s cupbearer.

[\(Nehemiah 1:11\)](#)“The First English Samurai”Bible In One Year: [Exodus 16~18; Matthew 18:1~20](#)

William Adams (1564–1620) is believed to be the first Englishman to reach Japan. Taking a liking to Adams, the ruling Japanese shogun made him his interpreter and personal advisor concerning the Western powers. Eventually, Adams was presented with two swords with rank of a Samurai. This showed just how much the Japanese revered Adams. Because William Adams served his foreign king well, he was also rewarded with greater opportunity for influence.

Centuries earlier, another man in a foreign country also had great influence over his king. Nehemiah was a cupbearer to Persian King Artaxerxes ([Neh. 1:11](#)). In the royal court, the cupbearer would test the wine before it was given to the king to protect him from poisoning. But this position also meant he had the king’s ear as a trusted advisor. Nehemiah’s integrity, administrative gifts, and wisdom made him a confidant to his ruler, which paved the way for the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem.

Like Nehemiah, each of us has been given a unique sphere of influence. Raising children, church or community work, and employment all provide a platform where we can have a beneficial effect on others. Has the Lord placed someone in your life upon whom you can have an influence?

Meditate:When we live with integrity, We please our God above And influence society With truthfulness and love.

Aphorism:Even a little example can be a big influence for Christ.

***January28(Saturday),2012**{[Psalm 23](#)}Key: He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. ([Psalm 23:2](#))“Quiet Time With God”Bible In One Year: [Exodus 19~20;Matthew 18:21~35](#)

The word *connected* captures our contemporary experience of life. Many people rarely go anywhere without a cell phone, iPod, laptop, or pager. We have become accessible 24 hours a day. Some psychologists see this craving to stay connected as an addiction. Yet a growing number of people are deliberately limiting their use of technology. Being a “tech-no” is their way of preserving times of quiet, while limiting the flow of information into their lives.

Many followers of Christ find that a daily time of Bible reading and prayer is essential in their walk of faith. This “quiet time” is a disconnection from external distractions in order to connect with God. The “green pastures” and “still waters” of [Psalm 23:2](#) are more than an idyllic country scene. They speak of our communion with God whereby He restores our souls and leads us in His paths (v.3).

All of us can make time to meet with God, but do we? In Robert Foster’s booklet “7 Minutes With God,” he suggests a way to begin: Start with a brief prayer for guidance, then read the Bible for a few minutes, and close with a short time of prayer that includes adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication for others. It’s vital to take time today to connect with the Lord, who is our life.

Meditate:We need to set aside the time To read God’s Word and pray, And listen for the Spirit’s voice To guide us in His way.

Aphorism:Time spent with God is time well spent.

***January29(Sunday),2012**{[1 Corinthians 9:19~27](#)}Key: Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. ([1 Corinthians 9:24](#))“Running The Race”Bible In One Year: [Exodus 21~22;](#)

[Matthew 19](#)

Spiridon Louis isn't well known around the world, but he is in Greece. That's because of what happened in 1896 when the Olympic Games were revived in Athens.

During the competition that year, the Greeks did quite well—winning the most medals of any nation. But the event that became a source of true Greek pride was the first-ever marathon. Seventeen athletes competed in this race of 40 kilometers (24.8 miles), but it was won by Louis—a common laborer. For his efforts, Louis was honored by king and country, and he became a national hero.

The apostle Paul used running a race as a picture of the Christian life. In [1 Corinthians 9:24](#), he challenged us not just to run but to run to win, saying, “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.” Not only did Paul teach this but he lived it out. In his final epistle, he said, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” ([2 Tim. 4:7](#)). Having finished his race, Paul joyfully anticipated receiving the victory crown from the King of heaven.

Like Paul, run your earthly race to win—and to please your King.

Meditate: As we run in this race—As our best effort we bring—We are spurred on by the fact That we must win for the King.

Aphorism: The Christian's race is not a sprint—it's a marathon.