

Bible study for this week 1/30/12~2/05/12

***January 30 (Monday), 2012** {[Luke 23:39~43](#)} Key: Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.” ([Luke 23:43](#)) “Behind The Parted Curtain” Bible In One Year: [Exodus 23~24; Matthew 20:1~16](#)

Pastor and author Erwin Lutzer wrote: “One minute after you slip behind the parted curtain, you will either be enjoying a personal welcome from Christ or catching your first glimpse of gloom as you have never known it. Either way, your future will be irrevocably fixed and eternally unchangeable.”

Luke recorded a short yet powerful narrative that pictures two men about to go behind that curtain of death. When Jesus was being crucified, two thieves hung alongside Him. According to Mark, both men hurled insults at Jesus (15:32).

One of the thieves, however, had a change of heart as he realized Jesus’ innocence, his own sin, and his destiny. He rebuked the other thief and asked Jesus to remember him when He came into His kingdom. These words were a sign of repentance and simple faith. Jesus responded, “I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise” ([Luke 23:43](#)). Salvation for the man was immediate. He knew that day where he would spend eternity.

Realizing that we are sinners and placing our trust in Jesus’ death and resurrection assures us that we can immediately know where we will spend our eternal tomorrows when we slip behind the parted curtain.

Meditate: Oh, why not turn while yet you may; Too late, it soon will be—A glorious life you may possess Throughout eternity.

Aphorism: To prepare for tomorrow, trust Jesus today.

***January 31 (Tuesday), 2012** {[Ephesians 5:8~14](#)} Key: You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light. ([Ephesians 5:8](#)) “Be The Light!” Bible In One Year: [Exodus 25~26; Matthew 20:17~34](#)

A friend of mine has the opportunity each winter to attend the Super Bowl as a journalist. His job is to garner interviews with Christian athletes and National Football League personnel for a faith-based radio program.

When he first started covering the big game a few years ago, he grew disillusioned with the self-serving, pleasure-seeking atmosphere during Super Bowl week. “I found it to be a very dark place,” he says.

One day he told a former NFL player, a Christian, how he was feeling. The athlete looked at my friend and said, “Brother, you are being light in this dark place.” That comment reminded my friend why he was there, and it helped renew his excitement for serving God in a place where the light of the gospel is needed. It spurred him to shine his light.

Perhaps you work in a setting where God is not acknowledged, faith is mocked, and godless living is applauded. Maybe you feel that you are going into “a very dark place.”

Why not be a light ([Eph. 5:8](#))—through your smiles, kind words and deeds, and diligent work. Ask God to bring opportunities to share the good news of Jesus Christ. You may be the only light a co-worker sees today.

Meditate: God put us in this darkened world To shine as sons of light; So, help us, Lord, to spread Your Word And keep our witness bright.

Aphorism: Our witness for Christ is a light in a dark world.

***February 01 (Wednesday), 2012** {[Romans 15:4-13](#)} Key: Whatever things were written before were written . . . that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might

have hope.([Romans 15:4](#))“**The Written Word**”Bible In One Year: [Exodus 27~28; Matthew 21:1~22](#)

Last January, ESPN television ran a compelling feature about Indianapolis Colts quarterback Peyton Manning, who had just been named the NFL’s Most Valuable Player. But the feature was not about football. Instead, it explained that for several years, when certain competitors Manning admired were retiring from the NFL, he took time to handwrite a note to them, congratulating them on their careers and their character.

Each recipient who was interviewed expressed deep appreciation that one of the greatest players of all time would do that. It was a great reminder of the power of the written word.

While a written note from a respected athlete such as Peyton Manning has much value, no human’s words can compare with the written Word we have from God in Scripture. Paul wrote, “Whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope” ([Rom. 15:4](#)). In the life-changing wisdom of the Bible, we have a personal message that tells us what God desires for us to be and what He desires to be for us. He has given us His written Word so we “might have hope” as we face the issues of life. Out of gratitude, let’s read God’s written message—and watch it change our lives.

Meditate: Cling to the Bible; this jewel and treasure Brings life eternal and saves fallen man; Surely its value no mortal can measure; Seek for its blessing, O soul, while you can.

Aphorism: God speaks through His Word to those who listen with their heart.

***February02(Thursday),2012**{[Luke 7:37~49](#)}Key: This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner.([Luke 7:39](#))“Time For A Change”Bible In One Year: [Exodus 29~30; Matthew 21:23~46](#)

A friend once told me, “In my lifetime I’ve seen a lot of things change, and I’ve been against them all!” Perhaps he overstated the point, but many of us would agree that we don’t like change—especially if it involves altering our habits and attitudes.

That’s one reason Jesus was so unpopular among the Pharisees. He challenged their long-established system of good works and self-righteous living. Consider the incident when the town “sinner” entered the home of the town “saint” in Luke 7. Simon the Pharisee wasn’t impressed with the woman’s lavish display of affection for Jesus. Reading Simon’s self-righteous thoughts, Jesus immediately challenged his flawed perception of his own goodness by telling the story of two debtors—one who owed much to his master and one who owed less. “Which of them will love him more?” Jesus asked (v.42). Obviously, the one who had been forgiven more. Speaking to Simon’s I-feel-pretty-good-about-myself attitude, Jesus said, “to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little” (v.47).

The challenge is clear. Lulled into thinking how good we are, our love for Jesus wanes because we have forgotten that we too are among the ones “forgiven much.” And when that happens, ready or not, it’s time for a change!

Meditate: Forgive us, Lord, for failures past, Then help us start anew With strength and courage to obey And closely follow You.

Aphorism: When God starts changing things, He usually begins with changing us.

***February03(Friday),2012**{[James 1:21~25](#)}Key: Be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.([James 1:22](#))“What Will I Do?”Bible In One Year: [Exodus](#)

[31-33; Matthew 22:1-22](#)

A man who has been my mentor and friend for many years often says that his goal in studying the Bible is always personal application. I appreciate his emphasis on putting learning into practice, because it's too easy for those of us who study, discuss, teach, and write about the Bible to take a merely intellectual approach to the Word.

Oswald Chambers said: "There is a danger with the children of God of getting too familiar with sublime things. We talk so much about these wonderful realities, and forget that we have to exhibit them in our lives. It is perilously possible to mistake the exposition of the truth for the truth; to run away with the idea that because we are able to expound these things, we are living them too."

James reminds us that the person "who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does" (1:25). The key issue is not what is preached or written, but what is *done*.

When I study God's Word, my first question should not be, "What am I going to say about this?" but "What am I going to do about this?"

Meditate: We take delight to teach God's Word, We say, "Amen, it's true!" But it's of little use to us Unless His will we do.

Aphorism: One step forward in obedience is worth years of study about it. ***February04(Saturday),2012{Colossians 3:1~11}**Key: Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.([Colossians 3:2](#))"A Question Of Values"Bible In One Year: [Exodus 34~35; Matthew 22:23~46](#)

On a trip through Chicago, I saw a poster advertising a business management seminar. The poster's message was intriguing: The Value of a Leader Is Directly Proportional to That Leader's Values. The accuracy of that statement struck me. What we value shapes our character—and will ultimately define how we lead, or whether we can lead at all. This does not apply only to leaders, however.

For the follower of Christ, values are even more significant. When Paul wrote to the believers at Colosse, he said, "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth" ([Col. 3:2](#)). His point is that only as we allow our values to be motivated and shaped by the eternal (not the temporal) will we be effective ambassadors of Christ in the world. It is in the understanding that we are pilgrims in this world, not tourists, that we can keep a clear perspective and an undistracted heart—and can more effectively serve the Savior.

It has been said that we live in a world that knows the cost of everything but the value of nothing. In this world of the "here and now," however, followers of Christ are called to build our values around what lasts forever. To say it another way: The Effectiveness of a Believer Is Directly Proportional to That Believer's Values.

Meditate: O Lord, You see what's in the heart—There's nothing hid from You, So help us live the kind of life That's honest, good, and true.

Aphorism: Hold tightly to what is eternal, but loosely to what is temporal.

***February05(Sunday),2012{Ephesians 4:11~16}**Key: He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water.([Psalm 1:3](#))"Like A Tree"Bible In One Year: [Exodus 36~38; Matthew 23:1~22](#)

In the quietness of my final years I plan to watch a tree grow—a birch tree I planted as a tiny sapling over 10 years ago. It stands now in mature splendor, just outside our picture window—beautiful in every season of the year.

So it is with our spiritual endeavors: We may have planted, watered, and fussed over our “saplings” (those we’ve mentored) for a time, but only God can make a “tree.”

Occasionally I hear from those I ministered to years ago, and discover to my delight that they have grown to maturity and have been greatly used of God—with no help from me. It’s a gentle reminder that I plant and water for a while, and help others “grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ” ([Eph. 4:15](#)). But only God “gives the increase” ([1 Cor. 3:6~7](#)).

German theologian Helmut Thielicke writes, “The man who doesn’t know how to let go, who is a stranger to quiet, confident joy in Him who carries out His purposes without us (or also through us or in spite of us), in Him who makes the trees grow . . . that man will become nothing but a miserable creature in his old age.”

So, at my age, I may yet tend a sapling or two, but mostly I will let go and watch them grow.

Meditate: A Prayer: Lord, I want to be used by You in others’ lives. Teach me from Your Word so that I can help others follow You. And enable me to let go and trust You to work in them. Amen.

Aphorism: Those who follow Christ can help others follow Him too.