

Bible study for this week 2/27/12~3/04/12

***February 27 (Monday), 2012** {[Matthew 20:20~28](#)} Key: Whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. ([Matthew 20:26](#)) “Strength In Weakness” Bible In One Year: [Numbers 17~19](#); [Mark 6:30~56](#)

No one wants to be weak, so we find ways to appear strong. Some of us use the force of our emotions to manipulate people. Others use the force of personality to control people, and some use intellect to intimidate. Although these create an illusion of strength, they are signs of weakness.

When we are truly strong, we have the courage to admit our limitations and to acknowledge our dependence on God. As a result, true strength often looks a lot like weakness. When the apostle Paul prayed that an affliction would be taken from him, God answered, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness” ([2 Cor. 12:9](#)). Paul responded with these troubling words: “When I am weak, then I am strong” (v.10).

Toward the end of Jesus’ earthly ministry, some of His disciples were striving for positions of prominence. Jesus used their argument as an opportunity to teach them that in His kingdom things are different: greatness comes when we willingly assume positions of weakness ([Matt. 20:26](#)).

This is a hard truth. I prefer the illusion of strength to the reality of weakness. But God wants us to realize that true strength comes when we stop trying to control people and start serving them instead.

Meditate: The life that we live for God’s glory, Let’s live it in biblical light: God’s strength is made perfect in weakness; He alone controls power and might.

Aphorism: God’s greatest power can be displayed in our biggest weakness.

***February 28 (Tuesday), 2012** {[Mark 7:1~13](#)} Key: If anyone does not provide for his own, . . . [he] is worse than an unbeliever. ([1 Timothy 5:8](#)) “The Country Of Old Age” Bible In One Year: [Numbers 20~22](#); [Mark 7:1~13](#)

In the book *Another Country*, author Mary Pipher met with people in their seventies, eighties, and nineties who were confronting many different life situations.

“I wanted . . . to understand the country of old age,” Pipher writes. “We are not organized in a way that makes aging easy.” The root problem, she observed, is that young and old have become segregated, to the detriment of both groups.

This social trend is not necessarily intentional. But many people do ignore and shirk their responsibilities for the elderly. In Jesus’ day, the Pharisees found creative ways to avoid their family duties. In [Mark 7:9~13](#), Jesus rebuked their common practice of dedicating their material possessions to God (declaring them as *Corban*) rather than using their assets to provide for their parents. Their tradition had violated the commandment to honor their father and their mother.

Our children, work, and church activities can pull us in many directions. But that doesn’t excuse us from honoring our aging parents by making provision for their needs, as much as we are able ([1 Tim. 5:8](#)). When the time comes for us to enter the country of old age, let’s hope we’ve set the right example for our own children to follow.

Meditate: Providing for our parents’ needs With loving words and selfless deeds Is what the Lord expects of those Who try to follow where He leads.

Aphorism: Honoring our parents is learned by example.

***February 29 (Wednesday), 2012** { [Proverbs 27:6~17](#) } Key: The sweetness of a man's friend gives delight by hearty counsel. (Proverbs 27:9) "**We Need One Another**" Bible In One Year: [Genesis 13~15; Matthew 5:1~26](#)

Back in 1948, four friends huddled together in Modesto, California, to pray and plan. They wanted their evangelistic ministry to be God-honoring and above reproach, so they agreed to hold one another accountable to principles of integrity that would guide their organization and their personal lives. They called their agreement the "Modesto Manifesto." You may recognize their names: Billy Graham, Grady Wilson, George Beverly Shea, and Cliff Barrows.

Only God knows the full spiritual impact of their worldwide evangelistic outreach. These men attribute the effectiveness of their ministry to the importance of remaining faithful to God and to the "manifesto" they made years ago. Their friendship and commitment to encourage one another is what made the difference in their lives and ministry.

Most of the work of God is accomplished through people who are honest with one another, committed to serve one another, and willing to receive wise counsel from one another (Prov. 27:6,17). When we build trust, we will work together smoothly and see God at work in and through us.

Yes, to be men and women of integrity and productive members of our churches, we need one another.

Meditate: *We share a common bond of love That comes from God our Father, And we're dependent on the strength We draw from one another.*

Aphorism: We need one another to do what God wants us to do.

***Murch 01 (Thursday), 2012** { [Revelation 5:8~14](#) } Key: Worthy is the Lamb who was slain! ([Revelation 5:12](#)) "The Fairest" Bible In One Year: [Numbers 23~25; Mark 7:14~37](#)

A friend recalls: When I first became a Christian and started attending church at age 19, I immediately fell in love with singing the great hymns of the faith. My heart overflowed with joy and thanksgiving as we sang of God's love for us in Christ. Soon one of my favorite hymns (from the late 1600s) became "Fairest Lord Jesus!" I love the simplicity of the melody and the awesomeness of the One exalted in these words:

Fair is the sunshine, fairer still the moonlight, and all the twinkling starry host: Jesus shines brighter, Jesus shines purer than all the angels heaven can boast. Beautiful Savior! Lord of the nations! Son of God and Son of Man! Glory and honor, praise, adoration now and forevermore be Thine!

God's Son, whom we sing about in this song, came to this earth, lived a perfect life, and gave Himself for us on the cross ([Luke 23:33](#)). He arose from the grave ([Luke 24:6](#)) and is now seated at God's right hand ([Heb. 1:3](#)). One day we'll join in worship with thousands upon thousands and say: "Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!" ([Rev. 5:13](#)).

Meditate: Maybe we'll sing "Fairest Lord Jesus!" too. Until then, let's allow Jesus to be "the fairest" above all in our personal lives by seeking wisdom from His Word and following in His ways.

Aphorism: We can never praise Jesus too much.

***Murch 02 (Friday), 2012** { [Luke 4:16~21](#) } Key: [The Lord] heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. ([Psalm 147:3](#)) "God Is Here" Bible In One Year: [Numbers 26~27; Mark 8:1~21](#)

Leslie and her two daughters were about to be evicted from their home. Although Leslie believed that God could help, so far He hadn't given a clue as to how. She wondered, *Where is God?* As she drove to the courthouse, she prayed for God's intervention. Then she heard a song on the radio proclaiming, "God is here! Let the brokenhearted rejoice." Could this be the assurance from God that she was longing to hear?

Inside the courtroom, Leslie stood before the judge, heard his decision, and signed the legal documents, but still God had not given her an answer.

As Leslie was walking to her car, a truck pulled up beside her. "Ma'am," said the driver, "I heard your testimony inside the courtroom, and I believe God wants me to help you." And he did. Gary helped Leslie get in contact with a woman from a local church who was able to work with the parties involved to reverse the process so that she and her girls could stay in their home.

When people ask, "Where is God?" the answer is, "Right here." One way God is at work is through Christians like Gary who are continuing the work Jesus started—healing the brokenhearted and binding up their wounds ([Ps. 147:3](#)).

Meditate: God is here; He stands beside you. God is here; He wants to guide you. God is here and He will help you, So do not fear—Your God is near.

Aphorism: When we love God, we will serve people.

***Murch03(Saturday),2012**{[Amos 5:21~27](#)}Key:Let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream.[\(Amos 5:24\)](#)"Mighty Stream"Bible In One Year: [Numbers 28~30; Mark 8:22~38](#)

A friend recalls:When I was a young teenager, my dad, uncles, cousins, and I went trout fishing at the head waters of the Sacramento River in California. The source of the river is melted snow, so the water was swift, clear, cold, and refreshing. My cousins and I couldn't resist stepping into the cool current while angling for rainbow trout.

On the way home, we stopped for a dip in a pond that was far different. The pond water was warm, and it smelled stagnant. It contrasted greatly with that swiftly flowing, invigorating stream.

The prophet Amos used the metaphor of a stream to illustrate the transforming power of righteousness. Appalled at Israel's dead religious ritual and their exploitation of the poor ([Amos 2:6~8; 5:21~27](#)), he called for justice and righteousness to prevail. He saw that God's people were stuck in the stagnant pond of injustice toward others when what they needed was a life marked by "righteousness like a mighty stream."

Likewise, God desires for us to allow justice to "run down like water" from our lives. One way that can happen is to strive for just laws and to champion loving care for the poor. May we seek to be a part of God's mighty stream of His righteousness until Christ returns.

Meditate: Justice is the clarion call for Christians—We cannot step aside from what God said; He has told us how to treat our neighbor, And we must follow on the path He's led.

Aphorism: Righteousness follows when truth springs into action.

***Murch04(Sunday),2012**{[Ecclesiastes 2:1~11](#)}Key:All was vanity and grasping for the wind. There was no profit under the sun.[\(Ecclesiastes 2:11\)](#)"What Brings Happiness?"Bible In One Year: [Numbers 31~33; Mark 9:1~29](#)

After studying the effect of the post-World War II economic boom in Japan, Richard Easterlin concluded that monetary growth does not always bring more satisfaction. More recently, economists Betsey Stevenson and Justin Wolfers conducted surveys in more

than 100 nations and concluded that life satisfaction is highest in the richest countries.

So who's right? Let's check with the writer of Ecclesiastes. He should know! He was a truly rich man (2:8). He had the means to try everything in this world—and he did! He gave himself to pleasure (vv.1~3), grand projects (vv.4~8), entertainment (v.8), and hard work (vv.10~11). But he concluded that it was all “vanity and grasping for the wind. There was no profit under the sun” (v.11).

Lasting satisfaction doesn't come from possessing tangible things like savings accounts and material goods. Recent events have shown that these things can suddenly lose value. To find true happiness, we have to find it in Someone who is not from “under the sun.” And that is our Savior, Jesus.

Hymnwriter Floyd Hawkins wrote: “I've discovered the way of gladness, I've discovered the way of joy, I've discovered relief from sadness. . . . When I found Jesus, my Lord.” Only He can give joy that is full ([John 15:11](#)).

Meditate: Take the world, but give me Jesus, All its joys are but a name; But His love abideth ever, Through eternal years the same.

Aphorism: To know happiness, get to know Jesus.