

Bible study for this week 3/19/12~3/25/12

***Murch19(Monday),2012**{[Proverbs 31:21~31](#)}Key: Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised. ([Proverbs 31:30](#))
“Authentic Beauty”Bible In One Year: [Joshua 1~3; Mark 16](#)

I often take a moment as I wait at our grocery store checkout stand to scan the covers of the magazines displayed there. It seems that if they aren't about sex and money, they're about diet, fitness, health, and outward beauty. There's nothing there for the soul.

The problem is that people read the wrong magazines—those that are full of lies that fixate on beauty of face and form as though that's all there is. This can lead to comparison and terrible despair.

Some years ago, a friend of mine told of a conversation he had with a lovely, self-assured teenager. “You're very self-confident,” he observed. “Can you tell me why?” “Yes,” the young woman answered. “It's because I'm so pretty.” “Oh, I'm sorry,” he said with extraordinary wisdom. “Why?” she asked in surprise. “Because,” he replied, “you may not always be pretty.”

“Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing” is the wisdom we read in Proverbs 31. Physical beauty all too quickly fades away; all one's efforts to keep it are doomed to fail. But there is an inner beauty—authentic beauty that will endure forever—in the one “who fears the Lord” (v.30).

Meditate: Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me—All His wonderful passion and purity!
O Thou Spirit divine, all my nature refine, Till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me.

Aphorism: Righteousness in the heart produces beauty in the character.

***Murch20(Tuesday),2012**{[Genesis 2:18~25](#)}Key: A man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. ([Genesis 2:24](#))
“Marriage God's Way”Bible In One Year: [Joshua 4~6; Luke 1:1~20](#)

The movie *The Princess Bride* has a wedding scene in which the marrying minister says, “Marriage . . . is what brings us together today.”

Sometimes it is good to remind ourselves of the grand plan for marriage spelled out in Scripture.

Marriage creates one new family out of two: Adam said, “ ‘This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh’ Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife” ([Gen. 2:23~24](#)).

It provides a pure outlet for a divinely designed desire: “Because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband” ([1 Cor. 7:2](#)).

It forms a mutually helpful team: “The heart of her husband safely trusts her She does him good and not evil all the days of her life” ([Prov. 31:11~12](#)).

Marriage God's way brings a man and a woman together to honor Him and help society. Celebrate marriage for the ways it brings us together in God's name.

Meditate: If men and women yield to God And of His love partake, The marriage bond that joins two hearts No power on earth can break.

Aphorism: God created husband and wife to complement each other.

***Murch21(Wednesday),2012**{[Acts 15:1~11,19~21](#)}Key: As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby.([1 Peter 2:2](#))“Pure Milk”Bible In One Year: [Joshua 7~9; Luke 1:21~38](#)

Recently it was discovered that some milk producers in China had been diluting cow's

milk and adding the industrial chemical Melamine. This chemical was added because it artificially enhanced protein readings. Several infants died and others became seriously ill. Such adulteration is not new. Other countries have been adding Melamine to animal feed for at least 40 years for the same purpose, resulting in the death of animals.

Another kind of adulteration is when people add to God's Word, "the pure milk of the Word" as Peter described it ([1 Peter 2:2](#)). The word pure means "unadulterated" or "uncontaminated." The early church had to deal with those who considered circumcision necessary for salvation ([Acts 15:1](#)). That idea was rejected because it was not in accordance with the Word of God, which says that salvation is by grace alone. Peter encouraged his brethren in the Lord: "Why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples? . . . We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved" ([Acts 15:10~11](#)).

Examine carefully any teaching that asks you to do anything more than what is in God's Word. Otherwise it can be deadly to your spiritual well-being.

Meditate: The Lord has given man His Word, His will He has made known; Let man not try to change that Word With words that are his own.

Aphorism: God's Word needs no additions or subtractions.

***Murch22(Thursday),2012**{[Colossians 1:3~12](#)}Key: [We] do not cease to pray for you. ([Colossians 1:9](#))"Texting God"Bible In One Year: [Joshua 10~12; Luke 1:39~56](#)

An article in *The Washington Post* told about a 15-year-old girl who sent and received 6,473 cell phone text messages in a single month. She says about her constant communication with friends, "I would die without it." And she is not alone. Researchers say that US teens with cell phones average more than 2,200 text messages a month.

To me, this ongoing digital conversation offers a remarkable illustration of what prayer could and should be like for every follower of Christ. Paul seemed to be constantly in an attitude of prayer for others: "[We] do not cease to pray for you" ([Col. 1:9](#)). "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" ([Eph. 6:18](#)). "Pray without ceasing" ([1 Thess. 5:17](#)). But how can we possibly do that?

Missionary Frank Laubach described his habit of "shooting" prayers at people as he encountered them during the course of each day. In a sense, he was "texting" God on their behalf, staying in constant communication with the Father. Laubach believed that prayer is the mightiest force in the world, and said: "My part is to live in this hour in continuous inner conversation with God and in perfect responsiveness to His will."

Pray without ceasing. Perhaps what Paul urged us to do *can* be done.

Meditate: Give me a spirit of prayer, dear Lord, That I may commune with Thee As I travel along life's rugged road, In Thy company always to be.

Aphorism: Prayer should become as natural as breathing.

***Murch23(Friday),2012**{[2 Corinthians 2:14~17](#)}Key: Through us [God] diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. ([2 Corinthians 2:14](#))"Signature Scent" Bible In One Year: [Joshua 13~15; Luke 1:57~80](#)

You can't see it, hear it, or touch it, but scent is powerful. The smell of things like crayons, petunias, and colognes evoke memories that transport me to the past and bring to mind people and places I might not otherwise recall.

Some celebrities have fragrances named after them. Fans can identify with an actress or singer by dabbing on the scent bearing her name. Along those lines, *Ladies Home Journal* published a quiz to help readers determine the perfect fragrance for them. The idea is that

every woman, to be memorable, should have a specific scent associated with her.

The idea of a signature scent is not new. God introduced it as part of worship. In the tabernacle, a certain scent was to be associated with the Lord ([Ex. 30:34~35](#)). The people were forbidden to use this fragrance for anything but worship (vv.37~38).

This idea continues under the new covenant, but with a stunning difference. Instead of using incense to make people think of Him, God uses Christians as His “signature scent” to the world ([2 Cor. 2:14~15](#)). The fact that God identifies Himself with us in such a powerful way is a truly humbling thought, and causes me to ask, “What do people think about God as a result of being around me?”

Meditate: When we’ve been alone with Jesus, There’s a difference others know; And to them it’s like a fragrance That we leave wherever we go.

Aphorism: A life lived for God has a pleasing aroma.

***Murch24(Saturday),2012{[Job 1:13~22](#)}Key:** When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold. ([Job 23:10](#))“Worst Possible Scenario!”Bible In One Year: [Joshua 16~18](#); [Luke 2:1~24](#)

When I used to teach at a Bible college in a large city, I sometimes graded papers at a food court while waiting for a commuter train. One day, I accidentally bumped my large cup of coffee. Its entire contents emptied into my open briefcase.

In most cities, there is a quiet reserve on the part of commuters. However, the coffee splash was so dramatic that it could not be ignored. A man sitting nearby said aloud, “Worst possible scenario!”

That comment was obviously an overstatement. But each of us dreads the thought of something in particular: financial loss, the death of a child or spouse, cancer, or another loss or hardship.

The book of Job is a case study in worst possible scenarios. Yet Job wisely assessed God’s role in trying circumstances of loss and poor health: “He knows the way that I take; when He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold” ([Job 23:10](#)). From this wise statement we can learn two valuable lessons: One is that what we dread most can be used to test our character and make us stronger. The other is that God will provide the strength and comfort to see us through.

Cling to God. He has promised to work on our behalf, even in the worst possible scenario.

Meditate: God often sends me joy through pain, Through bitter loss, divinest gain; Yet through it all—dark days or bright—I know my Father leads aright.

Aphorism: The living God can take the fear out of living.

***Murch25(Sunday),2012{[Revelation 21:1~4](#)}Key:** God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. ([Revelation 21:4](#))“Far Better”Bible In One Year: [Joshua 19~21](#); [Luke 2:25~52](#)

A friend recalls: Having suffered greatly—first from cancer, and then from the grueling medical regimen—pastor Dan Cummings was tired. After 2 weeks of treatment in Texas, he was looking forward to going back home to Michigan. In a post on his blog, he wrote: “Today is far better . . . amazing what some hydration will do. . . . Will fly home on the weekend to continue treatment at home.”

Dan did return to Michigan, but several days later, his journey on earth ended. He went home to be with his God—whom he loved with every bit of his weakened body but mighty spirit.

When I viewed his blog a few days later, his words “Today is far better” jumped out at me. I smiled through my tears in the knowledge that Dan was now experiencing a life that is truly “far better” ([Phil. 1:23](#)).

Someday we who claim the name of Jesus will also go to that place where there is “no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying.” It’s a place where there is no more pain and where a loving Father promises to “wipe away every tear from [our] eyes” ([Rev. 21:4](#)).

The life we have here isn’t all there is. There is a far, far better place that Jesus is preparing for those who love Him ([John 14:2~3](#)).

Meditate: When our life on earth has ended We will feel God’s warm embrace; There will be no pain or sorrow In that far, far better place.

Aphorism: **Heaven—no pain, no night, no death, no tears.**