

## **Bible study for this week** 5/14/12~5/20/12

\***May 14 (Monday), 2012** {[John 11:1~11](#)} Key: When [Jesus] heard that [Lazarus] was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was. ([John 11:6](#)) “**Silence And Trust**” Bible In One Year: [2 Kings 19~21; John 4:1~30](#)

In one of Joe Morgenstern’s weekly *Wall Street Journal* columns about movies, he considered the impact of the great film stars in close-up scenes where they said nothing at all. “Movie stars,” he wrote, “can do as little as they do at crucial moments because, having already earned our respect, they can assume that we’re paying attention.” This quality of powerful silence that we admire in actors and actresses, however, can be frustrating or disappointing in our relationship with God when He is silent.

When Lazarus, a close friend of Jesus, became seriously ill, his sisters Mary and Martha sent word to Jesus. But “when [Jesus] heard that [Lazarus] was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was” ([John 11:6](#)).

Commenting on this passage, Oswald Chambers said: “Has God trusted you with a silence—a silence that is big with meaning? . . . Think of those days of absolute silence in the home at Bethany! Is there anything analogous to those days in your life? . . . His silence is the sign that He is bringing you into a marvellous understanding of Himself. . . . If God has given you a silence, praise Him, He is bringing you into the great run of His purposes.” We can trust our loving Lord, even when He is silent.

*Meditate:* God is waiting in the silence For a heart that He can fill; He must find it cleansed and empty, With a spirit calm and still.

*Aphorism:* True trust in God stays strong even when He is silent.

\***May 15 (Tuesday), 2012** {[Psalm 119:9~16](#)} Key: Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly. ([Colossians 3:16](#)) “**Charlie’s List**” Bible In One Year: [2 Kings 22~23; John 4:31~54](#)

When Charles Hayward died 2009 May at the age of 87, he left a legacy for his children and grandchildren. He and his wife Virginia had faithfully served as missionaries for many years both in India and South Africa. But at age 73, he began to select and memorize portions of Scripture so he would “finish well” with his mind full of God’s truth.

He called his project, “The Whole Bible Memorization Plan.” His children call it, “Charlie’s List.” Charles chose a theme verse ([Col. 3:16](#)), at least one verse from each Old Testament book, at least one from each New Testament narrative book, and a verse or verses from each chapter of the New Testament Epistles. He began with [Genesis 15:6](#), “He believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness” and ended with [Revelation 22:17](#), “Let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.”

All in all, Charles committed 239 verses to memory. He reminds me of the psalmist who wrote: “Your Word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You” (119:11). Like Charles, the psalmist meditated and delighted in God’s Word (vv.15~16). What better goal could any of us have than to fill our minds with God’s truth.

*Meditate:* If you are faithful in reading God’s Word, You can be sure that you’re growing thereby; And if you’re hiding His Word in your heart, You’ll be rejoicing to meet Him on high.

*Aphorism:* Memorizing God’s Word is like planting seeds that bear the fruit of a righteous life.

**\*May16(Wednesday),2012**{[Acts 1:1~11](#)}Key: While they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.[\(Acts 1:9\)](#)“**The Ascension**”Bible In One Year: [2 Kings 24~25; John 5:1~24](#)

When the husband of my longtime friend and publishing colleague collapsed and later died, there was no doubt that life had slipped away from him. There were witnesses. The same was true when Jesus died. But three days later, Jesus was raised from the dead! We have no doubt that this is true because there were witnesses who later saw Him alive.

When we gathered for Dave’s memorial service, we read familiar passages of Scripture that affirm our hope that he is now enjoying new life in heaven. But we claimed these promises by faith because none of us witnessed Dave go to heaven. There was, however, a witness who saw Jesus in heaven. Not long after witnesses saw Jesus ascend ([Acts 1:9](#)), Stephen saw the heavens open “and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!” (7:56). One of the reasons we know that Jesus spoke the truth about going to prepare a place for us ([John 14:2](#)) is that He has been seen alive in heaven.

When a loved one goes ahead of us to heaven, we feel as if we’re being pulled in the opposite direction—down into an abyss of sadness. Yet, because God kept His promise to raise Christ and take Him to heaven, we can trust Him to do the same for all who love and follow Him.

*Meditate:*The Lord has promised to prepare A place in heaven above—A home where we will always be With Him and those we love.

*Aphorism:*The promise of heaven is our eternal hope.

**\*May17(Thursday),2012**{[Romans 8:22~30](#)}Key: We are [God’s] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus.[\(Ephesians 2:10\)](#)“**God’s Origami**”Bible In One Year: [1 Chronicles 1~3; John 5:25~47](#)

Not long ago, I attended a class in origami, where I learned that the term comes from two Japanese words that mean “folding paper.” In this process, a piece of paper is transformed into a bird or other unique shape by a series of geometric folds and creases.

Our facilitator was Hitoshiro Akehi, a Japanese brother in Christ. As we folded our paper into different shapes, Mr. Akehi shared some of his life experiences. The youngest of 11 children, he was raised by his mother after his father died during World War II. Through many twists and turns, his family came into contact with missionaries. As a result, many of his family members became Christians.

As I refashioned a simple piece of paper into a beautiful new form, I thought of how God shapes us. First, He uses circumstances to bring us to our knees and to Him. Then, by grace He continues to use life’s twists and turns to reshape us into more Christlike persons, “conformed to the image of His Son” ([Rom. 8:29](#)).

Has your life taken an unexpected turn? Remember, in the hands of our Creator and Redeemer, we are “[God’s] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus” ([Eph. 2:10](#)). We are His unfinished works of art. God can use the twists and turns in our lives to make us more like His Son.

*Meditate:*Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Thou art the Potter, I am the clay; Mold me and make me after Thy will, While I am waiting, yielded and still.

*Aphorism:*Christians are God’s works in progress.

**\*May18(Friday),2012**{[1 Samuel 17:33~50](#)}Key: The Lord, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.[\(1 Samuel 17:37\)](#)“**Triumphing Over Giants**”Bible In One Year: [1 Chronicles](#)

#### [4~6; John 6:1~21](#)

In 1935, the debate team of Wiley College, a small and unranked black school in Texas, unexpectedly defeated the all-white championship team from the University of Southern California. This was a classic case of the unknown triumphing over a national giant.

When ancient Israel was in peril at the hands of the Philistines, there was a boy named David who actually triumphed over a giant (1 Sam. 17). The armies were drawn up on opposite sides of the Valley of Elah. They were probably afraid of one another and decided that the outcome of the battle should be determined by a battle of champions. The Philistines offered Goliath, a giant (about 9'9"), but Israel could not find anyone who was worthy or brave enough to fight. David heard of the dilemma and appealed to Saul to let him fight Goliath (vv.32~37). Saul was reluctant, but he agreed. David, armed with five smooth stones (v.40) and unswerving faith in the Almighty God (v.45), triumphed over the Philistines' national champion.

We all face giants in our lives—worry, doubt, fear, sin, and guilt. But with limited and unlikely resources and unswerving confidence in our all-powerful God, we too can triumph over them.

*Meditate:* Come, Lord, and give me courage—Thy conquering Spirit give; Make me an overcomer In power within me live.

*Aphorism:* God gives us courage to challenge our giants.

\***May 19 (Saturday), 2012** { [Judges 2:6~12](#) } Key: Another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel. ([Judges 2:10](#)) "**Secondhand Faith**" Bible In One Year: [1 Chronicles 7~9; John 6:22~44](#)

A friend recalls: When I was growing up in Singapore, I remember that some of my school friends were kicked out of their homes by their non-Christian parents for daring to believe in Jesus Christ. They suffered for their beliefs and emerged with stronger convictions. By contrast, I was born and raised in a Christian family. Though I didn't suffer persecution, I too had to make my convictions my own.

The Israelites who first entered the Promised Land with Joshua saw the mighty acts of God and believed ([Judg. 2:7](#)). But sadly, the very next generation "did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel" (v.10). So it was not long before they turned aside to worship other gods (v.12). They didn't make their parents' faith their own.

No generation can live off the faith of the previous generation. Every generation needs a firsthand faith. When faced with trouble of any kind, the faith that is not personalized is likely to drift and falter.

Those who are second, third, or even fourth generation Christians have a wonderful legacy, to be sure. However, there's no secondhand faith! Find out what God says in His Word and personalize it so that yours is a fresh, firsthand faith ([Josh. 1:8](#)).

*Meditate:* O for a faith that will not shrink Though pressed by many a foe, That will not tremble on the brink Of any earthly woe!

*Aphorism:* If your faith is not personalized, it's not faith.

\***May 20 (Sunday), 2012** { [Genesis 4:1~7](#) } Key: If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. ([Genesis 4:7](#)) "**A Worthy Offering**" Bible In One Year: [1 Chronicles 10~12; John 6:45~71](#)

I was delighted when a mutual friend gave my neighbor a Bible. But my neighbor told me she stopped reading it because she couldn't understand why God would be so unfair as to reject Cain's offering. "After all," she said, "as a farmer, he simply brought to God

what he had. Did God expect him to buy a different kind of sacrifice?” Sadly, she had missed the point.

It wasn't that God didn't like vegetables. Rather, He knew that Cain's offering was masking an unrighteous attitude. Cain wasn't fully committed to God, as expressed by the fact that he wasn't living according to His ways.

It's easy to worship God on the outside while stubbornly keeping territory from Him on the inside. Jude writes about outwardly religious people who use religious activities to cover the reality of their sinful lives: “Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain” ([Jude 11](#)). We can faithfully serve God, sing His praises, and give sacrificially to His work. But God doesn't want any of that without our hearts.

Does the Lord take priority over our plans and dreams? Is He worth more than the sin that tempts us? When we express to Him that He is more worthy than anything or anyone else in our lives, it's an offering He won't refuse.

*Meditate:* Lord, may our worship and our praise, From hearts surrendered to Your ways,  
Be worthy offerings of love For all Your blessings from above.

*Aphorism:* God won't refuse a heart that is surrendered to Him.