

## **Bible study for this week** 6/18/12~6/24/12

\***June 18 (Monday), 2012** { [1 Tim. 6:6~10, 17~19](#) } Key: Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God. ([1 Timothy 6:17](#)) “**What Is Secure?**” Bible In One Year: [Nehemiah 10~11; Acts 4:1~22](#)

During the worldwide financial crisis of 2008, a widow lost a third of her income when her bank stocks no longer paid dividends after her trusted bank failed. The *Wall Street Journal* quoted her tearful response as an example of the feelings of many people who were similarly affected: “You just think, ‘This can’t be happening.’ What is secure anymore?”

Tragedy and hard times always jolt our thinking. Our best plans and hopes can be shattered by events beyond our control. We are reminded that there is only one source of true security in a changing world. With new appreciation, we consider Paul’s words: “Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life” ([1 Tim. 6:17~19](#)).

When our resources diminish, we can grow richer in good works, generosity, and sharing with others. If financial stability returns, we can hold more loosely what we are given, trusting solely in God.

We are secure in Him alone.

*Meditate:* Though troubles assail, and dangers affright, Though friends should all fail, and foes all unite, Yet one thing secures us, whatever betide: The Scripture assures us, “The Lord will provide.”

*Aphorism:* In uncertain times, our security is in God alone.

\***June 19 (Tuesday), 2012** { [Psalm 90](#) } Key: The days of our lives are seventy years; . . . yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. ([Psalm 90:10](#)) “**The Brevity Of Life**” Bible In One Year: [Nehemiah 12~13; Acts 4:23~37](#)

A friend recalls: On October 19, 2008, I heard the news that Levi Stubbs, lead singer for Motown’s vocal group The Four Tops, had died at age 72. As a boy, I enjoyed the Four Tops, especially Stubbs’ emotion-filled, passionate voice. I had never met him or heard the group in concert, yet his passing affected me at an unexpected level.

Behind my sadness, I think, was the reminder that I too am getting older. The death of someone I listened to when I was young reminded me that time isn’t marching on—it’s running out!

In the only psalm attributed to Moses, he wrote, “The days of our lives are seventy years; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years, yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away” (90:10). Those aren’t words we want to hear. We want to remain forever young, but Scripture reminds us that the years pass and death will one day arrive.

That leaves us to wrestle with two essential questions: Am I ready to “fly away” at life’s end, having trusted Christ as my Savior? And am I using my fleeting days to please the One who loves me eternally?

How are you doing—no matter what your age—with the challenges raised by the brevity of life?

*Meditate:* Our vigor is fleeting, our best years are brief, Our youth passes quickly—time’s ever a thief; But hope yet becomes us—death’s sting holds no power; We have a Redeemer—an unfailing Tower.

*Aphorism:* You can’t control the length of your life, but you can control its depth.

\***June 20 (Wednesday), 2012** { [1 Thess. 2:1~12](#) } Key: We exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children. ([1 Thess. 2:11](#)) “**Thanks, Dad**” Bible In One Year: [Esther 1~2; Acts 5:1~21](#)

In the US, more long distance calls are made on Mother’s Day than any other day. But on Father’s Day, the most collect calls are made. It seems that children still depend on their fathers to provide, even when they are far away from home.

Fathers are needed and wanted for much more than financial help. While [1 Thessalonians 2:10~12](#) is primarily directed toward church leaders, Paul talks about how their role is similar to a father’s. He states: “You know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children.”

*Exhorted* is “to call near.” It is easy for fathers to think that all that’s required of them is to bring home a paycheck. But children need their close encouragement.

The word *comforted* is “to console.” Nothing is more valuable to a child than the time given by a father to listen and talk. Without constant relating, relationships turn cold.

*Charged* is “to affirm.” Fathers challenge their children by affirming the truth of God’s Word as they live it out in front of them. And even in failings, they affirm what is right through the asking of forgiveness.

How thankful we can be for fathers who help their children “walk worthy of God” (v.12).

*Meditate:* We’re thankful for our fathers, Lord, They’re special gifts from You; Help us to show we honor them By what we say and do.

*Aphorism:* Good fathers reflect the heavenly Father.

\***June 21 (Thursday), 2012** { [Genesis 33:1~4](#) } Key: Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him. ([Genesis 33:4](#)) “**An Imaginary Threat**” Bible In One Year: [Esther 3~5; Acts 5:22~42](#)

Last spring the window to one of the rooms in our house was repeatedly attacked by a robin. The bird would perch at the base of the window, ruffle its feathers, chirp loudly, and then fly headfirst into the glass.

I did some research and learned that robins are territorial. While nesting, they drive out any competing robins. This bird apparently saw its reflection in our window and thought it was another robin. The threat was not real; it was only an illusion.

In the Old Testament, we see an instance when Jacob imagined a threat that wasn’t really there. Years earlier, Jacob had stolen his brother Esau’s blessing by their father. Now, after many years of separation, they were going to meet again. Jacob thought Esau would harm him, so he sent gifts ahead as a peace offering of sorts. Then, when he saw Esau approaching with 400 men, Jacob panicked. Yet what Jacob thought was an attack force turned out to be a welcoming committee. “Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept” ([Gen. 33:4](#)).

In interpersonal relationships, we sometimes misinterpret a situation. We must ask the Lord for discernment so we don’t miss a friendship because of an imaginary threat.

*Meditate:* I went outside to find a friend But could not find one there; I went outside to be a friend, And friends were everywhere!

*Aphorism:* Don't be afraid of a presumed enemy, but trust in the Lord to make a new friend.

**\*June 22 (Friday), 2012** { [Ecclesiastes 9:13~18](#) } Key: He by his wisdom delivered the city. Yet no one remembered that same poor man. ([Ecclesiastes 9:15](#)) "**No One Remembered!**" Bible In One Year: [Esther 6~8; Acts 6](#)

In a commentary on [Ecclesiastes 9:15](#), Martin Luther cites the story of Themistocles, the soldier and statesman who commanded the Athenian squadron. Through his strategy, he won the Battle of Salamis, drove the Persian army from Greek soil, and saved his city. A few years later, he fell out of favor, was ostracized by his countrymen, and was banished from Athens. Thus, Luther concludes, "Themistocles did much good for his city, but received much ingratitude."

The crowd, for some reason, seems to ignore or quickly forget the good that the poor and humble man accomplishes through his wisdom. No matter. "Wisdom is [still] better than strength" even if "the poor man's wisdom is despised" (v.16). It's better to be a quiet, honest sage who, though forgotten, leaves much good behind, than a swaggering, strident fool who, though many applaud him, "destroys much good" (v.18).

Accordingly, what matters in the end is not the recognition and gratitude we receive for the work we've done, but the souls of those gentle folk in whom we've sown the seeds of righteousness. Put another way: "Wisdom is justified by all her children" ([Luke 7:35](#)). Whom have you influenced through your wise and godly wisdom?

*Meditate:* Help me to walk so close to Thee That those who know me best can see I live as godly as I pray, And Christ is real from day to day.

*Aphorism:* A wise person sets his earthly goals on heavenly gains.

**\*June 23 (Saturday), 2012** { [Acts 14:1~7, 19~22](#) } Key: We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God. ([Acts 14:22](#)) "**Briers And Buttercups**" Bible In One Year: [Esther 9~10; Acts 7:1~21](#)

The buttercups in our backyard were unusually bright and beautiful due to the generous amount of spring rain God sent our way. I wanted to take some pictures of them before they faded, but I had trouble getting close enough because they were growing in a very soggy wetland. One sunny afternoon, I pulled on a pair of boots and trudged through briers and brambles toward buttercup bog. Before I got any pictures, I got muddy feet, multiple scratches, and numerous bug bites. But seeing the buttercups made my temporary discomfort worthwhile.

Much of life is about "getting through" the trials and troubles that are inevitable in our sinful world. One of these trials is persecution. The disciples certainly found this to be true. They knew the good things that Jesus has ready for those who follow Him, but they met harsh resistance when they tried to tell others ([Acts 14:5](#)).

Those of us who have chosen God's way, and who know from experience that it's "a more excellent way" ([1 Cor. 12:31](#)), will persevere even when we have to go through danger and difficulty. By doing so, we show others a beautiful picture of God's peace, mercy, and forgiveness. The joy that awaits will make our temporary discomfort worthwhile.

*Meditate:* As sure as night, life's troubles come, As sure as day, they're past; But surer still that endless joy When heaven we reach at last.

*Aphorism:* Earth—the land of trials; heaven—the land of joys.

**\*June 24 (Sunday), 2012** { [2 Corinthians 9:6~15](#) } Key: God loves a cheerful giver. ([2](#)

[Corinthians 9:7](#))“**Winners All**”Bible In One Year: [Job 1~2; Acts 7:22~43](#)

When the *Los Angeles Times* covered a 2008 conference championship soccer match between two Christian schools, Azusa Pacific University and Westmont College, it was about far more than winning the game. Three days earlier, a wildfire had swept through the Westmont campus, destroying several academic buildings, faculty homes, and student rooms. Unable to host the game, the rules required Westmont to forfeit. Instead, Azusa invited their opponents to play at their campus where they welcomed Westmont fans with free admission and lunch.

On the field, Westmont won an emotional 2~0 victory, while Azusa Pacific won admiration for their good will. *LA Times* reporter Bill Plaschke wrote: “Rarely in Southern California sports has there been a better show of sportsmanship than this, Azusa Pacific sacrificing its chance at a title defense to give Westmont a fair shot at taking it. As impressive as the resilience of the conquerors was the kindness of the conquered.”

So often we think only of money when the Bible calls us to give willingly and bountifully, “for God loves a cheerful giver” ([2 Cor. 9:7](#)). Giving others a chance and offering hospitality to those who hurt is generosity that makes winners of everyone involved.

*Meditate:* The gifts that we may give, The deeds that we may do, Most truly honor Christ  
When self is given too.

*Aphorism:* The manner of giving shows the character of the giver more than the gift itself.