

Bible study for this week 7/23/12~7/29/12

***July 23 (Monday), 2012** { [1 Corinthians 10:1~12](#) } Key: Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. ([1 Corinthians 10:12](#)) “**Confidence In What?**” Bible In One Year: [Psalms 33-34 & Acts 24](#)

While walking through a home-improvement store, I saw a man wearing a bright red T-shirt bearing this melancholy message: “Confidence: The feeling you have just before you understand the situation.”

I laughed at this humorous concept, but I also realized that the shirt carried a sane and sound warning. It’s a reminder to all of us who try to get things done through confidence in our own ability or credentials but without consciously trusting in the strength of God. If we think we can accomplish life’s tasks in our own strength, that false confidence will inevitably become our undoing—and we’ll collapse under the weight of our own failings.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians about this by recalling ancient Israel’s penchant for self-confidence and self-sufficiency. He described everything the Israelites thought they had going for them; then he told how they had turned those benefits into a license to sin and an almost arrogant confidence that would prove to be their undoing.

Paul said their self-confidence should warn us. His conclusion? “Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” ([1 Cor. 10:12](#)). [Psalm 118:8](#) shows us the best way: “It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man,” or in ourselves. Where is your confidence?

Meditate: Let all who think that they can stand Take heed lest they should fall; These words remind us of the truth That God is Lord of all.

Aphorism: Confidence in Christ is the right kind of confidence.

***July 24 (Tuesday), 2012** { [Acts 25:1~12](#) } Key: He is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before . . . kings. ([Acts 9:15](#)) “**Sphere Of Influence**” Bible In One Year: [Psalms 35-36 & Acts 25](#)

The book *The Preacher and the Presidents* chronicles the ministry of evangelist Billy Graham. Spanning presidents from Harry S. Truman to George W. Bush, Graham often had an open door to the White House. Yet despite his unusual sphere of influence, Graham repeatedly credited the grace of God working through him for his influence—not any personal talent he might possess.

The apostle Paul was another believer who was called to witness to people in high authority. Christ said of Paul, “He is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel” ([Acts 9:15](#)).

In Acts, we read that Paul’s sphere of influence included rulers such as Felix, Festus, Herod Agrippa, and perhaps Caesar himself (Acts 24–26). But as Billy Graham would do centuries later, Paul pointed to the grace of God working through him: “Not I, but the grace of God which was with me” ([1 Cor. 15:10](#)).

You may not be called to proclaim the gospel to heads of state, but God has placed people in your life with whom He wants you to share His message of hope. Why not pray for opportunities for God’s grace to flow through you as a witness to someone in your sphere of influence?

Meditate: Lord, help me make my witness clear, And labor faithfully, So friends and neighbors turn to Christ Through what they hear from me.

Aphorism: The best place to witness is where God has placed you.

***July 25 (Wednesday), 2012** { [Luke 4:1~13](#) } Key: Let us run with endurance the race that is

set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. (Hebrews 12:1~2)
“Fix Your Eyes” Bible In One Year: [Psalms 37–39 & Acts 26](#)

Over and over again, my driver’s education instructor said these two words: “Drive ahead.” This was his way of telling me to focus on the horizon, not just on my immediate surroundings. Drivers who continually look to the right or to the left may well go into the ditch.

Satan is good at causing “roadside distractions” that tempt us to look at him rather than at Jesus. If he can get our attention, he may be able to get us off track and delay our spiritual progress. He even tried this with Jesus Himself!

After Jesus was baptized, Satan tried to deter Him by suggesting “better” ways to accomplish His work. Satan told Jesus that He could prove He was the Son of God by throwing Himself from the temple ([Luke 4:9~11](#)). But Jesus knew that proving He was God’s Son would come by submitting Himself to the cross, not by flinging Himself from a high building. He responded, “You shall not tempt the Lord your God” (v.12). Jesus had His eyes on our redemption, and He knew He couldn’t accomplish it by taking a detour around the cross.

The way to stay out of spiritual ditches is to fix our eyes on Jesus ([Heb. 12:2](#)) and refuse to even glance at Satan’s distractions.

Meditate: The only way to overcome Temptations that we face, Is to be focused on the Lord, Who strengthens by His grace.

Aphorism: Satan ought not be in our line of vision, but behind us.

***July 26 (Thursday), 2012** { [1 Cor. 12:21~25](#) } Key: The Lord is gracious and full of compassion. ([Psalm 145:8](#)) “Learning From Erin” Bible In One Year: [Psalms 40–42 & Acts 27:1~26](#)

Erin’s life was so different from that of most 8-year-olds. While other kids were running and playing and eating ice cream, Erin was lying in a bed being fed through a tube—able to see only the brightest lights and hear only the loudest sounds. Her life consisted of needles and nurses and hospital visits as she battled ongoing illnesses and profound disabilities.

Surrounded by a remarkable family who cared for her with compassion and filled her life with love, Erin died before reaching her ninth birthday.

What can be learned from a precious child like Erin—one who never spoke a word or colored a picture or sang a song? A friend of Erin’s family put it best: “We are all better for having had Erin in our lives. She taught us compassion, unconditional love, and appreciation for the little things.”

Children such as Erin also remind us that this world is not reserved for the perfect, the wealthy, or the athletic. Each person, no matter their physical, mental, or emotional condition, is created in the image of God ([Gen. 1:26~27](#)) and is of equal value and significance. Our Lord has compassion for the weak, the broken, and all He has made ([Ps. 145:8~9](#)), and we should mirror that concern ([Eph. 5:1~2](#)). Is there an “Erin” in your life you can learn from?

Meditate: People in whom the world sees no value, But only as burdens to bear, Teach us great lessons of God’s sovereign power— He loves them as treasures so rare.

Aphorism: Never underestimate the value of one soul.

***July 27 (Friday), 2012** { [1 John 2:1~11](#) } Key: This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. ([1 John 5:3](#)) “Lessons Of Obedience” Bible In One Year: [Psalms 43–45](#)

[& Acts 27:27~44](#)

A friend recalls: When young Kofi came home after Sunday school, his mother asked him what he had learned that morning. His quick reply spoke volumes: “Obedience . . . again!”

Although I’m many years older than Kofi, I agree that obedience to God is a lesson that we must, sometimes reluctantly, learn over and over again.

Oswald Chambers wrote: “The Lord does not give me rules, but He makes His standard very clear. If my relationship to Him is that of love, I will do what He says If I hesitate, it is because I love someone I have placed in competition with Him, namely, myself.”

When we are obedient, we show God that we love Him and have more faith in Him than we do in ourselves. Arthur W. Pink said that love is “a principle of action, and it expresses itself . . . by deeds which please the object loved.” To obey God means to relinquish what we want and to choose to do what *He* asks.

God requires the obedience of His followers, and Jesus placed great importance on it. He asked, “Why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?” ([Luke 6:46](#)). And He issued this challenge: “If you love Me, keep My commandments” ([John 14:15](#)).

Meditate: To say we follow Jesus Christ Without attempting to obey Reveals our lack of faith that He Will lead us right in every way.

Aphorism: Obedience to God is an expression of our love for God.

***July 28 (Saturday), 2012** {[Jeremiah 6:14~20](#)} Key: Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls. ([Jeremiah 6:16](#)) “Expert Repair” Bible In One Year: [Psalms 46–48 & Acts 28](#)

If you’ve ever tried to fix something and failed, you’ll appreciate the sign I saw outside an automotive repair shop: *We Will Fix What Your Husband Fixed*. Whether the problem is the car, the plumbing, or an appliance, it’s usually better off in the hands of someone who is skilled and trustworthy.

So it is with the sin and the struggles within us that resist our efforts to mend them.

Jeremiah denounced the greedy prophets and priests of his day who “healed the hurt of [God’s] people slightly, saying ‘Peace, peace!’ when there is no peace” ([Jer. 6:14](#)). They could neither change themselves nor lead the people to spiritual transformation. So the Lord called the people to follow His way: “Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls” (v.16).

Centuries later, Jesus, the Son of God, said: “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” ([Matt. 11:28](#)).

The parts of our lives that we have tried and failed to repair can be restored by the hand of God. Through faith in Christ, we can be made whole.

Meditate: Life’s fractures can be mended By faith in Christ the Lord— At first the pain but then the gain And usefulness restored.

Aphorism: When God forgives, He removes the sin and restores the soul.

***July 29 (Sunday), 2012** {[Romans 1:8~16](#)} Key: I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes. ([Romans 1:16](#)) “Show Your Colors” Bible In One Year: [Psalms 49–50 & Romans 1](#)

A friend recalls: I was excited about going to the baseball park to watch the Detroit

Tigers play the Chicago White Sox. I proudly put on my Tigers T-shirt that morning before going to the opposing team's stadium. But I had to wear a sweatshirt over my team's shirt because it was cool outside. So I was disappointed that no one at U.S. Cellular Field could see which team I was there to cheer for. No one knew I was a Tigers' fan. After a 3-hour rain delay, the game finally started and I could cheer for my team and get my loyalty out in the open.

The apostle Paul had a loyalty that was most definitely out in the open—a loyalty to Jesus Christ. He wrote to the believers in Rome, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ” ([Rom. 1:16](#)). He knew that the gospel was “the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes” because Jesus had dramatically changed his life and its direction. In his preaching and witnessing, he proclaimed Jesus, the One to whom he had given his whole life (Acts 9).

The believers in Rome were also known for their allegiance to Christ. Paul said of them: “Your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world” ([Rom. 1:8](#)).

Is your loyalty to Jesus out in the open?

Meditate: God put us in this darkened world To shine as sons of light, So, let us always teach the truth And keep our colors bright.

Aphorism: Our loyalty to Jesus should be seen and heard in our lives.