

Bible study for this week 8/13/12~8/19/12

***August 13(Monday),2012**{[Romans 13:1~10](#)}Key: Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. ([Romans 13:8](#))

“Freedom”Bible In One Year: [Psalms 87~88; Romans 13](#)

Long ago my wife decided that driving within the speed limit gives her a wonderful sense of freedom. She tells me, “I don’t ever need a radar detector. And I never have to slow down when I see a state patrol car or worry about paying a fine for speeding.” Even on long trips when the miles seem to grind slowly along, she sets the cruise control at the posted speed limit and enjoys the journey. “Besides,” she reminds me, “it is the law.”

[Romans 13:1~10](#) addresses our responsibility to the authority of human government and to the law of God. When we obey the governing authorities, we don’t have to fear punishment, and we gain a clear conscience by doing what is right (vv.3,5).

Paul urged the followers of Christ in Rome to give the governing authorities what was owed them, whether taxes, revenue, respect, or honor (v.7). But he went beyond human regulations when he wrote: “Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law” (v.8).

It is our duty to obey man’s law and our privilege to fulfill God’s law by loving others. And His law is “the perfect law that gives freedom” ([James 1:25 NIV](#)).

Meditate: God wants us to obey the laws That govern our society; But loving one another is God’s perfect law that sets us free.

Aphorism:We keep man’s law by obedience; we fulfill God’s law by love.

***August 14(Tuesday),2012**{[Isaiah 46:8~11](#)}Key: I am God, and there is none like Me. ([Isaiah 46:9](#))“One Mysterious God”Bible In One Year: [Psalms 89~90; Romans 14](#)

My wife and I don’t always understand each other. For instance, it’s a great mystery to her how I can watch an entire baseball game between two teams that have no chance of making the playoffs. And I surely don’t understand her love of shopping.

To love someone intensely doesn’t mean you have to understand him or her completely. That’s good news, because there’s no way we can begin to grasp the deep mysteries of the God we love.

With our finite minds and our self-centered views, we can’t deduce why God does what He does. Yet some people look at tragedies, for instance, and turn their backs on God—assuming that their finite knowledge about the situation is better than His infinite wisdom.

Indeed, if we could figure God out—if He were no more than a glorified human with no greater knowledge than that of the smartest person—where would be the awe and the majesty of the Almighty? One reason we know God to be so great is that we cannot reduce His thinking to ours.

The apostle Paul asked, “Who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?” ([1 Cor. 2:16](#)). Clearly, the answer is no one. Praise God that even when we don’t understand Him, we know we can trust Him.

Meditate: Your ways, O Lord, are higher and Your knowledge is immense; So give us strength to trust You when Life doesn’t make much sense.

Aphorism: To fully understand God is impossible; to worship Him is imperative.

***August 15(Wednesday),2012**{[Psalm 93](#)}Key: The Lord reigns, He is clothed with majesty; the LORD is clothed, He has girded Himself with strength. ([Psalm 93:1](#))

“Mightier Than All”Bible In One Year: [Psalms 91~93; Romans 15:1~13](#)

Iguazu Falls on the border of Brazil and Argentina is a spectacular waterfall system of 275 falls along 2.7 km (1.67 miles) of the Iguazu River. Etched on a wall on the Brazilian side of the Falls are the words of [Psalm 93:4](#), “Mightier than the thunders of many waters, mightier than the waves of the sea, the LORD on high is mighty!” (RSV). Below it are these words, “God is always greater than all of our troubles.”

The writer of Psalm 93, who penned its words during the time that kings reigned, knew that God is the ultimate King over all. “The LORD reigns,” he wrote. “Your throne is established from of old; You are from everlasting” (vv.1~2). No matter how high the floods or waves, the LORD remains greater than them all.

The roar of a waterfall is truly majestic, but it is quite a different matter to be in the water hurtling toward the falls. That may be the situation you are in today. Physical, financial, or relational problems loom ever larger and you feel like you are about to go over the falls. In such situations, the Christian has Someone to turn to. He is the LORD, “who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think” ([Eph. 3:20](#)) for He is greater than all of our troubles.

Meditate: If you are helpless in life’s fray, God’s mighty power will be your stay; Your failing strength He will renew, For He’s a God who cares for you.

Aphorism: Never measure God’s unlimited power by your limited expectations.

***August 16(Thursday),2012**{[John 13:33~35](#)}Key: By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.([John 13:35](#))“**Love For One Another**” Bible In One Year: [Psalms 94~96; Romans 15:14~33](#)

You have to work hard to offend Christians. By nature, Christians are the most forgiving, understanding, and thoughtful group of people I’ve ever dealt with. They never assume the worst. They appreciate the importance of having different perspectives. They’re slow to anger, quick to forgive, and almost never make rash judgments or act in anything less than a spirit of total love. . . . No, wait—I’m thinking of Labrador retrievers!

I laughed when I read this humorous thought by David Learn in an e-mail. But having had experience with retrievers—and fellow Christians—I think it’s true that sometimes believers are just too easily offended! “The choir director always gives her the solos.” “The pastor didn’t even look at me when he shook my hand.” “I do a lot around here—people ought to appreciate me a little more.”

Anger. Resentment. Pride. Sure, issues between believers do sometimes need to be addressed. But what if we always tried to treat others the way we want to be treated ([Matt. 7:12](#)), weren’t quick to judge others but forgave them ([Luke 6:37](#)), and demonstrated a little humility? ([Phil. 2:3](#)).

And what if the world could actually recognize that we are followers of Jesus by the love we have “for one another”? ([John 13:35](#)). Is this true of us?

Meditate: Lord, let me be a shining light In all I say and do, That Your great love displayed in me May lead someone to You.

Aphorism: Sometimes the best witness is love.

***August 17(Friday),2012**{[Mark 10:17~23](#)}Key: How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! ([Mark 10:23](#))“**True Prosperity**”Bible In One Year: [Psalms 97~99; Romans 16](#)

A few years ago, the banking empire Citicorp ran a series of billboards about money: “Money changes hands—just be sure it doesn’t change the rest of you!” and “If people say you’re made of money, you should work on your personality!” These ads gave a

refreshingly new perspective on riches.

God also has a surprising spin on wealth. From His perspective, you can be “well off” when it comes to worldly treasures and yet be in dire poverty in your soul. Or you can be poor in terms of earthside stuff and be lavishly rich by God’s standards.

The distorting power of wealth reminds me of the story of the rich young ruler. After a discussion about eternal life, Jesus asked him to sell his possessions, give to the poor, and follow Him. Unfortunately, the man “went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions” ([Mark 10:22](#)). This prompted Jesus’ lesson to the disciples: “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!” (v.23).

It’s not that Jesus is against wealth. It’s just that He is grieved by anything that we value more than Him. We can work hard and make money, but when those things are the main pursuit of life, then Jesus isn’t. Placing Him first and foremost in our lives is the key to true prosperity.

Meditate: He possessed all the world had to give him, He had reached every coveted goal; But, alas, his life was a failure, For he had forgotten his soul.

Aphorism: Don’t let riches—or the pursuit of riches—derail your pursuit of Jesus.
***August 18(Saturday),2012**{[Daniel 6:1~10](#)}Key: Cause me to hear Your lovingkindness in the morning, for in You do I trust. ([Psalm 143:8](#))“**Ruts And Routines**”Bible In One Year: [Psalms 100~102; 1 Corinthians 1](#)

Summer is my favorite season. I love the leisurely days when I can set aside some of my routines without feeling guilty. Doing new things, seeing new places, and allowing myself the time to take “the scenic route” revive my spirit and renew my enthusiasm for life and work.

But summer can also be a dangerous time of breaking good habits. Certain routines are good. They increase our efficiency and ensure that important things get done. After all, we need to have fixed times and places for certain things or the world would be chaotic. Creation is designed to operate on schedule, and, as part of it, so are we. We need food and sleep at regular intervals.

We sometimes hear legitimate warnings about allowing routines to turn into ruts. But the Bible indicates that having set times for certain things is good. David indicated that morning was the right time for him to praise God and ask for His direction ([Ps. 5:3; 143:8](#)). And Daniel prayed three times a day, and not even the threat of death made him change his routine ([Dan. 6:10](#)).

While enjoying carefree days, we must not become careless about spending time with God. Savoring spiritual sustenance is a routine for all seasons.

Meditate: You’ll go forth a little stronger With a fresh supply of grace, If each day you meet the Savior In a secret, quiet place.

Aphorism: Those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength. —[Isaiah 40:31](#)
***August 19(Sunday),2012**{[Psalm 104:1~13](#)}Key: The birds of the heavens . . . sing among the branches. ([Psalm 104:12](#))“**Mozart’s Pet Bird**”Bible In One Year: [Psalms 103~104; 1 Corinthians 2](#)

Mozart is revered as a genius of musical composition. In one instance, he was even inspired by the melody of a bird. Mozart had a pet starling whose song so fascinated him that some say he wrote a piece of music based on the melody he heard in the bird’s chirps.

Birds were also an inspiration to the psalmist. In Psalm 104, he praises God for caring

for the living creatures He put on the earth. Included in his observations are birds who fly in the heavens above, perch in the branches of trees, and sing songs of heartfelt joy: “The birds of the heavens have their home; they sing among the branches” (v.12). Nature filled the psalmist’s heart with praise to God, and I think that must have included the musical sounds of the birds.

Often the marvels we see in creation prompt us to worship. This theme is repeated throughout Scripture: “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork” ([Ps. 19:1](#)). Creation’s stimulus to praise need not be limited to the visual. It can also be widened to include hearing nature’s songs. As we go about our daily routine, we can tune our hearts to the melodies God has placed in His creatures and let them serve as an added springboard of praise to the Creator.

Meditate: As Mozart added the song of a bird To a musical innovation, Let’s all add our voice to the worldwide song Of praise to the God of creation.

Aphorism: All of nature is a grand symphony conducted by the Creator.