

## **Bible study for this week** 8/20/12~8/26/12

\***August 20(Monday),2012**{ [1 Corinthians 3:1~17](#)}Key: I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ.([1 Corinthians 3:1](#)) “**Time To Grow Up**”Bible In One Year: [Psalms 105~106; 1 Corinthians 3](#)

While browsing through some birthday cards in a gift shop, I found one that made me laugh. Its message read: “You are only young once, but you can be immature forever.” That card tickled my funny bone. There is something winsome about never having to grow up, as any fan of Peter Pan can attest.

But we all know that perpetual immaturity is not only inappropriate, it’s also unacceptable. For the Christian, it’s vital that we mature. After we are born again and become followers of Christ, we are not expected to stay spiritual babies. The Scriptures challenge us to grow to be more like Him.

When writing to the church at Corinth—a church with many problems—Paul said that their issues were rooted in a lack of spiritual development. In [1 Corinthians 3:1](#), he said, “I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ.”

How do we grow beyond being just spiritual babes? Peter urged, “Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” ([2 Peter 3:18](#)). We do this by meditating on the Word of God and devoting ourselves to prayer ([Ps. 119:97~104; Acts 1:14](#)). Like the troubled church of Corinth, it may be time for us to grow up.

**Meditate:**More like the Master I would live and grow, More of His love to others I would show; More self-denial, like His in Galilee, More like the Master I long to ever be.

**Aphorism:**Spiritual growth occurs when faith is cultivated.

\***August 21(Tuesday),2012**{[Gen. 12:1~4; 21:1~7](#)}Key: Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. ([Genesis 21:2](#))“**Promises, Promises**”Bible In One Year: [Psalms 107~109; 1 Corinthians 4](#)

When people say with a sigh, “Promises, promises,” it’s often when they’ve been disappointed by someone who failed to keep a commitment. The more it happens, the greater the sadness and the deeper the sigh.

Have you ever felt that God doesn’t keep His promises? It’s an attitude that can subtly develop over time.

After God promised Abraham, “I will make you a great nation” ([Gen. 12:2](#)), 25 years elapsed before the birth of his son Isaac (21:5). During that period, Abraham questioned God about his lack of a child (15:2), and he even resorted to fathering a son through his wife’s handmaiden (16:15).

Yet, through the ups and downs, God kept reminding Abraham of His promise to give him a child, while urging him to walk faithfully with Him and believe (17:1~2).

When we claim one of God’s promises in the Bible, whether it is for peace of mind, courage, or provision of our needs, we place ourselves in His hands and on His schedule. As we wait, it may at times seem as if the Lord has forgotten us. But trust embraces the reality that when we stand on a promise of God, He remains faithful. The assurance is in our hearts, and the timing is in His hands.

**Meditate:** Standing on the promises that cannot fail, When the howling storms of doubt and fear assail, By the living Word of God I shall prevail, Standing on the promises of God.

**Aphorism:**All of God’s promises are backed by His wisdom, love, and power.

**\*August 22(Wednesday),2012**{[2 Peter 1:3~16](#)}Key: We did not follow cunningly devised fables . . . but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.([2 Peter 1:16](#))“**Confidence In Scripture**”Bible In One Year: [Psalms 110~112; 1 Corinthians 5](#)

The Narnia children’s books written by C. S. Lewis symbolize Christian truth. In the tale *Prince Caspian*, Lewis tells the story of a tyrant who usurped the throne of the enchanted land of Narnia. His young nephew, Prince Caspian, has heard stories of Narnia’s great king who died and rose again to break the power of evil. His uncle dismisses this story as a fairy tale. However, the boy later discovers that the ancient story is in fact true.

Lewis’ intent was to illustrate how skeptics often dismiss the ancient story of Christ as a myth. But, like biblical scholars today, Lewis was convinced that based on the historic evidence, the record of Jesus’ supernatural life is true. Sir Frederic Kenyon, former director of the British Museum, held a similar conviction about Scripture’s reliability. Of this he wrote, “Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as . . . established.”

The apostles had the same confidence in the record of Jesus: “We did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty” ([2 Peter 1:16](#)).

We can be assured that the biblical account of the King of kings is an accurate historical record.

**Meditate:** The skeptic questions, doubts, and scoffs, Protesting truths we hold so dear; But God’s Word stands, its truth remains, Proclaiming what we need to hear.

**Aphorism:**In a changing world you can trust God’s unchanging Word.

**\*August 23(Thursday),2012**{[Proverbs 2](#)}Key: My son, if you receive my words, and treasure my commands within you, . . . you will understand the fear of the LORD. ([Proverbs 2:1,5](#))“**Starting Young**”Bible In One Year: [Psalms 113~115; 1 Corinthians 6](#)

*Esther* was a bit worried. Before we all sat down for Sunday dinner, someone had started eating. That’s when our 3-year-old granddaughter said, “We haven’t prayed yet.” She was concerned that we might forget to give thanks.

Her concern was a good sign. It showed that at her young age, *Esther* was beginning to form one of those good habits that parents teach their children as part of their instructions for life. This little routine, for instance, helps her see the value of prayer and thanksgiving, which can be a powerful resource for her in the years ahead.

Raising children in an age of hostility toward the Christian faith is not easy. Parents wonder how best to help their little ones learn to trust the Savior and live to please Him. Proverbs indicates that a key to directing children is through purposeful instruction by parents ([Prov. 1:8](#)) on such things as listening to wisdom (2:2), seeking discernment (2:3), understanding the fear of the Lord (2:5), recalling parents’ teaching (3:1), and gaining insight (4:1). These become habitual when parents give instruction and when children “retain” those words of teaching (4:1~4).

Got kids or grandkids? It’s never too early to begin instructing them in wise living.

**Meditate:** God gives us children for a time To teach them how to love the Lord, To train them in His righteous ways, To follow and obey His Word.

**Aphorism:**The character of your children tomorrow depends on what you put into their hearts today.

**\*August 24(Friday),2012**{[Philippians 4:4~13](#)}Key: In everything give thanks; for this is

the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ([1 Thessalonians 5:18](#)) “Contentment” Bible In One Year: [Psalms 116~118](#); [1 Corinthians 7:1~19](#)

A poet once wrote: “As a rule, man’s a fool. When it’s hot, he wants it cool. And when it’s cool, he wants it hot. Always wanting what is not.”

What an insightful observation on human nature! So when we read in [Philippians 4:11](#), “I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content” we wonder, *Can this be possible?*

For Paul it was. [Philippians 4:12~13](#) describes Paul’s response to life: “I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through Him who gives me strength” (NIV). Paul’s relationship with God superseded whatever he did or did not have. His contentment was not based on his circumstances, but on his relationship with Christ.

Paul reminds us that contentment doesn’t happen overnight. It’s something that we learn. As our relationship with God develops over time and through experiences, we learn to trust God more and ourselves less. Paul knew that Christ would give him the strength to persevere in whatever situation he encountered (v.13).

No matter what you’re facing today, through prayer you can receive the strength to be content.

**Meditate:** The world is filled with so much good That brings us joy and pleasure, But true fulfillment only comes When Christ we love and treasure.

**Aphorism:** We find contentment at the same place we find salvation—in Christ.

\***August 25(Saturday),2012**{[Ecclesiastes 2:1~11](#)}Key: I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure.([Ecclesiastes 2:10](#))“Sunshine Chaser”Bible In One Year: [Psalm 119:1~88](#); [1 Corinthians 7:20~40](#)

Diana and Dave love to ride their jet skis on the lake, skimming across the water on warm sunny days. But one morning the weather was cool and mostly cloudy, and Diana couldn’t convince Dave to go out. So she went on her own. It was so cold that she flitted back and forth across the lake, trying to keep herself in the sunshine for some needed warmth. But every time she reached a sunny area, the clouds moved and it quickly turned to shade. Realizing the futility and silliness of chasing the sunshine, she finally gave up because it didn’t bring her what she wanted.

King Solomon did another kind of chasing that couldn’t bring him satisfaction ([Eccl. 2:1](#)). In the first 11 verses of Ecclesiastes 2 alone, he mentions that he chased after pleasure, laughter, wine, wisdom, houses, gardens, money, possessions, and music. But his evaluation was that “all was vanity and grasping for the wind. There was no profit under the sun” (2:11). Those pursuits were empty—“vanity of vanities” (1:2). He wisely concluded: “Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all” (12:13).

Are you chasing after some of the same things that Solomon was? It’s a vain pursuit. Purpose and satisfaction come only from knowing and obeying God.

**Meditate:** Chasing after empty pleasure Will not satisfy one’s heart; But to those who follow Jesus, Life’s fulfillment He’ll impart.

**Aphorism:** Only God can fill an empty heart.

\***August 26(Sunday),2012**{[2 Cor. 4:16~18](#)}Key: Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. ([2 Corinthians 4:16](#))“Older Or Better?”Bible In One Year: [Psalm 119:89~176](#); [1 Corinthians 8](#)

We know we’re getting older when we say things like, “Can you believe how young

those professional baseball players are?” And it’s a sure sign of aging when we no longer ask, “How are you?” but say, “Hey, you look terrific”—as if we’re surprised.

Aging is inevitable. Unfortunately, society has taught us to fear advancing age and to disguise its reality as much as possible. But aging can actually be a wonderful thing. Followers of Jesus have the capacity to get significantly better with age. As Paul put it: “Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day” ([2 Cor. 4:16](#)).

Just as there are physical signs that reveal we’re getting older, there are signs that show we are getting better. Rather than becoming more crotchety, intolerant, and unloving, the maturing follower of Jesus grows better at forgiving, loving, and caring. Growing older is a continuation of the journey to become more like Jesus, which means that as time goes on our heart and attitudes should increasingly resonate with and reflect the compelling character and winsome ways of our Savior.

So as we grow older, let’s embrace the opportunity to become spiritually more like Jesus. Our friends will notice that we look better with age.

***Meditate:*** The seeds of aging sprout in youth, As weeds or grain they’re sure to grow;  
But if we sow with love and truth, A golden harvest we can know.

***Aphorism:*** Don’t just grow older— grow better as a follower of Jesus.