

The background of the entire cover is a close-up photograph of several oak leaves. The leaves are in various stages of autumn, with some showing vibrant green, others a mix of green and yellow, and some fully turned to a rich brown. Numerous clear water droplets of varying sizes are scattered across the surfaces of the leaves, reflecting light and adding a sense of freshness and texture to the image.

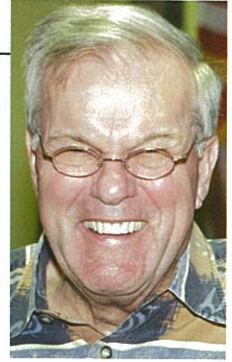
Fall 2015

GRAPEVINE

BIBLE TEACHING RESOURCES
by DON ANDERSON MINISTRIES

*"Therefore, my beloved brethren,
be steadfast, immovable, always
abounding in the work of the
Lord, knowing that your toil is
not in vain in the Lord."*

(1 Corinthians 15:58 DAV)



Hang on Tight & Do the Right

“The days are coming,” declares the Sovereign Lord, “when I will send a famine through the land—not a famine of food or a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the words of the Lord” (Amos 8:11 NIV).

Joel Rosenberg has written many novels and a wonderful book on discipleship I have used. In the book *Implosion: Can America Recover from Its Economic & Spiritual Challenges in Time?* Rosenberg writes the following:

Suddenly I heard the Lord speak directly back to me. Whether it was audible or not I cannot say, but it might as well have been, because the message was loud and clear. “Joel, do you ever really study my Word?” God asked me. Stunned, I thought about it for a few moments and finally had to say no. Obviously I had read the Bible from time to time in my life, but the blunt truth was I had never been serious about knowing the Scriptures for myself. Then God said, “Joel, do you ever spend time talking to me in prayer?” Immediately I was deeply ashamed of myself. Again I had to say no. Of course I had said prayers now and then, but I had never been serious about talking to—or listening to—the Lord.

At that point, God lowered the boom. “Then, Joel, why would you expect to experience my blessings when you don’t even really know me?” Then the transmission, as it were, ceased. (332)

Thumbing through the newspaper the other day, I noticed that actor Dean Jones of Disney fame died at 84 from Parkinson’s disease. After I read that obituary, I turned to the Lord and said, “I don’t know how much ground time I have left but I really want to know what You want me to focus on these last days.”

The Apostle Paul, in 1 Corinthians 15:58, concludes the chapter on the resurrection with this advice: “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord” (DAV).

Three key statements mark this resurrection chapter.

Statement One: 1 Corinthians 15:50: “Now, this I am saying, brethren, that flesh and blood are not able to inherit the kingdom of God; nor is the perishable inheriting the imperishable” (DAV). We can do nothing apart from God to gain His kingdom.

Statement Two: 1 Corinthians 15:57: “but thanks be to God, who is giving us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (DAV). With Him, all things are possible. Let’s have an attitude of gratitude.

Statement Three: 1 Corinthians 15:58: “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord” (DAV). This verse is a command. It starts with the adverb “therefore,” so we know Paul is giving us a concluding command in view of what he

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GRAPEVINE FALL 2015

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From the Editor

Fall is a transitional time and we at Bible Teaching Resources are beginning transitions as well. In this issue, Don encourages us all to “Hang On Tight & Do the Right” as we face the finish line in work, relationships, family life, even life itself. For many months now, Don and Pearl have been discipling a group of believers. Some of these remarkable disciples offer equally remarkable insights into life and scripture in a special article inside. And if you’ve ever wondered just what inspires Pearl Anderson, a glimpse at the sayings and verses tacked on her refrigerator will give you a clue. We hope that this issue finds you well and we thank you for your continued prayers, friendship, and support.

—M. Jane Rodgers



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*A higher standard.
A higher purpose.*

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September 18, 2015

Don Anderson
Don Anderson Ministries
P.O. Box 6611
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Dear Don,

While attending an event for All Saints Episcopal School last night, my wife, Jaime, encountered a gentleman who is associated with your ministry. In the course of their conversation, Jaime shared that you had been an influence on our spiritual path; and he in turn shared that you may be reaching a milestone point in your ministry. Her synopsis of that visit brought to mind so many wonderful memories, hence this note.

"Way back" in 1978, we attended a Bible study you were teaching in Waco, TX, on the churches in the Book of Revelation. At that time, both my wife and I were school teachers, yet we were experiencing a compelling sense of calling to "something more." Your teaching inspired me to consider broadening the horizons of just what that "something more" might be.

To briefly summarize all that followed, shortly after attending that study we were accepted to seminary, quit our jobs in Waco, sold our house, and began what has now been a nearly forty year pilgrimage to our current place of service. Just as a sidelight, I wrote you a letter in 1979 outlining the beginning of that process, which you included in an edition of the "The Coaches Clipboard" (I still have a copy).

Over the course of the years that followed, we have served in four churches, the two longest tenures begin at First Baptist Church of Tulsa, OK, for 14 years, and currently at Green Acres Baptist Church here in Tyler, for the past 15 years and counting.

All of that is simply to say Thank You for how God used your example and influence as a strategic milestone in our path to "actually becoming all that God has had in mind for us to be," (TLB). For that example, for that influence, and for your years of dedicated service, we will be eternally grateful.

Gratefully,



Ken Warren

God can do anything, you know -- far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us. Ephesians 3:20-21- The Message

Lessons from Disciples

As our readers know, Don has been discipling groups of men and women. Here are some insights and encouragement from some of these followers of Christ, all active in His kingdom.



From Scott Borgmann:

Jeannie and I have had a busy but fun-filled summer. We started our summer devoting our time to camps that cater to foster kids: Royal Family Kids Camp (RFKC) and Teen Reach Adventure Camp (TRAC). RFKC is a five day camp for kids, ages 7-11 and TRAC is a three day camp for teens, ages 12-15. We have been involved with these camps for the past 15 years. Kids get a chance to hear about God's promise of the hope He has given us through His Son. What has always amazed me over the years is that the camps were started to reach the abused and neglected kids in foster care, but God also uses these times to continue His work in us. I like to say that these camps are a vacation with a purpose. We saw God answer many prayers as we prepared for each session. God's faithfulness serves to strengthen our faith.

Through TRAC, I have also been given an opportunity to mentor someone. Don has been preparing us to take on the role of a mentor, and I have been praying that God would bring someone into my life. Now He has. I say all this to simply

state that, as imperfect as I am, God continues to use me in ways I would have never imagined. My prayer, as Jeannie and I move forward, is that the spirit of power, love and self-discipline that is given us, as stated in 2 Timothy 1:7, is used to bring honor and glory to God.

From Rich Knarr:

We've had a great summer. It's fun to see how much the kids look forward to getting out of school for the summer and then to see them enjoy all the sights, sounds, and experiences that summer has to offer. But by the end, it's also interesting to see that (even though they won't admit it) I think they are ready to return to school and the routine that it offers. After sleeping in each day throughout the summer, all three were up on their own (bright eyed and bushy tailed) for the first day of school!

This summer we took a wonderful trip to Alaska. Three generations of Knarrs were together, which was really neat. I think my dad really enjoyed it. It was also nice to have the Hegtvedts along. They are wonderful.

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I read and enjoyed John Ortberg's *Soul Keeping*. I like Ortberg and his writing style, including the fact he is not afraid to admit his faults and shortcomings and the effect of these on his soul. His honesty makes the book relevant to me, because I find that I have so many of the same thoughts and feelings. I believe we all do, to some degree. But the picture he paints of what a soul connected to God looks like is truly a beautiful thing.

Inductive study continues. I have read James several times through but just need to complete putting all my thoughts and observations down on paper.

From Joe Freeman:

Joshua 1:9 states, "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." This summer has been a "season" of change for me and my family. During this time I have found my thoughts and at times my heart filled with joy, fear and a sense of uncertainty like never before.

In May, my family lost our first parent and grandparent. She was a loving mother to my wife and a wonderful grandmother to my children. We miss her thoughtful homemade cards at birthdays and her wonderful sense of humor. Whenever we got together she never failed to have us laughing, usually at one of her funny stories about her childhood and growing up on the west coast. We very rarely heard the same story twice. She was one of a kind and a blessing to us all. We miss her.

In June, we celebrated my son's high school graduation, took a family vacation, and then in no time at all we were dropping him off at College Station in August. He is a good and honorable son. We are truly blessed.

This September, I was reminded that Daddy's little girl has officially become an adult. She celebrated her 21st birthday. It seems like it was just last week when she was dancing around the house in her Cinderella dress, asking, "Daddy, am I pretty?" She has become a beautiful young lady right before our very eyes. We are truly blessed.

And now to top it all off, my wife and I are trying to get accustomed to the "empty nest" fraternity. God love her and bless her. She is a saint and yes, as Don would say, I know I married over my head. I am truly blessed.

We are reminded by friends and family that these seasons are all part of life and it is good...and it is. God is good and faithful through it all. He has taught me that blessings can be found in times of joy, pain and even uncertainty. God is with us in all seasons of life, as He reminds us in Joshua 1:9.

From Doug Brown:

Dear Friends....This has been a very interesting year for Kynell and me. It has been so much fun to see what God has planned for us. My most often offered prayer is that God would use us where and when He will, to His glory.

Many opportunities have come our way, from chances to talk to the occasional pilot in the cockpit on the way to Hawaii or to the waiter at the local eatery or even to the random passenger asking why I am so happy. Jesus loves me, this I know!

If we will stop and listen, He will share His plan for us. So often we pray and tell God what we want or expect: new Job, a baby, a friend, a wife, or husband. I believe we should be asking for His guidance and then listening for the answers. Seek and you will find.

I recently was thinking of an old friend, wondering what had ever become of him. So I googled his name. There it was. The first thing that came up was his picture on his obituary. Oops...I had been thinking of him for years. Why didn't I call him? God puts people in our paths and in our hearts for a reason. We should take the time to listen....when you think of old or new friends, call them and tell them you are thinking

of them. You never know what a blessing you will be to others unless you act.

Recently I was asked to take over the men's ministry leadership position at our church. My first thought was that I may not be the most qualified, but then if you look all throughout the Bible, you will see many "not so qualified" people that God used for His glory. Kynell and I will take this opportunity to serve and gather my brothers in His name. Listen to these words of our Lord Jesus Christ: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20).

From Andre Markle:

Our summer has been a chapter of new beginnings for our family. We celebrated Finley's kindergarten graduation in May and that very night went to the hospital to bring baby Connor into the world. We have been through struggles, tears, laughter, and pure delight as we have transitioned from a family of three to a family of four. We have recognized God's perfect hand in all of this. Lessons we have learned are a multitude from realizing that life is not meant to be easy, learning to find joy in the midst of chaos, and remembering to enjoy every bit of time that we have together. We also were reminded to continue to be diligent and work hard at whatever we are doing.

In my study of Ruth I found myself scared silly when I pictured myself in Naomi's shoes in the first chapter and was totally amazed at her transformation from utter despair to praising the Lord. I hold onto the truth that with the Lord a day can be completely transforming.

In my reading of *Soul Keeping* (which I admit I haven't quite completed) there were several things that hit me hard that I needed to hear at that very moment. Chapter seven really spoke to me and I realized how true it is that it is no one's responsibility but my own to live in accordance with the Lord to keep my soul intact. It is so easy to cast blame and rationalize actions. Ortberg brought to my attention that blaming and rationalizing bring wickedness into my life. I have no doubt that God was speaking to me during that reading.



From Heidi McKellar:

The insights that follow are from our study of the book of Malachi. Historically, Malachi is written at a time when the Jews are back in their homeland. The temple has been rebuilt, but the nation is at a spiritual low. Throughout the Bible, God remains faithful to Israel and yet again, Israel is unfaithful to God. Israel is rebellious. Malachi means "my messenger." So what is the message? Through a series of declarations followed by questions that are then answered one discovers this. In Malachi the sins of Israel are delineated. The lessons are yet applicable today.

Repudiating God's unconditional love

Malachi 1:1-5: "I have loved you, ...but you ask 'how have you loved us?' I have loved Jacob, but Esau I have hated." This is important, because Jacob was chosen, and loved unconditionally apart from any merit. Esau was not chosen. God loves us unconditionally, yet this love does not absolve us of our guilt. The Israelites are the chosen people and yet are guilty of spiritual indifference. They are not bringing their best to God. God is calling and He does not change His purpose of bringing believers close. We are guilty of not bringing our best to God and of being indifferent to His love for us.

Refusing to honor God

Malachi 1:6-2:9: "a son honors his father, and a servant his master...where is the honor due me? Where is the respect due me? It is you O priests who show contempt...'how have we shown contempt for your name'?" At this time the priests are allowing people to bring sacrifices that are flawed. The priests are making a living

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Farewell to The Firs

Psalm 84:6: “When they walk through the Valley of Weeping, it will become a place of refreshing springs, where pools of blessing collect after the rains!” (NLT).

Psalm 23:4: Even when I walk through the dark valley of death, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me. Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me” (NLT).

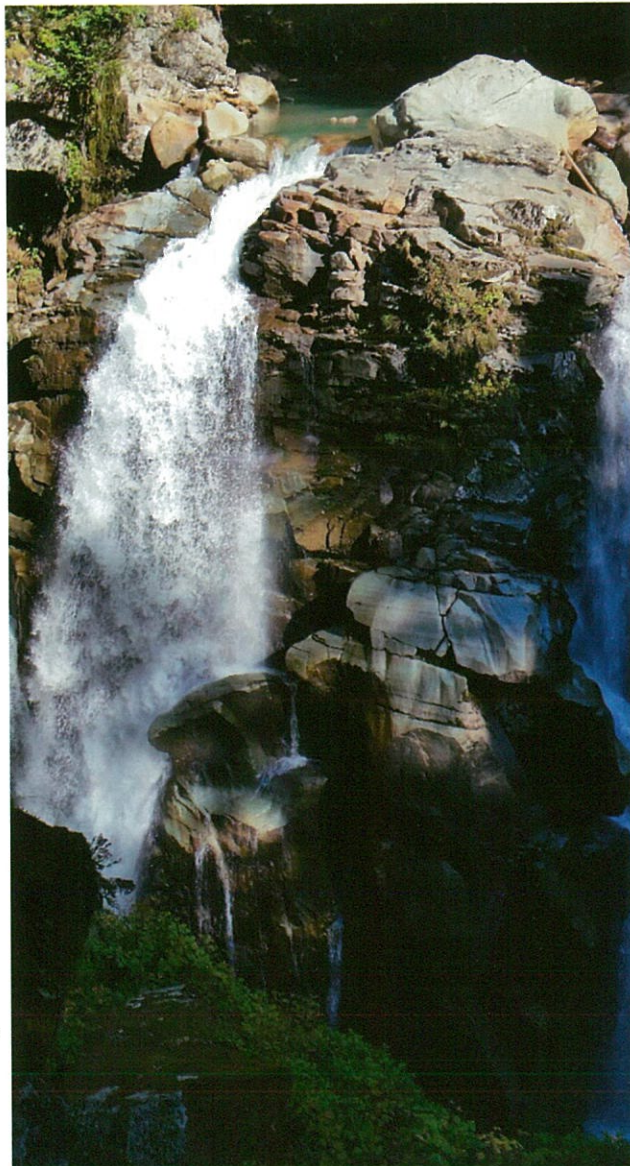
The repetition of the little word “through” in the verses above lets us know that there is victory ahead and we are going to get through this, whatever it is that we face.

Someone has written that “A good leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way.

One year ago last summer, I was diagnosed with Parkinson’s. Shortly after the diagnosis, we made our annual trip to The Dunes Bible Camp in Washington state.

I told folks at The Dunes when we finished the Labor Day conference that I would probably not be returning.

When we arrived home, we found an invitation from The Firs to come and be their speaker, September 8-12, 2015. I really wanted to do this conference because of the sweet memories we had of



our ministry at The Firs from 1962 –1967.

While we served on The Firwood staff those years, Andy and Julea were born.

Grant Whipple was the executive director of The Firs at that time. He gave me a wonderful opportunity to journey south, along with several members of our staff, to California to meet Wetherell Johnson and Miss Hertzler who had just started Bible Study Fellowship. The week was transforming for me because it helped me realize that my love for the word and the teaching of the word were gifts God had given to me.

I asked Ms. Johnson if she thought it would be a good idea to try to write inductive Bible studies for the Firwood staff and do away with outside speakers



and have the staff trained to teach the word. She encouraged me and Dr. Whipple also encouraged me when I got home to give it a try. I wrote the first studies on 1 John and it was an amazing summer to see The Firs staff respond and the campers respond to having their own personal Bible teachers 24 hours a day. Lives were transformed.

Some years later, I was invited to help start Pine Cove. I used the same program and approach for the five summers that we there and again God really blessed the teaching of His word.

After the Pine Cove experience, it was on the road with the word of God and for 43 years, I have been teaching the word.

We accepted the opportunity to teach at the senior adult conference at The Firs with the stipulation that if the Parkinson's had done its work so that I could not be effective in the teaching of the word, we would ask not to go.

We prayed regularly for the opportunity and our friend Walter Wilhelmi volunteered to go along and assist in any way that he could to make the conference possible. Then our son Bobby also volunteered to come along. Bobby

spent part of his childhood there when we lived at The Firs for five years. It was like going home to him.

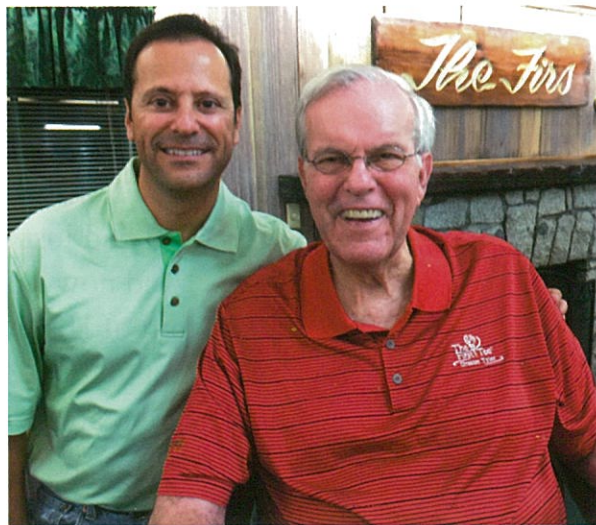
Madeline made the travel plans for us, arranging for wheelchairs, rental cars, and all those things, and on September 7, we traveled to Seattle. We spent the night in Seattle and had a wonderful dinner at Ivar's Salmon House, one of my favorite restaurants.

The next morning after breakfast at Denny's we made our way to The Firs. We arrived early in the afternoon on September 8. The staff suggested that we go up and look

at all the things that have happened at Firwood. The Firs has three facilities: a historic conference center in Bellingham, Camp Firwood five miles up Lake Whatcom, and a ski chalet at Mt. Baker, 52 miles away.

Saying farewell to Firwood was emotional because of the years we spent there training counselors and teaching Bible studies. Bobby, Walter, and Pearl helped us move into our cabins on the main grounds in Bellingham.

continued on next page



The Firs



2 Timothy was our text for study. God gave freedom of the Spirit in that first teaching session.

Each day was blessed with surprises. Our youngest daughter, Julea, and her daughter, Taylor, came and spent two days with us. My sister, Lila, and her husband, Herb, also registered for the conference.

Richard and Mary George drove from Seattle and Scott and Jeannie Borgmann drove from Bremerton. On Friday of the week we got to make the 100 mile round trip to the ski chalet. By the way, the Lord worked a real miracle in the weather, cloudless clear skies every day. We had a special lunch at The Firs Chalet. Mt. Shuksan and Mt. Baker were visible: a beautiful sight. What a trip and what a memory! Sunday evening we were back in Tyler and our special thanks to Walter, Bobby and Pearl. What a wonderful way to say goodbye to The Firs.

In my last message on Saturday night I focused on 2 Timothy 4:6-8: "As for me, my life has already been poured out as an offering to God. The time of my death is near, I have fought a good fight, have finished the race and I have remained faithful. And now the prize



awaits me, crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge will give me on that great day of His return. And the prize is not just for me but for all who eagerly look forward to

His glorious return."

In Acts 20:36, Paul says goodbye to the Ephesian elders: "When he had finished speaking he knelt and prayed with them. They wept aloud as they embraced him in farewell. Sad most of all because he had said that they would never see him again. Then they accompanied him down to the ship."

Paul had just said to them earlier in Acts 20:32: "And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified" (NASB).

My, my, how God has blessed us with the opportunity once again to teach His word. The Lord does exceeding abundant, above all that we can ask or think.

I conclude this meditation with one of my favorite phrases from a Puritan prayer:

"Give me then repentance, true brokenness, lasting contrition."



Pearl's Reflections

by Pearl Anderson

Safe in His Care

"Keep your eyes open, hold tight to your convictions, give it all you've got, be resolute, and love without stopping"

(1 Corinthians 16:13-14 The Message)

Maxine, a sarcastic cartoon character, sure has people my age pegged right: "Brain cells come and brain cells go, but fat cells live forever."

To counter-act the "brain cell" dilemma, I have several sticky notes posted in the kitchen at home and my office at work. Some of the most obvious I share with a smile, some with regret that I did not post them forty years ago. Here are some:

You can't have a good day with a bad attitude, and you can't have a bad day with a good attitude.

"Lord, please pour out a blessing on the ones who honor you as they share their gifts and talents by the thoughtful things they do."

--Emily Matthews

Walk steadily toward God without fear.

"The Lord is close to the broken hearted; He rescues those who are crushed in spirit" Psalm 34:18 (NLT).

"This kind cannot come out by anything but prayer" Mark 9:19 (NASB).

The best thing to hold is each other.

This is my promise verse: "But you, be strong and do not lose courage, for there is reward for your work." 2 Chronicles 15:7 (NASB).

It Is Well with My Soul

And, Lord, haste the day when the faith
shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll,
The trump shall resound and the Lord
shall descend.

Even so—it is well with my soul.

It is well with my soul.

It is well with my soul.

RECIPE CORNER

Donna's Delights

French Cheese Bread

From Donna Anderson
Skorheim

*Try this for your next
football party or with a
salad and pasta!*

1 long loaf of French bread
1 cup mayonnaise
1 cup butter, softened
1 8oz. pkg. grated
mozzarella cheese

Cut bread lengthwise and
lay on foil or cookie sheet.
Mix together mayonnaise,
butter and cheese. Spread
mixture on both halves.
Bake 30 minutes in 350
oven. Slice and serve!

Soul Keeping: Caring for the Most Important Part of You

by John Ortberg (Thomas Nelson 2014)

We have used this book with all the disciple couples this summer. It has been very meaningful and helpful to each of the disciples.

Ortberg quotes Dallas Willard in *Renovation of the Heart*: “Our soul is like a stream of water, which gives strength, direction, and harmony to every other area of our life. When that stream is as it should be, we are constantly refreshed and exuberant in all we do, because our soul itself is then profusely rooted in the vastness of God and his kingdom, including nature; and all else within us is enlivened and directed by that stream. Therefore we are in harmony with God, reality, and the rest of human nature and nature at large” (15).

This also would be a good book to read with others and also to have small group discussions on each chapter.

All The Places To Go: How Will You Know?

by John Ortberg (Tyndale 2015)

We are going to use this book this next year in our discipleship discussions and instruction. It is a great book on identifying the open and closed doors in our lives. Ortberg says it well as he describes what he calls “open-door people”: “Some of the saddest stories are about calls that never get answered, risks that never get taken, obedience that never gets offered, joyful generosity that never gets given, adventures that never happen, lives that never get lived. I hope that’s not you” (42).

Books on heaven and eternity

Since I have Parkinson’s and now know that my ground time may be brief, I have been reading books on the subject of finishing well and anticipating heaven. Friends, for me, I don’t know how long that will be. Don’t waste a day.

My Final Word

by Charles Colson

Chuck Colson recently went home to be with the Lord. This is his final book; he issues the challenge for believers to hold “tight to the issues that matter most.” The text on the flyleaf says it well: The issues you cannot ignore from the voice you will not forget.”

Colson identifies twelve issues: apologetics; bioethics and life issues; Christians and public life; church and culture; crime, punishment, and justice; happiness; homosexuality and the Church; Islam versus Christianity; judicial usurpation; persecution; suffering; clashing worldviews.

Where I Am: Heaven, Eternity, and Our Life Beyond

by Billy Graham

With a scheduled September release, this book is supposed to reveal what Billy Graham believes about the afterlife as time on earth wanes. Graham shares the Bible’s message about eternity, discusses how humans choose their eternal destinations, and, not surprisingly, urges readers to embrace Christ.

If you have already read Dr. Graham’s *Nearing Home*, you’re really going to enjoy this book too.

mailbag

Many thanks for *A Great While Before Day*. Ever since hearing you at the Potter Law Firm and at Doug's home, I have enjoyed and learned from your messages. May God grant you vision & keep teaching us through Bible Teaching Resources.

Thanks for the wonderful material. I always look forward to the study. Hope you'll be staying cool. Such hot weather.

The new daily devotional guide along with the *Grapevine* just arrived and I was so excited to know they are still coming. I look forward to spending time in it each morning and bless you both for your faithful witness. I'm thankful I can lend my support with this gift.

As I was reading your devotional for today, I told myself—I simply must write to you. I sometimes read two or three of your offerings, taking them in one big gulp!



I wanted you to know I appreciated your keeping me on your list of mailings, also your pictures of yourselves—time is kind to you! I am 87 now. Bill went to his heavenly home in 2004 and by 2009 my children insisted I come from having lived in the North Carolina mountains to the more arid Yakima, Washington. I found a good church and a choir that needed another alto—so I am happily settled in and content! So, I'm still growing in the Lord and am so very BLESSED. This pic I've decided to send is of a new born (almost) great granddaughter, who is now almost three. I know that God prompted me in writing you today.

MEMORIALS & GIFTS

In memory of Orville Burns
By Tori Bredin

In memory of Warren Evans
By Pat Evans

In memory of Laura Mae Gunter
By Brian & Kathleen Leo

Prison Ministry Gifts
Steven Pickett
Pat Evans

Grapevine Sponsors
Richard & Mary George

has taught us about the resurrection in the previous 57 verses.

Paul focuses on a relationship when he calls his readers “beloved brethren.” He issues a threefold set of instructions: Be steadfast; be immovable; be always abounding in the work of the Lord.

Phillips paraphrases the verse this way: “And so, brothers of mine, stand firm! Let nothing move you as you busy yourselves in the Lord’s work. Be sure that nothing you do for him is ever lost or ever wasted.”

So the question arises, for me as for all of us, “About what do I need to be steadfast?” The number one priority must be to maintain the spiritual disciplines: time reading God’s word, time in prayer, time for accountability, time for scripture memory, time to witness for Christ. After this, the directive is to maintain servant leadership. Next, teach others. Next, disciple others. Finally, worship and praise Him who enables it all.

“But He knows the way that I take; when He has tested me, I will come forth as gold” (Job 23:10 NIV).

“In my opinion whatever we may have to go through now is less than nothing compared with the magnificent future God has planned for us” (Romans 8:18 Phillips).

My charge to you is to keep looking unto Jesus. He will walk with you in all His and your ways. My precious daughter Becky, who went home to be with the Lord just a few years ago, knew this well. Insert your name in 1 Corinthians 15:58, as I have my daughter’s, and you will understand that the directive is to you, in whatever ground time you have left.

Therefore, my beloved Becky or _____, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.

I have made it a habit in my devotional time each day to read a Puritan prayer from the book *The Valley of Vision*. This one is especially transparent:

Go on to subdue my corruptions, and grant me grace to live above them. Let not the passions of the flesh nor lustings of the mind bring my spirit into subjection, but do thou rule over me in liberty and power. Go on with thy patient work, answering ‘no’ to my wrongful prayers, and fitting me to accept it.

Purge me from every false desire, every base aspiration, everything contrary to thy rule.

If thou shouldst give me choice to live in pleasure and keep my sins, or to have them burnt away with trial, give me sanctified affliction. (77)

Today, I find myself singing Horatio Spafford’s “It Is Well with My Soul”:

*And, Lord, haste the day when
my faith shall be sight,
the clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
the trump shall resound,
and the Lord shall descend,
even so, it is well with my soul.*

Lessons from Disciples

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rather than answering a calling to lead people in the ways pleasing to God. The priests are to set the right example and not be careless or overly casual. We also need to be reverent and in awe and behave accordingly, starting with our leaders. The lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge...because he is the messenger of the Lord Almighty.

Rejecting faithfulness

Malachi 2:10-16 teaches us to take heed of our spirit and the things that are in our minds. In our marriages if we accept unfaithfulness and behavior that is sinful, the commitment is diluted and we dilute our faithfulness to God. There are things that destroy our marriages whether they lead to divorce or not: TV, pornography, idols to self. These things also destroy our children and lead to faithlessness in them.

Redefining righteousness to serve themselves

Malachi 2:17-3:5 reveals lessons including that God is a refiner and purifier who accepts offerings from the pure of heart, after sin is purged away. God accepts men who bring offerings in righteousness. So we cannot just bring offerings if we have not changed our hearts and admitted our sin. God knows our hearts and will accept what we have to offer when we allow Him to purge away those sins that take us away from Him

Stealing from God

Malachi 3:6-12 shows us that the Lord does not change. All that we have is a gift from God. If we hold too tightly to our possessions, we have closed hands that cannot hold all God has to give us. God wants to show us what He can do if we have faith and trust that He will not abandon us. We must ask God what He would do with all that He has given us and remember that all we have is from Him.

Repudiating God's grace

Malachi 3:13-4:3 cautions us against rejecting

what God offers. God is so patient with us, mercifully so. He is not through extending His mercy to His people. Malachi the messenger has pointed out the sins, both asked and answered the questions as to why these are sinful ways and how to get it right before the day the Lord comes.

The things difficult to answer in Malachi's time are just as difficult to answer today. It is easy to forget God's unconditional love, to refuse to forget to honor God in all we do, to not take heed of our minds and spirit and reject faithfulness, to redefine being righteous to suit our own conscience, to rob God of all we should give back, to be unfaithful stewards, and to accuse Him of being unfair without mercy when things do not go our way. God is unchanging in His love for us, and we should remain steadfast in our focus on Him, remembering that He is patient (look how patient he has been with Israel since the beginning of the Bible) and that if we renounce our sinful ways, we can be closer to Him.

Our summer has involved getting settled in Iowa. I have started work, and I have found that taking care of people with cancer is the same no matter where I go. I love listening to people's stories and I am happy to help them regain physical health, recognizing that when cancer wins, God still wins bigger. I am sure He knows what I need daily, but since my hiatus from oncology since December, I now know I am more than the work that I do and that my worth is not in that work, no matter how rewarding it may spiritually be. We have joined a church and hopefully will get in a small group soon. Cornerstone is a pretty large Bible teaching church; it started as a college ministry interestingly enough.

After reading and studying Malachi, I have wondered how many times I asked the questions that Israel asked of God, thinking I knew how things should be, and doubting God's love and care for me. I learned a lot from this study and I am anxious to look at other books in the Bible in the same way. I hope I am listening to God. I am pretty sure He hears me.

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