

# The FAITH BUILDER

THIS ISSUE:  
Giving God First Place

July/Aug  
2007

2007  
2006  
2005  
2004



"Dear friends, BUILD yourselves up in your most holy FAITH..." -Jude 1:20

## I Think I Finally Got It

Susan Rotz

*Susan Rotz became a Christian shortly before the beginning of Hope Church. She and her husband, Rob, were searching for a church home, and they came to our very first public worship service. They stayed for fourteen years. Now, as Susan's family prepares to move to Maryland, Susan reflects on the lessons God has taught her and the ways she has personally changed during these fourteen incredible years.*

### WHY COULDN'T I GET IT?

Pastor Paul asked me to chronicle my Christian journey within the life of Hope Church over the past fourteen years. That is how long I have been a Christian. Hope Church is my first church experience, and it is much like that of one's first love. I love Hope Church and always will. God led me to exactly the right church for me, despite my own belief as a new Christian that I needed an established church, not a brand new one. Rob and I went to that first service on Easter Sunday and knew immediately it was the church for us. I could probably write pages extolling Hope Church but I think I can sum it up in one line. God is in this church.

Just after joining Hope Church, I remember learning that being a

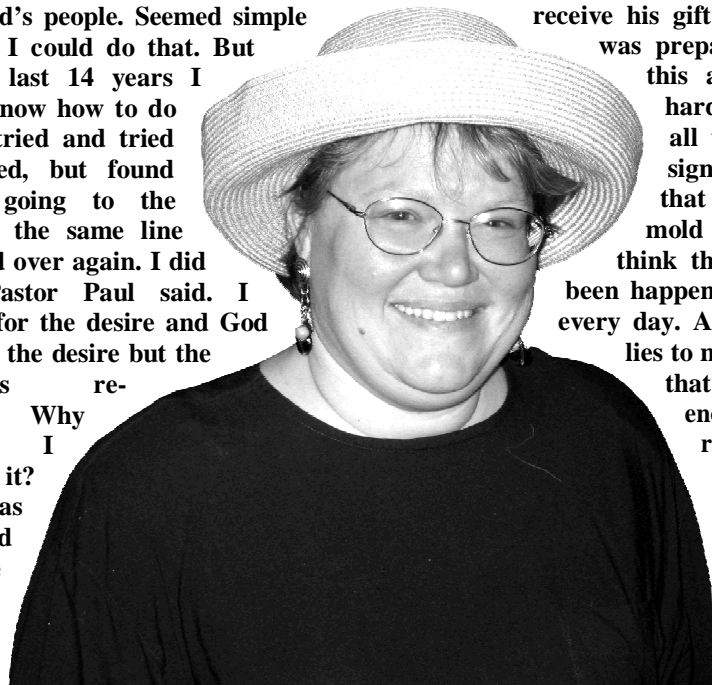
Christian was all about having a close trusting relationship with Jesus. I wanted that. All through the last 14 years I have seen people at Hope who had that and I wanted that too.

So I asked and listened and found that the way to have a close relationship with Jesus was to spend time with him every day—praying, reading, and memorizing his word—and to fellowship with God's people. Seemed simple enough; I could do that. But for the last 14 years I didn't know how to do that. I tried and tried and tried, but found myself going to the back of the same line over and over again. I did what Pastor Paul said. I prayed for the desire and God gave me the desire but the questions remained. Why couldn't I get it? Why was it so hard for me to do these simple

things? Why could other people get it and not me?

### FORGIVING FATHER AND RECEIVING LOVE

Well, it took 14 years, but I think I finally got it. There were some things that God had to teach me before I would be ready to get it, and by "get it" I mean to receive his gift of love. As I was preparing to write this article, it was hard to remember all the really big, significant events that God used to mold me because I think that change has been happening a little bit every day. Also, Satan still lies to me and tells me that I'm not good enough and there really isn't anything I have to share. But Satan is a liar and God is truth and when I asked God



to show me what to share, he gave me a few things that I pray will draw you closer to Him.

I don't know what order these all happened in, but I think the teaching that brought me the closest to God was all about forgiveness and the desperate need we all have for the love of our fathers. I won't go into all the details of my childhood, but needless to say I did not have a good relationship with my father. It wasn't really bad either; I just didn't really have one. He lived 3 hours away and I didn't have to deal with him on a regular basis. As a matter of fact, I could go for a year or more without ever calling him or having a need to visit him.

However, even though he was not in my daily life any more, I did carry around a mess of self-condemnation and guilt. Satan was lying to me and telling me that I was not good enough for my own father to love me. How could God or anybody else love me? How could Rob love me? It was hard to accept love, but Pastor Paul kept preaching that God loved me, and that I needed to honor my father and that forgiveness was a key ingredient.

The father thing was so right on. I was

treating God the same way I was treating my father—like he was non-existent and that I didn't need him. Consequently, I was also treating Rob the same way. To make a long story short, with some help, I was able to forgive my father.

I realized that my father's inability to love me the way I needed to be loved was not my fault. After releasing that bit of baggage, God showed me that Jesus died for my father's sins just as he died for mine and that my father's sins were no worse than mine. If Jesus could hang on a cross for my father, who was I not to forgive him, too? So I made the choice to forgive my father and in so doing was able to see that I did need God, I did need Rob, and I did need my father in my life.

Release, relief, joy, peace, and love are all words that come to mind when I think of coming out the end of that dark tunnel into the light. Laraba Kendig once testified in a church service how God was not content to leave us in the darkness, and that God wants to bring us into the light. I hold onto those words to this day because that is what God has done in my life over and over again. He has proven to me that he is faithful, and that I can trust him completely.

## HOW COULD I NOT TRUST GOD?

God has used Hope Church to show me His love in many ways. Sometimes God has to drag me from the darkness into the light, kicking and screaming. Despite many internal struggles, I did not share them with others very often because, of course, Satan was lying to me and telling me I did not deserve to trouble other people with my problems.

But one time I had a talk with Pastor Paul and he asked me if I trusted God, and I honestly had to say I did not. From that time forward, I had to know why I didn't trust Him. Once it was said, I could not let it just be. How could I not trust God?

I had watched this brand new church trust God to provide every year and He did. It was amazing to be at a church business meeting where each year we stepped out in faith to increase the pastor's salary and in the end the money was there. It was obvious the leaders of Hope were seeking after God's plan, not man's plan. I was amazed every time I turned around because people would pray for something and it would happen. God was answering prayer in this



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## The FAITH BUILDER

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Unless indicated otherwise, all Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version.

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fellowship. It was such a privilege for me to see this church grow from the beginning because I was growing right along with it. God gave me this great gift of fellowship.

It is a good thing God was showing me that I could have faith and trust in him because there was a time when Satan attacked my marriage. During this time, a medical doctor gave a misdiagnosis that suggested there had been unfaithfulness in the marriage. Later, we got another opinion and further tests that proved the first diagnosis was wrong. But in the meantime, we chose to trust God and to believe in one another.

God honored our faith and commitment. I remember coming out of that dark tunnel into God's light feeling stronger and closer to Him. I could not see the purpose while we were in the tunnel but hung onto God's promise to turn all things to good for those who love him.

Another time of growth in the faith and trust department happened when God was telling us that it was time for me to be at home full-time, which meant I had to quit my job that I loved and had been doing for 18 years and cut our income in half.

This was not easy, but we knew it had to be done. Rob worked full time, was finishing his college education in an accelerated program, and cared for 3 young children in the evening while I worked. Yes, it was time to take this step, but on paper the finances didn't add up properly in the black. I had seen God

provide money before so we took this step of faith and we didn't go under. We went in debt and could have been a lot better stewards but God is merciful and forgiving and still keeps his promises. God is giving us a second chance to be better stewards and you can pray for us that we would honor His gifts.

### LOVING CARE AND BIBLICAL TEACHING

The loving care and good solid biblical teaching I received from Hope changed my life and brought me closer and closer to God. The people of Hope church reached out and cared for my family through the births of my children, all of which were high risk pregnancies with long periods of complete bed rest. When Rob's health was failing you prayed, drove him to work daily for months, and even dug the biggest ditch ever (a trench outside our house to repair a basement wall).

I remember that our first Hope Group with the Hoppes opened my eyes to the fact that it was possible to raise godly children. I just wanted to sit in their home and watch them parent and I did on many occasions. In the Manwiller Hope Group we ate dinner together and read missionary stories where, not only did I see how much God cares for his people and that I can trust Him to take care of me, but my children learned great table manners. When Rob was a Hope Group Shepard, I saw what a great responsibility the church takes in caring for God's people and how important it is to respect the authorities in my life.

Nora led a study on biblical womanhood which introduced God's plan for wives being helpmates, and I learned how doing housewife-like things was valuable and good. I learned that submission was not a bad word as we studied a book called *The Excellent Wife*. Submitting to God and submitting to my husband did not mean I was being held down under his thumb. Submission is a choice made out of love. God is still working this one out in me, but he has shown me that His design for men and women is amazing and submitting to Him will be okay and a blessing.

God uses Pastor Paul and his way with words and teaching style to speak to my heart with direct, honest wisdom—and all for free! Pastor Paul has many wise sayings and one that I think changed my thinking about "church" is when he said it was not his job as a pastor to make

me feel comfortable. Thank God, because when I was uncomfortable, it usually meant I had some sin to deal with.

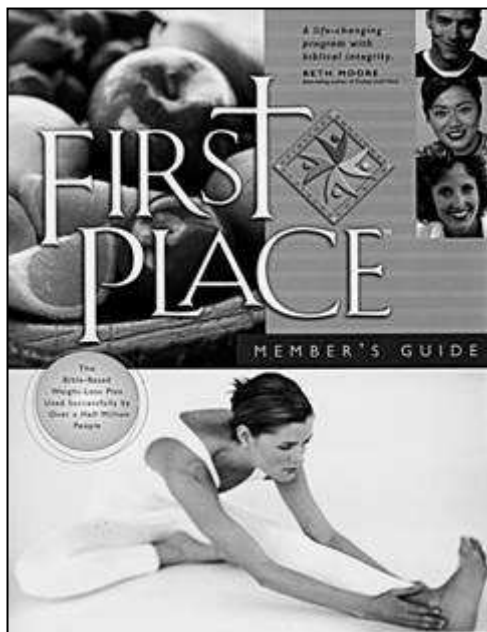
I spent much of my youth and young adult life being crippled by fear because I worried about what other people thought of me. But Pastor Paul casually said in a church service one time not to worry about whether other people are looking at or thinking about you because most likely they are NOT. The other people are sitting there wondering what everyone else is thinking of them. Seems so simple and logical and yet I have never forgotten those words as they took a huge chunk out of a stronghold Satan had in my life. I began to wonder what God thought of me more than other people.

A more recent sermon about being a lukewarm Christian reminded me again of this lesson. I knew I wasn't where God wanted me to be, and that I did not want to be spat out, so I sat in a prayer group after the service and confessed that I was a lukewarm Christian. That was hard, but God has also taught me that confession is a powerful tool against Satan. As long as I kept my sin a secret, Satan would balloon it up to an unimaginable weight and size, but as soon as I would utter my sin out loud, the balloon would pop, the weight would be gone, and then I could just begin to pick up the pieces and He would be there beside me.

### CHOOSING TO GIVE GOD FIRST PLACE

Listen up now. Even after getting good solid teaching and seeing God work in others and in my own life, proving Himself over and over, I still couldn't get it. The knowledge was there in my head. I knew what I had to do to be close to God. Just when I thought I couldn't go back to God one more time and ask him to forgive me once again for ignoring him, Denise Hunt called me about the First Place Program.

She said it was a kind of diet program with a Bible study and that the premise was learning how to put God first place in your life. She asked me to pray about it, so I hung up, said a little prayer, waited a little longer so she would think I really prayed about it long and hard, and called her back—with a yes. I knew I was overweight and needed to get my eating under control, but I thought that maybe this would be the thing I needed to show me how to stay close to God. Well, I'm happy to say that God has



used the First Place Program to do both things in my life.

Being a diabetic, I had a lot of education about food and exercise and that success depended upon making lifestyle changes. As I strived to keep my First Place commitments, God finally helped me to really take in this concept of lifestyle. He revealed I would have to make the choice to live each and every day for the rest of my life choosing to eat right and exercise. Then God showed me that having a close relationship with Him on a daily basis was also a lifestyle. I had to choose to read my bible, pray to Him, memorize His word and serve Him each and every day for the rest of my life. These were not things I would do for a little while and then stop.

I ask myself what was different about this time or this program and it sounds so cliché but it's the truth. I'm not alone this time. I am depending on God's strength and not my own. It wasn't until I gave up

on myself and gave God the control that I began to understand how much power He has. The power is in His Word, and in the Holy Spirit working in me. The power for victory comes when I trust and obey, when I seek His kingdom and His righteousness first, when I choose to believe that God loves me and will take care of me and that his plan is good, pleasing and perfect. These were the promises I clung to and expected God to deliver.

### PASSING THE TEST AND GRADUATING

He delivered in a big way. You see, just as I was beginning First Place and on my way to "getting it", Rob became unemployed. Normally this event would have unhinged me, and at times I could feel the fear creeping back as Satan tried to defeat the mighty work that was going on in me, but I was learning about the power of God's Word and that it is the truth. The more truth I read, the easier it was to recognize and refuse to believe Satan's lies. Amazingly, God helped me to remember that even if we lost everything he would bring us through the dark tunnel into the light and there would be something good, pleasing and perfect waiting for us. Never in my life have I had such peace and joy while going through a trial.

God is so cool! Did you notice how this article is laced with the word "choice"? I was saved with Joshua 24:15, "Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve... But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD." I was sitting in a Southern Baptist revival meeting waiting for the sky to open up and for God to reveal himself to me in this big tangible way, but then all I could hear of the sermon were the words,

"Choose you, choose you, choose you this day..."

God showed me that I needed to make a choice to believe and once I did, I knew there was no turning back. Later, of course, I learned that it was really God who chose me. I feel like, in much the same way, God has saved me again by showing me that I had to make a choice to have a lifestyle that is both healthy and godly. And like 14 years ago, once I made the choice, I knew there was no turning back.

I started out with Hope Church as a baby, was raised on good solid godly principles, and now I feel like I am a graduating senior going off to college to face the world. As many of you already know, Rob has spent many months looking for employment and God is faithful. He has answered all the prayers and Rob accepted a job and is currently working in Virginia, close to where his mom and sister live. This means that our family will also be moving soon. I do not believe for one second that it is coincidence that God gave me this victory and that I finally feel like I "get it" just when we are set to move. His timing is perfect, seldom ever early but never late.

If I were to give a graduation speech today, I would make sure to tell Hope Church that I feel ready to go out into the world to see how God will use me. I feel strong in my faith and that I am choosing God each and every day. I don't begin to even think that I can do this on my own, so I ask that you continue to keep us in your prayers. We will need to find a godly church where we can continue to fellowship, stay strong, and grow in Him (know any good "colleges" in Maryland?) I know God is with me and that He has a plan and I truly believe it is good, pleasing, and perfect. I couldn't ask for any greater graduation present. ☩



# Lessons From An Athlete

Wayde Hoppe's Testimony from Sunday, June 10

I want to share with you what I have learned as an athlete that might apply to us as we grow into mature men. My words are aimed at men, and at boys growing into men. Once upon a time I was an athlete; I am reminded that more and more I no longer am. I tried a lot of different sports. I enjoyed all of them. I was successful at a couple. I was not a great athlete. I was good, and I learned some things, and that's what I want to share with you.

The first thing that's needed for you to succeed in athletics is discipline. I think of six different disciplines that are needed. This is what I teach my own sons, and sometimes my daughters.

## DISCIPLINE #1: STRENGTH

The first discipline I think of is the discipline of strength. That seems obvious. I wrestled in high school. In wrestling, you always have opposition to what you do. So, if you push, the other guy is pushing back. If you pull, he's pulling back. If you go someplace, he's already been there. It's non-stop opposition. Almost every sport has something or someone that is opposing you. In order to overcome opposition, you have to have strength.

The sad part is that strength doesn't come easily. It almost always hurts to get stronger. The same is true for life. We are in a war, a battle. Satan opposes you. If Satan should take a break, your flesh is quick to oppose you, tempting you to give in, to indulge, and to stop fighting. It requires strength. Men have the temptation to stop resisting and we must resist that.

## DISCIPLINE #2: QUICKNESS

The second discipline is quickness. The Bible talks about being alert, ready for action, on your guard. The Bible says we have an opponent, Satan, who is walking around looking to devour you. If you want to succeed in athletics, you must be alert, attentive. You can picture the sprinter in the starter blocks. He is not looking at the people in the stands. He is not listening to the chatter of the people on the other side of the fence. His mind is on what he is doing. He is

listening for only one thing, and that's the starting gun. When that happens, he bursts forth immediately.

God wants men to be attentive in life. For some of us men, life seems to just happen to us. We're not really engaged. We're not thinking about where we are going, where the game is, or whether we are attentive and alert. Ask yourself: Do I know what's happening? Can I recognize that there is an influence on my family and me? Am I aware of it? God asks us to be attentive, aware, and anticipate.

## DISCIPLINE #3: KNOWLEDGE

The third discipline that I share with my sons is that we need to have knowledge. In sports, you must know the technique, but more basically, you need to know the goal. I have seen athletes catch the ball and go the wrong direction. Or imagine the person who is in a track race. What would happen if, during the race, he decided to go over and try his hand at pole vaulting? You've got to know the goal and stick with the goal. There's an old saying that says if you aim at nothing you're likely to hit it. If you go through life saying, I'll do a little of this and a little of that, and maybe wait until something else happens, too, when you get to the end of your life there won't be much fruit and you won't get to the goal.



I can suggest what a couple of the goals are. One of them is a godly heritage. This is Scriptural. For many of us, we will accomplish this as we raise our children. God says, "I have enough pagans and heathens in the world; I need godly men and women. You're going to raise up GODLY men and women." Some of you don't have children, but the goal is still that when you exit this life there should be more godly people than when you entered. That's part of the goal for your life—to make people who love the Lord.

The second thing that you must know is the rules. Every sport has its own rules. If you don't play by the rules, you don't win. It doesn't matter how much you might stomp your feet about the rule or the guy who called the rule—that's the rule. You just have to play by it. Once when I was wrestling, I was in an invitational tournament at Schoolcraft College. There were about thirty high schools that were invited. I was in tenth grade. I made it to the finals. I faced a wrestler who was the prior state champion. I went out on the mat and wrestled him. We were tied as we went into the third period. Then I got called for stalling. I got a warning. It got down to the last ten seconds, still tied. It was possible that it might go into overtime. I might actually win. But I got called for stalling again. They gave my opponent a point, and I lost. I hadn't played by the rules, and I didn't win the prize.

God says there is a prize for you if you live this life the way He wants you to live. He has good things in store for you. But if you say, "I know what God's goal is, but I'm not going to get there God's way. I'm going to outwardly have a ministry, but privately have a sin in my life," God says, "I'm sorry, you did not play by the rules."

## DISCIPLINE #4: COURAGE

The fourth discipline is courage. Let me clarify: courage is not fearlessness. Courage is knowing what you're afraid of, but facing it anyway. If you have competed in sports, you remember the knot you get in your stomach when you think, "I don't know if I want to do this;

this guy's going to hurt me." You need courage to face it. God wants men of courage. God will ask you to do things, particularly to forsake your own life, and that takes courage. You will be opposed by people who will ridicule you if you want to be a godly Christian man.

I remember when I was in college. I was working for a bunch of architects and engineers. I would read my Bible during lunchtime. This is not facing martyrdom, but one day they all gathered around me and scorned me. These were men that I respected and I was trying to become one of them. I wanted to be an architect. They all came to my office and laughed at me.

Another time I was an intern at an architectural firm after I graduated from college. My boss asked me one day to do something dishonest. He wanted me to change the date on my drawings. He would profit if I would lie to the client in this way. In the middle of the architectural studio, with everyone listening, I had to tell the boss I wasn't going to do that. I had an allegiance to Someone Else. He got eyeball to eyeball with me and said, "Oh, yes you will do that." And I said, "Oh no I won't do that." I was shaking in my boots.

But you do what God asks you to do. It takes courage. Many of you know that I was a principal owner of an architectural firm when, a few years ago, God said, "Your seventh child was just born; I'd like you to quit your job and start another company. Go out on your

own." It took a lot of courage to do that. If you want to be a man of God, I have learned that God will ask you to do things that are hard.

#### DISCIPLINE #5: DESIRE

The fifth discipline is the discipline of desire. I have seen many talented athletes over the years who didn't make it because they didn't want it badly enough. They thought it would be nice to be a star, and they had the talent to be a star, but they didn't want it enough to sacrifice to get it. You need to ask yourself the question, do I want it bad enough myself? Do I want to be like the godly men we read about in the biographies of Christian missionaries and Christian heroes?

#### DISCIPLINE #6: STAMINA

The last disciple that I teach my children is the discipline of stamina. The Bible calls it "endurance" and "perseverance". When you go out on the wrestling mat, the guy with the most stamina usually wins. Even if he is not the better wrestler, if he sticks with it to the end, he usually wins. That's true for most sports, and that is true for life, too. Christianity is not a sprint. It's a marathon. You have to be in it for the long run.

Some of you became Christians when you were ten or eleven years old. You must ask, "Am I in this for seventy

or eighty years?" That's what is ahead of you. That's what you are pressing for. It isn't good enough to say, "I started out strong. I was amazing when I was 20. Now that I'm 30 I have other things I'm interested in." The Bible is full of examples of people like that. Some of them were kings who started out well, but later said they had had enough of doing things God's way.

For the athlete, endurance is necessary long before the competition. You don't get up one day and say, "Today I'm going to run a marathon, having never run one before." You need to train every day. I'm sorry, but it hurts. It's not comfortable. But you must decide to be a man of endurance and put your body under discipline.

You may notice that none of my six disciplines included talent or beauty. When I was in high school, I wasn't half as talented as most of the athletes I competed against. I think that I gained a position on my teams because I tried harder than most guys. I worked harder. I wasn't distracted by things around me. I knew what I wanted, and I knew it would take me twice the effort of every one else.

God is saying to people around the world, "You don't have to be talented and you don't have to be good looking. I don't care if you have style or popularity. That's not part of the game. If you have the disciplines that I put down in my Word, you can be a great man of God." This applies to all men. This is what God expects of every man. †

FOR KIDS



## GUESS WHO I AM



**H**ello there. Let me tell you a little about myself. My name means "wild goat." Shamgar had been judge over us many years ago, but now he is dead. Recently the Canaanites had been oppressing us, so God raised up Deborah to be judge over Israel, with Barak as military commander. But Barak was kind of afraid, so Deborah helped him out (and got most of the glory afterwards too). I also helped them out a bit myself. After Deborah and Barak routed the Canaanites the rest of the army fled west. However Sisera, the commander, abandoned his troops and came north toward us. I am not an Israelite, you see. I am a Kenite, and most of the people who live here are on the Canaanite's side. That's why he came to me. But he chose the wrong woman. I am loyal to the Israelites. I did some quick thinking, and decided to invite him in. I had him lay down, covered him, and brought him some goat's milk. He soon fell asleep, which was just what I wanted. I live in a tent, and am accustomed to using the hammer and tent pegs. These would have to serve as my weapons, and they worked just fine. I drove a tent peg right through Sisera's head, and he died. That day the Israelites won a great battle and were delivered from the Canaanites. They even sung a song about it, and I'm part of it! They call me, "Most blessed of tent-dwelling women." Talk about woman power! Can you guess who I am? †



**NEW BABY:** On Monday, June 11, Daniel and Katie Jones received from the Lord a baby girl. Their daughter is named Faith Annabeth Jones. Faith was born at the University of Michigan Medical Center in Ann Arbor. She weighed 7 lb, 2 oz at birth, and measured 18 ½ inches. ☩

**GRADUATIONS:** On Sunday, June 10, our church had a formal recognition of two high school graduates. We had prayer and special gifts for Samuel Hoppe and Tariho Lula. Samuel has completed his homeschool studies, as well as some courses at Schoolcraft College. This fall he will be enrolled at Cedarville University in Ohio. Tariho is also a homeschool graduate. She plans to study this fall at Heritage Bible College in Livonia. ☩

**COOKBOOK:** Rachel Evans is preparing a book of recipes and practical wisdom. The book will be presented to Mary Redouty later this summer as a wedding gift. Additional copies will be made available to others in the church. If you have something to contribute, send your recipe to Rachel at rachelev@umich.edu. ☩

**MOVED:** Shaun and Rachel Kalis have moved from Livonia to a home in Salem Township. Their new address is 7200 North Dixboro Road, Ann Arbor, MI, 48105. The new home phone is 248-782-7053.

Rachel Krause has moved from Detroit to Ypsilanti. She lives at, and helps operate, a home on a small farm that has a mission to distribute food and other resources to people in the community. Her new address is 1343 East Forest, Ypsilanti, Michigan, 48198. You can reach her by phone at 562-899-1597.

Rob Rotz has taken a new job in the Washington D.C. area. He has already moved there to start the job; his family will be joining him at the end of the summer. The new address is 7208 Blanchard Drive, Derwood, Maryland, 20855. You can reach Rob at 301-977-7411 or by e-mail: rrotz@comcast.net. ☩

**MISSIONS:** Our church is sending volunteers to work as counselors and assistant counselors at Solid Rock Bible Camp in Alaska. They are responsible for leading campers to know Jesus Christ as Savior. Liz Delcamp is spending the entire summer season at Solid Rock. Peter Manwiller, David Manwiller, Josh Rotz, and Dan Griffith are each spending part of the summer at the camp. You may send an encouraging note to Liz or one of the guys by addressing it to: Solid Rock Bible Camp, PO Box 489, Soldotna, AK, 99669.

In late July, our church is sending a team of mission volunteers to Romania to work with NetWorks, the ministry where Leah Ransom serves. NetWorks reaches out to the very poor in and around Arad, Romania, in the northwest part of the country. Specifically, NetWorks operates ministries at a farm for homeless men, a home for single mothers, in the inner city for impoverished children and youth, and at a summer camp for youth evangelism and training. They also are involved in distribution of food and fuel, economic development work, strengthening the local church, and prayer for the people of Romania. The volunteers from our church will have a hand in a variety of areas of service. Five people from Hope Church have plane tickets to Romania: Alice Berry, Girlie Pascua, Kevin Paterson, Peter Manwiller, and Tariho Lula. ☩

### **ANSWER TO PRAYER:**

We have been praying for one of our church members, a woman named Haipin, who returned to her home country a year ago. Her Asian homeland has churches that are under government supervision, as well as more dynamic house-based churches that meet secretly. Before she left Michigan, Haipin stood before both our congregations and asked that we would pray that she would be invited by someone to one of the house churches. She also asked us to pray for her husband, who is an unbeliever. In May, Haipin wrote to us the following message:

**JULY BIRTHDAYS:** Rachel Evans, Hosanna Fair, James Hoppe, Rachel Kalis, Timothy Manwiller, Sola Mewha, Taylor Pitcher, Jenny Routson, Rick Routson, Kayleigh Rushlow ☩

**JULY ANNIVERSARIES:** Craig & Denise Hunt, Kevin & Annie Kalis, Nick & Deena McGuire, Wouter & Amy Verkerk ☩

**AUGUST BIRTHDAYS:** Charlie Achatz, Noah Arbenowske, Jackie Bell, Sarah Bell, Alice Berry, Susanna David, Anna Delcamp, Matthew Ferguson, Ruthanne Ferguson, Anne Haakonstad, Elizabeth Hoppe, Grace Hoppe, Denise Hunt, Joseph Hunt, Josh Hunt, Annie Kalis, Russ Mewha, Dale Miel, Shaun Pikka, Andrew Rodrigues, Cindy Rodrigues, Joshua Rotz, Susan Rotz, Ace Snyder, Eddie Soper, Carter Waterbury ☩

**AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES:** Mark & Yvonne Berry, Wayde & Carrie Hoppe, Bill & Angela Jennings, Paul & Nora Manwiller ☩

# Nature Hike Outing



**Samuel Graham Trees  
Parker Brook Grove**  
Flood plains, flooding, and trees

You are standing on a flood plain that naturally gets water every several days a year. The trees around you are sensitive to both low lying, their roots are in flooded soil and they die the soil becomes during summer droughts. Trees have distinct tolerance for the flooding and drying from an soilless. In fact, differences help determine which soil they will live in because various trees on the flood plain. You may notice the soil is a different color in the flood plain where Parker Brook joins Fleming Creek.

The tree that flowers in summer is called *Amelanchier*. As a result, the soil is in a state of slight higher ground - the higher difference in the soil can be in the several centimeters in low places.

The red oak (*Quercus rubra*) tolerates both the soil that is flooded for longer than other trees. Red oak tolerates other common trees, and these include *Aspen* and *Pine* in the flood plain.

After the drier than that trees death the drier, the large *European* willows (*Salix*) have several feet in the flood. These willows are fast growing, they will stand on the short bank. Watch how water rises and plants will grow to life their own.



**Scavenger Hunt**



**In The Tree!**



**Looking At Some Nature**

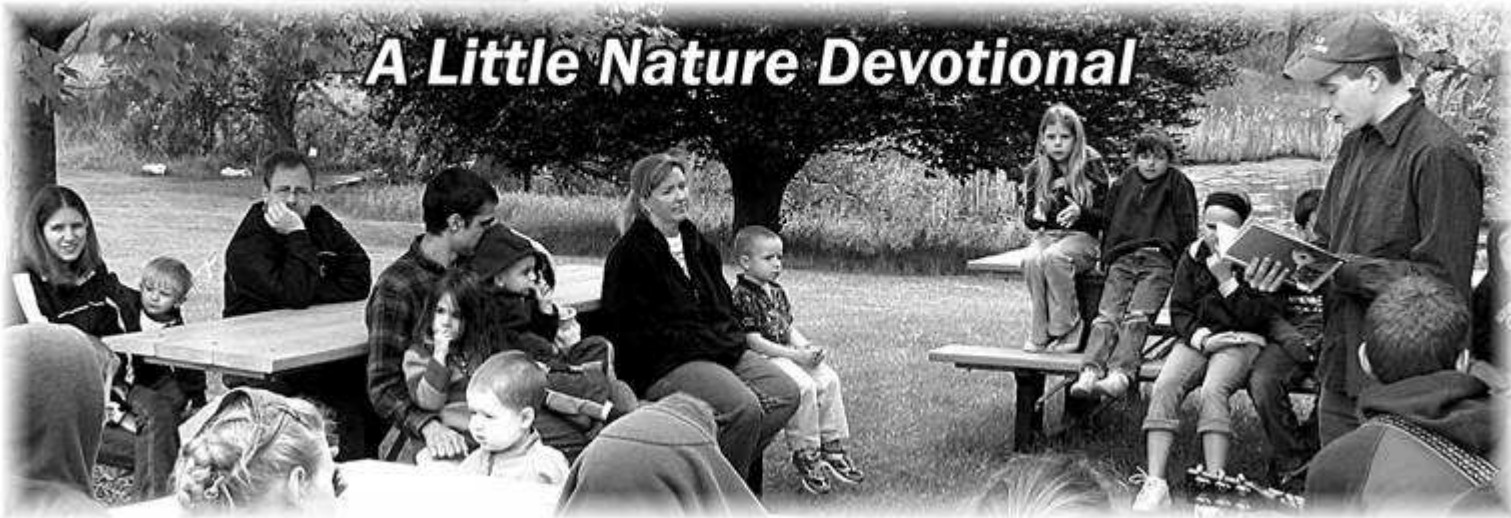


**Won't He Make a Great Dad?**



**Our New Nature Expert**

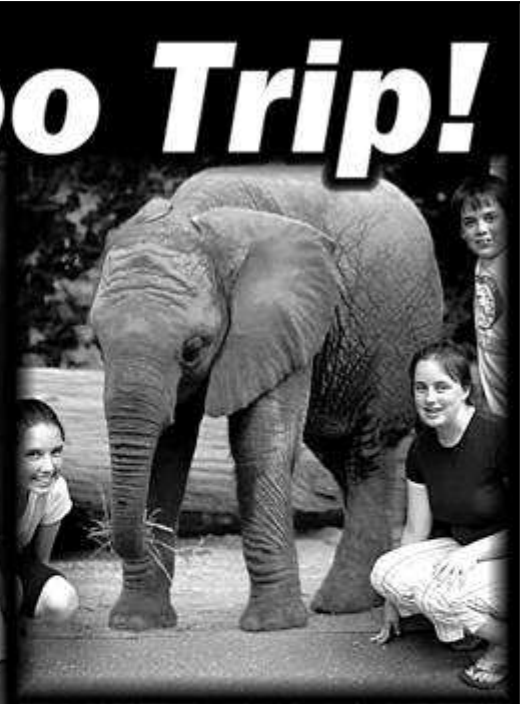
## A Little Nature Devotional



# The Zoo Trip!



**The Three Stooges**



**Lunch Time**



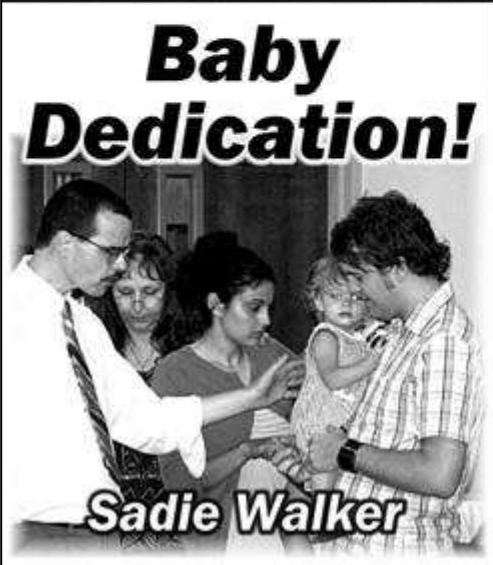
**I Want What He's Eating...**



**More Wild Animals**

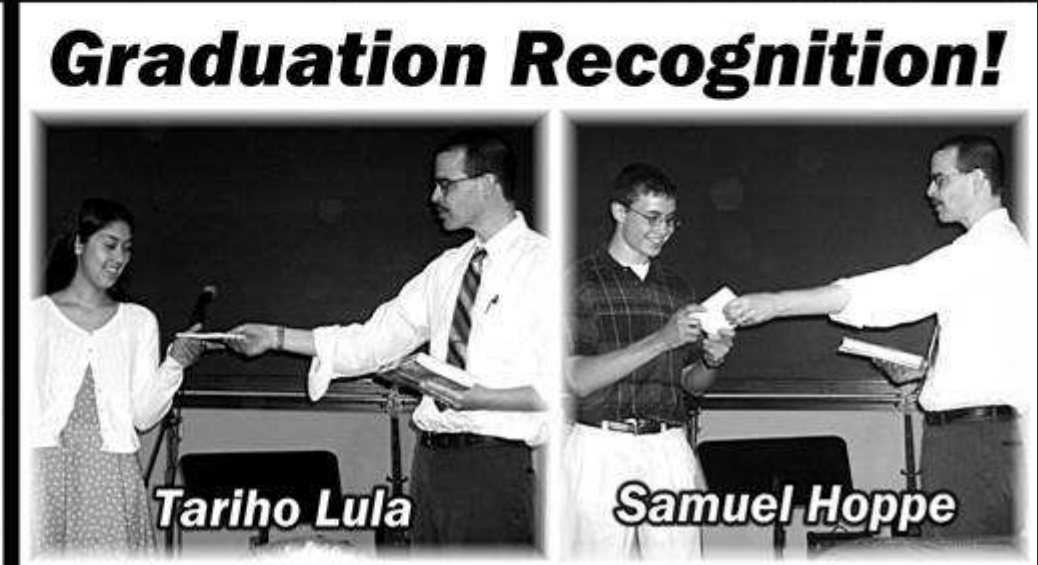


**Don't Mess With This Guy**



## **Baby Dedication!**

**Sadie Walker**



## **Graduation Recognition!**

**Tariho Lula**

**Samuel Hoppe**



# BIBLE READING GUIDE

## Gospels of Matthew & John

### Sunday, July 1: Matthew 1

See how many names you recognize in Jesus' genealogy. This genealogy shows that Jesus is a Jew - a descendent of Abraham - and a direct descendant of king David. How did Mary become pregnant with Jesus? What did the angel say to Joseph about the situation? What does the name "Jesus" mean?

### Monday, July 2: Matthew 2

What gifts did the Magi bring? Why is Herod "and all Jerusalem with him" troubled about the birth of Jesus? (v 3) How does Herod try to destroy Jesus? Who else did Satan try to destroy in the same way? How many prophecies about the Messiah are fulfilled in this chapter?



### Tuesday, July 3: Matthew 3

What did John the Baptist wear? What did he eat? Why did people come out to him? What did he say to the Pharisees? True repentance brings with it good fruit; false repentance is only words. If being baptized in water means being submerged in it, what do you think it is like to be baptized by Jesus "with the Holy Spirit"? Why did Jesus have John baptize Him? What evidence is there here that this was the right thing to do?

### Wednesday, July 4: Matthew 4

Why would the Holy Spirit lead Jesus out into the desert, and why would the Spirit lead us into a spiritual desert sometimes in our lives? How long was Jesus there? How did He deal with the devil's temptations? How should we deal with temptation? What is Jesus' message when He begins to preach? Who are the first disciples that He calls? What does Jesus do besides preach?

### Thursday, July 5: Matthew 5

This chapter begins the Sermon on the Mount. What does "blessed" mean? How is Jesus the fulfillment of the Law? (v 17) Jesus gives us a high standard to live up to. How can we apply the statement "if your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you"? (v 30) Does anyone ever persecute you? How do you respond to them? How should you respond to them? (v 44)

### Friday, July 6: Matthew 6

What warning does Jesus give about good works like giving to the poor and praying? What basic principle does Jesus teach about forgiveness? (see vv 14-15) What do you think treasure in heaven is? (v 20) What promise does Jesus give about our material needs? Do you worry about money? Do you seek God's kingdom and His righteousness?

### Saturday, July 7: Matthew 7

What does "judge" mean? (v 1) In this context, judge means to discern good from evil. Which verses talk about discernment? (vv 5, 6, 13-14, 15-20) People often misinterpret verse 1 by taking it out of the context of the rest of the chapter, wrongly concluding that Christians should not judge what is good or evil. What is Jesus teaching in when he speaks of the narrow and wide gate? When he speaks of the good and bad tree? When he speaks of the wise and foolish builder?

### Sunday, July 8: Matthew 8

List all the miracles Jesus does in this chapter. In verse 20 Jesus refers to Himself as "the Son of Man"; where else have you read that phrase recently? (see Dan 7) Jesus is claiming that He is a man, and that He is the one that Daniel prophesied about. Why do you think the people in verse 34 asked Jesus to leave their region?

### Monday, July 9: Matthew 9

What miracles does Jesus do in this chapter? What do the people who come to Jesus for healing believe about Him? Matthew was a tax collector, which was a dishonorable job for a Jew. He had dishonorable friends, and Jesus went to his house to meet them. Why do the Pharisees get mad about this? What does Jesus say about it? Who do you know who needs to meet Jesus?

### Tuesday, July 10: Matthew 10

Can you name the twelve disciples? What instructions does Jesus give them as He sends them out? What does He tell them to expect? We can expect the same things. Some people today mistakenly think that Jesus came to bring "peace on earth", meaning everybody would be nice to everybody else. What does Jesus say He came to bring in verse 34? Just being an on fire Christian will cause someone to be mad at you, but remember that our real struggle is with Satan, not people (Eph 6:12).

### Wednesday, July 11: Matthew 11

John is in prison and wants some confirmation that Jesus is the Messiah. What confirmation does Jesus give him? How can anyone know God the Father? (see v 27) What is a yoke? What does it mean that Jesus' yoke is easy? Do you ever feel like you are carrying a heavy burden or a hard yoke? What should you do about that heaviness?

### Thursday, July 12: Matthew 12

What does it mean that Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath? (v 8) How many of Jesus' followers did he heal? (v 15) Why do you think the Pharisees wanted to destroy Jesus? What did Jesus mean when He told the Pharisees they would be given the sign of Jonah the prophet? (v 39) Who are Jesus brothers and sisters?

### Friday, July 13: Matthew 13

Jesus tells several parables to demonstrate what the kingdom of heaven is like. Why does He teach in parables? What is the main message of the "kingdom parables"? Two of the parables stress the great worth of the kingdom of heaven (vv 44-46). Have you had to give anything up in order to gain the kingdom of heaven?

### Saturday, July 14: Matthew 14

Who does Herod think Jesus is? What does Jesus do when He hears of John's death? How much food did the disciples have with them that evening? How many people ate the food? How much was left over when they were all done? How do the disciples respond when Jesus walks on the water? Note that Jesus does not rebuke them for worshiping Him and calling Him God's Son; this is evidence that Jesus is God.

### Sunday, July 15: Matthew 15

The Pharisees challenge Jesus again. What does Jesus say they are like? (v 14) His parable teaches that our hearts are the source of our sinful actions. The Pharisees looked good on the outside, but they had evil hearts. What evil is in your heart? Why doesn't Jesus want to heal the Canaanite woman's daughter? What does He say to her? (v 26) Why does he heal her daughter?

### Monday, July 16: Matthew 16

What is the leaven of the Pharisees? Who does Peter say that Jesus is? How does Jesus respond? Here again is evidence that Jesus is

God. What does it mean to take up your cross and follow Jesus? Why would a person carry a cross in those days? How would a person lose his life for Jesus' sake? (v 25)

### **Tuesday, July 17: Matthew 17**

Who goes up the mountain? Who joins them? What do the disciples do when they hear God speak from the cloud? What kind of faith must we have to do the work of the kingdom? Why does Jesus say the disciples are exempt from paying the temple tax? What does He do about paying the tax?

### **Wednesday, July 18: Matthew 18**

Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? Here is a repetition of the exhortation to cut off your hand or pluck out your eye if they cause you to sin. (vv 8-9) What things in your life cause you to sin? Are you willing to get rid of them? How are we supposed to handle it when people sin against us? What happened to the wicked slave who made the other slave pay his small debt? What will happen to people who do not forgive their brothers?

### **Thursday, July 19: Matthew 19**

Why does the Law allow divorce? Why is it bad to divorce? What does Jesus think about children? Why do you think it is hard for rich people to get into heaven? Are you rich? What standard do you use to decide if you are rich? Have you given up material things, or disappointed your family to follow Jesus? What promise does Jesus give such people?

### **Friday, July 20: Matthew 20**

What time did the first laborers start working in the vineyard? What time did the last group start working? How long did the first and last groups work? How much did they get paid? Was this fair? What does this parable teach us about the kingdom of heaven? How does someone become great in the kingdom of heaven? Who do you give your life for?

### **Saturday, July 21: Matthew 21**

Who do the people think Jesus is as he enters Jerusalem? "Son of David" is an expression used to refer to the Messiah. The chief priests challenge Jesus for not stopping the children from praising Him. What does He say to the priests? Note that He is applying a scripture about God to Himself, thereby claiming to be God. (v 16) How will tax collectors and prostitutes get into the kingdom of heaven before the Pharisees? (v 31)

### **Sunday, July 22: Matthew 22**

Who is represented by the people who were invited to the wedding feast but didn't come? Who are the ones who were not invited at first, but rounded up in the streets? How does Jesus silence the Pharisees when they try to trap Him with the question about paying

taxes? How can the Messiah be a son (descendant) of David, and be David's Lord?

### **Monday, July 23: Matthew 23**

Jesus knows He is nearing the crucifixion and He holds nothing back in rebuking the Pharisees. What kinds of things do the Pharisees do wrong? Why is what they do so terrible? (see v 13 and 18:6-7) How are you like the Pharisees? What would be the opposite of what the Pharisees do? How does Jesus feel about Jerusalem and the people there?

### **Tuesday, July 24: Matthew 24**

Jesus describes what it will be like in the end times, right before He comes back to earth. What things can you see that are already happening? What has to happen before Jesus returns? (v 14) Who knows exactly when He will return? (v 36) This means that whenever anyone gives a specific date for Christ's return, you know that it can't be right. What are we supposed to do about His return? What must we do to be ready?

### **Wednesday, July 25: Matthew 25**

Why were the prudent virgins ready for the bridegroom? Why were the foolish ones not ready? What did the slave who got five talents do right? What did the slave who got one talent do wrong? What resources (talents, abilities, opportunities) has the Lord given you? Are you using them to build His kingdom? What would you have to show Him if He returned today?

### **Thursday, July 26: Matthew 26**

How many times does Jesus tell his disciples what is going to happen in this chapter? (see vv 2, 13, 21, 29, 31, 32, 34) How many times did Jesus pray in the garden of Gethsemane? What did He pray? Who comes to arrest Jesus? How many angels could He have had to fight for Him? What assumption has the high priest made when he says that Jesus is blaspheming?

### **Friday, July 27: Matthew 27**

What do the priests say when they take the thirty pieces of silver back? (v 6) What do they do with the money? They are concerned about keeping the Law, yet they as much as admit that they are going to murder the Son of God. Who warns Pilate that Jesus is righteous and he shouldn't be part of His murder? How does she know that Jesus is righteous? What happens when Jesus dies? Who buries Jesus?

### **Saturday, July 28: Matthew 28**

Who rolled away the stone from Jesus' tomb? The earth shook when Jesus died, and when He rose from the dead; these are the most earthshaking events in history. Jesus' death and resurrection affected everyone around, even if they didn't know Him. Who finds the empty tomb? What do they do when they see

Jesus? What do the other disciples do when they see Him? What is the last command that Jesus gives His disciples? What are you doing to fulfill this command?

### **Sunday, July 29: John 1**

Here is John's written account of the good news about Jesus. John calls Jesus "The Word". What does he mean by this? Jesus is called "The Lamb of God" v. 29). What does this mean? He is called "The Messiah" and "The Christ". What do these words mean? Why do the first disciples choose to follow Jesus?

### **Monday, July 30: John 2**

Here are two events that are signs pointing to who Jesus is. Why did Jesus turn water to wine? How did this reveal His glory? (v. 11). Why did Jesus drive merchants and money changers out of the temple? How did this reveal His glory and His relationship with God the Father? (vv. 16-17)

### **Tuesday, July 31: John 3**

Nicodemus, a very religious man, comes to see Jesus. Why does Jesus tell him he must be born again? According to Jesus, how can he be born again? Now for the most important question: Have you been born again? Why isn't John the Baptist upset that people are following Jesus instead of him?

### **Wednesday, August 1: John 4**

Jesus travels through Samaria, a region most Jews avoided. What does the Woman at the Well want from Jesus? What does He have to offer that is better? Note that Jesus doesn't let the conversation get bogged down in religious controversies; He points her to the Christ. How is this an example for us?

### **Thursday, August 2: John 5**

Jesus speaks with a man at the pool of Bethesda. What does this man need, and how does Jesus help him? What is this man's greater need? What do you think Jesus means by His warning in verse 14? What does Jesus tell the crowds about resurrection from the dead and eternal life?

### **Friday, August 3: John 6**

The chapter starts with two more miraculous signs to prove Jesus is the Messiah. What are they? Why does Jesus call Himself the "Bread of Life"? What does Jesus mean about eating His flesh and drinking His blood? Why do some people stop following Jesus? Why doesn't Peter quit?

### **Saturday, August 4: John 7**

Jesus teaches the crowds in Jerusalem. Does the crowd believe in Him? What does Jesus mean when He says He is going somewhere where they cannot find Him? (vv. 33-34). What does He mean when He speaks of "Living Water"? (vv. 37-39)

### **Sunday, August 5: John 8**

Why did the Jewish leaders want to stone a woman caught in adultery? What does Jesus say

to the accusers? What does He say to the woman? What does Jesus say about Himself and Abraham? (vv39-40, vv 54-59) Why do the Jewish leaders then want to stone Him?

### Monday, August 6: John 9

Jesus heals a blind man. Why was the man born blind? Are you willing to allow God to use your sorrows for His glory? When people ask the healed man about Jesus, what kind of testimony is he able to give? When people ask you about Jesus, are you able to give the same kind of testimony?

### Tuesday, August 7: John 10

In what ways is Jesus like the gate to a sheep pen? In what ways is Jesus like a good shepherd? Why do some of the people hate Jesus and want to stone him to death? Why do some of the people follow Jesus and believe in Him? Why do people, even today, react so strongly to Jesus?

### Wednesday, August 8: John 11

After hearing that Lazarus is sick, why does Jesus wait and allow Lazarus to die? What does Jesus promise Lazarus' sister, Martha, about the resurrection and the Life? (vv. 25-26) Lazarus comes alive—a foreshadowing of what will happen to Jesus. How do the chief priests react?

### Thursday, August 9: John 12

Why did Mary pour out, all at once, perfume worth a year's income? Was it a waste? Is there any lesson in this concerning our worship of Jesus? Jesus arrives in Jerusalem. What does He know will soon happen to Him? (vv. 23-25, 31-32). According to verse 43, why did many people refuse to believe in Jesus?

### Friday, August 10: John 13

Why does Jesus wash His disciples' feet? Why does Peter initially object? Jesus tells us to follow His example by washing one another's feet. Jesus gives a new command in verse 34. What is it? How will obeying this command show that we are Jesus' disciples? (v. 35).

### Saturday, August 11: John 14

What does Jesus teach us about heaven? About the way to get to heaven? Jesus says He will soon go back to the Father in heaven. Whom will he send to be with us while He is gone? What are some ways the Holy Spirit will help us (see verses 26-27).

### Sunday, August 12: John 15

How is Jesus like a vine? How are we like branches? How is God the Father like a gardener? What happens to branches that are connected to the vine? To branches that are severed from the vine? In verses 9-13, Jesus gives the secrets to remaining in the vine. What are they?

### Monday, August 13: John 16

Jesus is still talking to His disciples on the night He will be arrested. What does He say that will

comfort and encourage them? What does He say that will toughen them and prepare them for hard things to come? The world gives trouble; what does Jesus give? (v. 33)

### Tuesday, August 14: John 17

In verses 1-5, Jesus prays for Himself. In your own words, summarize what Jesus says. In verses 6-19, Jesus prays for his disciples. What does He say? And in verses 20-26, He prays for all Christians. That's us. What specific things does Jesus pray for us about?

### Wednesday, August 15: John 18

Judas brings soldiers to arrest Jesus. What does Peter do? Did Jesus want to be defended in this way? After Jesus is arrested, Peter denies that He even knows Jesus. How can Peter go from being so bold to being so cowardly? Has something like that ever happened to you?

### Thursday, August 16: John 19

If you were a reporter covering Jesus' death, what would you say concerning Jesus' sentencing before Pilate? About the crucifixion? About the death of Jesus? About Jesus' burial? If you were an editorial writer, what would you say about the significance of these events?

### Friday, August 17: John 20

What did Peter and John see when they ran to the tomb? What did the disciple Thomas say he wanted to see? What instruction does Jesus have for Thomas in verse 27? How does the blessing in verse 29 apply to Christians today? According to verse 31, why was the Gospel of John written?

### Saturday, August 18: John 21

Jesus has a private word with Peter. What does He ask Peter? Why do you think He asks the same question three times? What does Jesus say will happen to Peter in the future? What does He say to Peter about John's future? Jesus is still speaking to his people today: "Follow Me" (v. 19).

## The Gospel:

You have completed a study of the Gospel message as written by Matthew and John. Please read the following verses and ask yourself these three questions:

- 1) What does this text say about the meaning of the Gospel?
- 2) What does this text say about proclaiming or defending the Gospel?
- 3) What does this text say about living in a manner worthy of the Gospel?

### Sunday, August 19:

Romans 1:16-17

### Monday, August 20:

Romans 15:14-20

### Tuesday, August 21:

1 Corinthians 1:17-19

### Wednesday, August 22:

1 Corinthians 9:12-27

### Thursday, August 23:

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

### Friday, August 24:

2 Corinthians 4: 1-6

### Saturday, August 25:

Galatians 1:6-12

### Sunday, August 26:

Ephesians 6:10-20

### Monday, August 27:

Philippians 1:27-30

### Tuesday, August 28:

Colossians 1:15-23

### Wednesday, August 29:

2 Thessalonians 1:3-10

### Thursday, August 30:

2 Timothy 2:8-14

### Friday, August 31:

Revelation 14:6-7

## Send to a Friend

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