

The FAITH BUILDER

HOPE
Community Church

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2006



THIS ISSUE
Learning To
Love in a Week

Christian Vision, Church News & Bible Reading Guide

Learning to Love in a Week

By Pastor Paul's Tuesday Night Hope Group

The following short articles, written by members of the same Hope Group, all have something to teach us about being filled with the love of God. Each Hope Group member started with a different chapter of Scripture. Each person studied his chapter carefully to see what key truths God was teaching about love. And

each person chose one specific application. That is, each person chose one area of his own life where, for seven days, he would put that truth into action. It was a kind of experiment. Could these Christians, with God's help, learn to love during that week?

In their own words, these Christian brothers and sisters now share with you their

insights into God's Word, and the interesting results of their attempt, with God's help, to learn to love.

Please note that each person studied the entire chapter that is mentioned in the subtitles. For the benefit of the readers, we have printed out selected verses from each chapter. †



"Love, Deception and Confusion"

By Mary Walker

"And this is love: that we walk in obedience to His commands. As you have heard from the beginning, His command is that you walk in love. Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son." (2 John 6-9)

The verses I studied for the week of "Learning to Love" came from the book of 2nd John. As I was reading this book it

became clear to me that there are really three aspects of love, and in order to be really complete in love I must exhibit all three aspects.

We are told to love God, to obey God, and to love one another. I think of it as really being a triangle of love. If I love God I will obey his commands. His command is to love others. If I really am loving others I am loving God.

Now when people talk about true love, there is one very important aspect that is often lost or ignored: Truth! I cannot truly love without truth. 2nd John makes this very clear. The truth that John speaks of is that Jesus Christ came in the flesh. Therefore, I cannot deny the essential truth (that God came to earth as Christ) and still say that I am loving God.

Also, if someone is spreading a message

that denies Jesus Christ coming in the flesh, then they are deceivers and of the anti-Christ spirit. Even if a specific religion speaks of loving God and other people, but denies Christ as the one true way, they are deceivers. This is all according to 2nd John.

During my week of "Learning to Love," God used these verses to protect my mind from confusion when I was discussing religion with someone during the week. This person reasoned that any religion is good in the end if it teaches kindness toward others. While I agreed that God desires kindness toward others, 2nd John reminded me that I could not conclude that a religion was from God if the truth of Christ was lost or rejected. In fact, no matter how extreme the kindness, it cannot even be called true love toward God or other people without Christ. †

“Smoothing Out the Bumps”

By Shaun Walker

“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:37-39)

The main point I came away with after reading through these verses was this: No matter how we might feel about anything, God still loves us. ‘Anything’ includes today, tomorrow, positive cash flow, negative cash flow, death, distance, fear, contentment, prosperity, hardship, good times, bad times, even ourselves. The bottom line is that nothing can stop God from loving us. Yeah, it’s true. Just read the verses.



I also could see that once we are immersed in the truth of God’s unchangeable love, nothing will faze us or distract us from that truth. Now I don’t know about you, but the biggest distraction I used to have from the truth of God’s love was myself. I thought that I’d screwed up too many times for God’s love to stay the same. But I was wrong. Now, even when I do mess up, I can say that I’m still able to hold firm to the truth about God’s

love spoken of in these verses. Nothing, nothing, nothing can change God’s love for us!

When pondering what this showed me about loving other people, I came to the conclusion that our love for others should be the same as God’s love for us. The verses essentially say that if God (being God), has decided to put everything on the line for someone by sending Jesus, we never have any business lifting a finger against that person, let alone accusing them. Basically, if God’s mind and heart is full of unchangeable love towards a person, we got no business feeling any other way towards that person.

With that said, we have an example to follow. This is where it can get a bit confusing, but bear with me here. Ready? Jesus is the first in the line of humanity that God restored. Jesus was fully man, and fully God, and totally one with God, therefore he was a fully restored man. And he was the first person in the history of everything to be so. So when we see Jesus, we see a life completely shaped in the way God wanted it to be shaped. But what does that mean?

It means that in the same way Jesus let his life be shaped by God (completely, without reservation), we need to let God shape us. In this, we claim the promise given by God that he called us (his children) by name, set us on a solid basis with himself, and will stay with us to the end, finishing what he started. We don’t have to ‘do’ anything except obey by letting God shape us into whatever he wants.

So how did God want to shape me during my Love Week? He wanted to shape me into a much more merciful man. It seems that I’m usually very good at receiving mercy; it was the giving it away part that needed some work. I specifically needed to be shaped into a mercy-giving man when it came to music related things.

In case you didn’t know this, most musicians are blessed with musical ability. Big surprise, right? The thing musicians are not blessed with is punctuality. I’ve been in bands where it’s so bad that I would tell people to come over for practice an hour earlier than I was planning to practice, just to make sure we’d all (including myself! and it was always at my house!) be ready to go ‘on time.’

Anyway, the thing I wanted to do was exhibit abundant mercy during the week to anyone who was late. You know what the effect was? A much greater awareness of my unending need for mercy from God! I had not even realized how impatient I had been getting until I decided not too.

My resolution then is this: I will let God continue to shape me in real ways to smooth out the bumps of judgment and anger, making me into a conduit of grace and mercy. When I’m faced with chances to ‘justifiably’ be mad at people, I will instead choose to love them by giving them a hug.

So if I randomly come up to any of you with a hug, just remember, it’s my bumps that are being smoothed out, not yours. I love you all! Rock! 🎸



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The Faith Builder

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

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“Giving It Up”

By Angela Jennings

“Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children, and live a life of love, just as God loved us and gave Himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” (Ephesians 5:1-2)

Upon reading this passage, I think of the love in my heart toward my own children. My heart lacks the words to articulate its depth. God says here that we are his dearly loved children. How much greater than the love I hold for my own dearly loved children is that of God toward us?

Then, regarding our love for God, this Scripture tells us that if we really love God, we will obey God’s commands. Some of the commands included in the rest of this chapter are putting aside sinful desires and impurities like sensuality, deceitfulness, anger, and not letting the devil have a foothold. So, since we love God, we will put our old self aside, living as if we truly are created to be like him in true righteousness. The Scripture further speaks to the thief, saying that instead of stealing, he must work so that he has something to give to others. Finally, it speaks of how to love those around us. It talks of being kind, compassionate, and forgiving one-another. Ultimately, it tells us to imitate God, living a life of love, like Jesus, who gave himself up for us.

The main aspect of love that I chose to focus on was giving myself up for the Body of Christ, like he did for us. Involved in that was something that I had never realized I had a problem with. Specifically, I thought I was not a liar. Recently, however, the Lord was quietly revealing to my heart that I had been studying the art of deceiving in my workplace. I was learning to say things in a manner that made my customers, my employees, and others come to certain conclusions without ever telling a blatant lie. This, my dear friends, is falsehood, deceiving, and yes, even lying. I had a payment on a debt that was late this past week. I nearly put the incorrect date on the check in order to lead the receiver to believe that I had simply forgotten to mail it. What wickedness dwells in my heart! So, I set out to practice being completely honest, giving up myself, my possessions, my all for the sake of Christ. I had no idea what I was truly in for!

The adventure began as soon as the assignment to study this chapter and learn to love was given. I selfishly thought, “I don’t have time for this! I have papers to write, Sunday School lessons to begin preparing, and I have a broken foot preventing me from getting into my basement to type any of this on the computer. . .” Wait! Give myself up. I can do anything and everything God asks me to do.



Moment by moment, my heart opened to seeing just how much of myself I hold back from others around me. I moved through my home praying each day about what to give away, what to do with my time, and just how to apply this. I began giving away things as wide-ranging as a semi-skilled massage for my husband, my private time so that I could give my son Patrick some extra school session time, and my nap time for the sake of my brother who really needed a listening ear.

Then, the Lord began to show me some extra things in my home. I had some extra baking dishes and was praying about what to do with them. A couple of days later, I was sharing with a sister in Christ about my family’s need for daily bread. She offered to make some food and asked me to bring a baking dish, as hers were worn or broken. AHA! Give her some dishes! There was the answer. Boy, was the devil in the way of getting there that day! But at the end of the day, I came home with fewer baking dishes, groceries from two families in the church, and a heart filled with more love for this Body I belong to.

The more I practiced giving, the more my family received the things we needed this week! My husband received pay for a job he had done but had never been paid for. I received new asthma medication that helped some breathing troubles I had been having. Our little daughter, Iona, received formula, diapers, and wet wipes. Patrick received some specific food items he had been praying for. Oh! And, the Lord even provided a laptop for me to borrow! (Now I didn’t have to go downstairs on a broken foot to type this assignment about love). Praise Him!

The more I gave of my time, my energy, and everything else that I thought was “mine”, the more the Lord moved freely in my life and throughout my family. What I’ve learned is that what’s mine isn’t! May the Spirit of God move freely in this, His Body. May we be united in all we do and think, as we submit ourselves to the mind of Christ. May He use us as a healthy, loving body to accomplish his good work on planet Earth! Amen. †

“Proactive Love”

By Bill Jennings

“We love because He first loved us. If anyone says, “I love God,” yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And He has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.” (1 John 4:19-22)

According to the Apostle John, who wrote this part of the Bible, God has initiated the love relationship between mankind and Himself. God loved me before I ever cared about him. He showed this love most clearly by giving Christ for me. If I have this kind of willing, sacrificial love, then I am in God.

John also teaches us that as lovers of God we must love others, regardless of their behavior. The reason for this requirement is that visible people, even though sinful, are easier to love than an invisible, though perfect, God. Or to put it simply, it is easier to love what we can see than what we can’t see.

Our greatest example of this sacrificial love is Jesus Himself, who gave His sinless life for me. God promises that Christ’s Spirit in me will enable me to love with a love that makes God seen in me and drives out fear of both God and man, allowing for an intimacy that is prevented by fear. John also challenges us that if we say we love God or claim to have God’s love in our hearts, then we must love our spiritual siblings regardless of how they treat us, as God’s love is not based on behavior.

I chose to apply these verses toward my wife, whom I have a covenant to love and am called to love exactly as Christ loved us by a direct biblical mandate in Ephesians 5:25-29. I committed this week to consciously, proactively care for my wife’s needs as God has intended, without grumbling or having a selfish attitude.

Overall, the week went very well and I believe I did better than usual in caring for her with a good attitude. I was also shown how much I need to grow in this area, and while I found a simple, conscious effort to walk in the Spirit and be willing to serve helped me not to grumble nearly as much as I usually do, I discovered that I truly need to grow a lot in my acts of love being pro-active rather than re-active.

May God empower and grow me to maturity as I learn to be pro-active rather than re-active in living out Christ’s love for my wife and others. †

“Making the Choice”

By Robyn Mewha

“If you love me you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of Truth... If anyone loves me he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”
(John 14:15-17, 23)

Love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

Our actions are powerful testimonies to the world of what can be accomplished if we choose to live by the Spirit of God or by our sinful nature. Every day we are faced with choices to love or to sin, and the world is observing what we share. Our love for God is exemplified through our acts of obedience. If we love Jesus, we will obey what He commands.

Love one another, not by condition or by any set standards, but love because it is what we are called to by Jesus our Savior and Friend. Our love is driven to service through our obedience to our Lord. Then,



the Spirit of Truth (Holy Spirit) becomes alive in our lives and is experienced in the relationships we share. Let your Light shine before men!

In order to love others in the Spirit we must have Jesus' commands deep in our hearts and choose to actively obey them. How awesome it is to be used as a vessel by God and to share the Light of Christ in true love to the world. We all desire to love and be loved whether we are pagans or saints, but the question is: who or what is the source of our love? We do not have to be intimidated by this high calling because Jesus is our example in His intimate relationship with the Father. Jesus was rooted in the Father's love. There was never a doubt in His mind about whether the Father's commands were best or true. We need to live in such trust and obedience.

We are promised that the Counselor (Holy Spirit) will be with us and in us if we obey Jesus' teachings to love one another. The Holy Spirit of God is our strength, our ability, our confidence to live a life of love.

I felt it was necessary to have a week focused on obedience in Christian love. Obedience comes not only in the topical areas of the Christian life that Jesus calls us to, but also in the momentary choices that Jesus allows us to experience and test us in the faith. In the busyness of the day it

is very easy to get swept up in the day's momentum and I realize that my choices are often made by an emotion or impulse rather than a decision to love no matter what. When trials come in the day, I can pause and call out to Jesus to come to my rescue and give me peace. I must choose love instead of acting in my flesh and all it desires.

At the end of this week I realized that when my mind is focused on loving, all is good. Jesus shines brighter and the world is able to see how a life filled by the Spirit is unique and beautiful. I have had some failures this week learning to love, but I am encouraged that I am a work in progress and the key to this act is PROGRESS. I am moving forward--progressing, choosing to not be satisfied in my flesh, but to become engaged in the work that God wants me to pursue. I can, by the power of the Holy Spirit, not react sinfully when I am tested or even tempted but to run to Jesus, call on Him, and He will guide me, protect me, and lead me to love.

And when I do fall short from acting in love, there is grace and I am encouraged by our brother Paul in Romans 5: “Where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” ☩

“No Record”

By Alice Berry

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.” (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)



The Lord is dealing with me in regards to I Corinthians 13:5, “Love... keeps no record of wrongs.” Mulling over past hurts in my

mind has been a life-long habit of mine and by God's grace needs to be eliminated from my thought life.

In one of *The Faith Builders* Pastor Paul wrote: “Forgiving means that you no longer have the right to punish that person in your heart. You no longer have the right to hold judgments or upset toward that person.” The Lord used these

words to further convict me. As Pastor Paul writes earlier in that article, the accusations against that person are from Satan. I need to recognize that

truth, resist Satan, keep forgiving and keep turning those things over to the Lord.

In Hope Group Pastor Paul challenged me to not only pray for blessings upon that person, but also to put faith into action. I was reminded that Jesus, in Matthew 5:38-48, admonishes His followers to turn the other cheek, give the tunic as well as the cloak, to go the extra mile.

If I show love only to those who show love to me, what evidence of the grace of God at work in my life is that? By God's grace and power working in me I can submit to the conviction of the Holy Spirit. ☩

On Fire For Jesus! (even on a cold day)

HOPE CHURCH YOUTH EVENTS

Over the years, it seems that God has delighted in bringing young people into our church. Many of the adults in our church today were saved and disciplined when they were teens or college students.

God is still bringing young people to us today. Every month the teens organize outreach events, where they invite their friends and classmates to come and meet Jesus. Besides worship, teaching, and fellowship for the teens in our church, these youth events usually include plenty of food, sports, service projects, or other activities. The youth events are designed to be evangelistic opportunities for kids to get saved and grow with God.

The most recent youth event took place on Saturday, February 25. It involved a bottle drive to help Josh Rotz with his Eagle Scout project. The teens made the bottle drive into a door-to-door evangelistic outreach as they distributed invitational flyers about the church (pictures on right).

Lately, we have seen a new wave of teens coming to youth events and getting saved. However, Satan is very much opposed to this. As we've been learning in our current sermon series, Satan is very real and seeks to destroy our faith in God, especially the faith of new Christians. We need to be praying that Satan would not gain a foothold in their lives, and ask God to continue to bless our evangelistic efforts. Thank God for our on-fire Christian teens! †



FOR KIDS



GUESS WHO I AM



I am one of Jesus' twelve disciples, but can you guess which one? Here are some clues that might help:

- #1: Most people think I was the youngest disciple, but in another sense I was certainly the oldest disciple.
- #2: The Bible reveals that I was one of the angriest disciples, but later my words show that I had become perhaps the most loving disciple.
- #3: It is possible that I never had any children, yet I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.
- #4: According to the Bible, I could outrun Peter. But when Peter ran away on the night Jesus was arrested, I didn't run at all.
- #5: I lived as a prisoner on a tiny island, but without leaving the Island I traveled to a distant Kingdom and saw a great city and a mighty army.
- #6: I was never trained as a speaker or a writer, yet I wrote a major biography, a collection of letters, and a book of prophecy. †

Our Missions

Part One

By Samuel Hoppe



THE IDEAL MISSION OPPORTUNITY

Ever since we were quite young it has been my parents' desire to take their children in pairs on short term mission trips as we became old enough. Late in 2004 my father felt that God was telling him to prepare for the first of these trips, on which he would take my sister, Grace, and me. He began looking for an opportunity for the summer but nothing worked out and the summer passed.

Sometime in November we were contacted by Engineering Missions International (EMI), a group that organizes teams of short term volunteers for engineering, designing, planning, and building projects on the worldwide mission field. My parents had been previously involved with EMI when they went to Honduras on a short-term mission trip 15 years ago, but had not had any contact with them since.

They were organizing a small team to do some surveying and planning for a village in Liberia and wanted my dad to do the planning. The trip was scheduled for early January and was only a week long, which worked out relatively well with our school schedule. In addition to this they were looking for a couple of assistants for the surveyor, capable of hiking through the jungle. This could hardly have been more ideal and clearly displayed the work of God. After considerable praying, we accepted.

For the most part preparations went smoothly, but as our departure grew closer we came against a significant problem. We were strongly advised by several doctors to get immunized against Hepatitis A, a disease that, although not lethal when treated prop-

erly, could have temporary debilitating effects.

The vaccine, however, had been derived from fetal tissue and we could not morally justify using it. There was an alternative medication without questionable origins, but this was not used anymore, having been outdated by the above vaccine. We prayed that God would show us an alternative. After hunting around for some time my dad finally found a company on the internet that dealt in hard-to-find medications that said they could ship some to us. We ended up getting treated one week before we left, leaving just enough time for the medication to take effect.

Liberia is a small, underdeveloped nation on the west coast of Africa, recently emerging from seventeen years of civil wars. The UN currently supplies their entire police force as well as much of their food and clothing.

OUR PROJECT & TEAM MEMBERS

Our project involved fifty acres of partly cleared jungle, not far from the capitol, Monrovia. The land is owned by Victor Padmore, a relatively influential Liberian pastor for the Lutheran Church of Liberia. His plan is to build a village in which he could house homeless people if they would in turn adopt one or two orphans. The village would include farming areas and a school, as well as a church building.

The team consisted of only three others besides Grace, my dad, and me; a civil engineer/surveyor, a chemical engineer who was the team leader and who had spent several years in Liberia working on various projects, and an anesthesiologist who had also previously spent a significant amount of time working in Liberia.



WELCOMED INTO LIBERIA

We left on the 7th of January and arrived safely in Monrovia twenty-four hours later, on a Sunday. We fortunately had no trouble at all getting through customs and were immediately greeted by an enthusiastic pastor along with his wife and other members of his household. We were then driven to the pastor's home where he houses many of his relatives along with his immediate family. These people, who lived rather well by Liberian standards, had so little compared to what we have and yet were so joyful and willing to share what they had with us.

One of the biggest things I think I gained from our trip was a greater appreciation of countless blessings that God has given us here in America. There are so many luxuries that we enjoy that we tend to take for granted, and yet these Liberians were so content with so little. †



Trip to Liberia

Part Two

By Grace Hoppe



LAY OF THE LAND

The home where we stayed was in much better condition than many other homes in the area (downtown Monrovia), but the hospitality was even more impressive. Everyday, when we returned back to the house, our clothes were all hanging up to dry, our beds were made, and our room clean. Though it took a while to realize who was doing it for us, we finally caught one of the teen girls sweeping our floor. This girl, Sianee was one of the girls that I was able to make friends with. Despite limited communication, as well as limited time spent together, Sianee and I soon became fast friends.

Our second day in Liberia, Monday, was spent getting to know the Padmore family a little better, being driven through the city of Monrovia, and actually visiting the property where someday there will be a village. This piece of land was somewhat cleared but otherwise covered in jungle. In a couple of mud huts lived a few relatives of the pastor who were overseeing what work was already going on, primarily farming. But on this day we were just there to visit and get a general overview of the land.

On Tuesday, we were driven out to the site along with the rest of our team and we commenced work. Samuel and I trudged the perimeter of the fifty acres with the surveyor while Dad sat down with the pastor and sponsor to discuss what was going to be built.

VISITING A LEPER COLONY

On Thursday we were taken to a nearby leper colony. These people were not only starved for food but they were desperate for attention. So along with the rice and dried fish, which is brought to them only about once a month by people of the church, we spent time with them. As we were pulling up, children came running toward the van, about fifty of them swarming around. Getting out of the van was quite a task because of these children pushing on us. They were so happy that we would come. They had been shunned and the fact that someone wanted to come and see them was a blessing.

Leprosy is not as contagious as it was thought to be many years ago, but even at that, many of the people in this colony were not lepers themselves. They had been isolated because they were related to or had been in contact with a leper. Such a sad life these people lead, but to see their faces as they were given a hand shake and a cup of rice was very rewarding.

SAYING GOODBYE

Friday, our last day there, was spent in checking our flight in Monrovia, making a few last minute purchases, saying farewell to the many friends we had made, and driving to the airport. It was sad to leave – I would like to go back someday – but it was wonderful to come back home and share my experience with those who may never have the chance, as well as encourage those who might. We have already received two phone calls from Sianee as well as numerous emails telling of how much she misses us.



Traditional Liberian Dress

AN EYE-OPENING EXPERIENCE

For me, the trip was eye-opening to several different things. First of all, after witnessing how people live, I can now see how blessed I am to live in a stable environment and under a stable government. The Liberian people were being protected by foreign soldiers, their food was being given to them, and most of their clothing is surplus American clothing. It is strange to see someone sitting in a mud hut with a basketball jersey on, but that is actually what I saw.

Second, I think it was important to see how others worship God in another land. Though our days were spent in the city or on the property, our evenings were spent with the Padmore household in devotions. They would sing a few songs, have someone share something from the Bible, and recite memory verses. Though we couldn't always understand one another, I think part of what helped me to connect with the girls so well was our common bond in Christ.

Finally, realizing that the world is bigger than America was new to me. I have studied geography and seen pictures of other civilizations, but to see it with my own eyes was incredible. The best part about it was that I got to see a new way of life through God's eyes. I wasn't going as a tourist but as an ambassador for Christ. I didn't just get to see the corporate part of Liberia (which consisted mainly of peddlers and wheelbarrow pushers) but I got to see the Church alive in Liberia. This is definitely something I recommend doing. It doesn't just make your world bigger; it will make your heart bigger as well. ☩



PEOPLE OF HOPE Community Church

OVERSEAS MEMBERS:

LEAH RANSOM

Leah Ransom has moved to a different house in Romania. She writes,

"I am enjoying the new house. It is lovely. It is really cold here right now. It is hard to keep warm in the office as I write to you. Some of the ways life has changed for me makes me smile. I never thought I would be living and working in places that are heated by wood-burning devices. I never thought I'd see a pig or a cow walking along by the side of the road. I never thought I'd look up during Sunday worship and see a reflection of God's beautiful creation staring back at me in the form of a mountain."

I marveled at that yesterday during worship. During the service I was also touched by the testimony of a 17 year old Romanian teen. I was so blessed by how God has touched his life with an anointing, a gifting for evangelism. He ministers to the street people in Arad. At our worship service last night, we had lots of new people from the village come. Many of these people we already know through our youth club and other outreaches. We are praying for their salvation. May God touch their hearts."

THE THUEMMELS

Karl and Jeanne Thummel are expecting a baby, their fourth, very soon. Rather than returning to Michigan for the birth, they are planning a birth at the International Clinic in the capital city of their Asian home. Jeanne is pleased with the American midwife who will attend the birth in the clinic. She writes,

"We just need to sort out details about the transportation to the clinic once in labor. In this city, we take taxis everywhere. (Very Inexpensive). But we can't depend on getting a taxi in the middle of the night. So we need to set something up in advance. Something will work out."

LAI LENG

Lai Leng reports that her work with young people includes counseling other single girls about relationships. She writes,

"Easier said than done. Basically I was just passing on what you have taught me [in Michigan]. It helps me to better remember what I learned when I have to pass it on."

Lai Leng is also organizing outreach weekends. As a result, some young people are joining God's family. Others face obstacles, like the teenaged girl who is banned by her parents from participating in anything with the youth club.

HAIPIN



Haipin has safely returned to her homeland. She and her husband are reunited, and she is adjusting to the reverse culture shock. She writes,

"Everything looks much smaller and more crowded than before. The apartment we stay in is also very small but I am starting to adjust to that. Sometimes I feel that I don't know where my heart is even though I know that I am physically here. Please continue to ask our Father that I will not feel this way too often and for too long. Thank you for all your support. Your petitions definitely make a difference. I have strongly felt your petitions surround-ng me on two different occasions. That's very comforting to me."

EAGLE SCOUT:

Mark McGuire has earned the rank of Eagle Scout. This achievement was publicly recognized at a Court of Honor ceremony held at a V.F.W. hall in Ann Arbor on Sunday, January 29. Among the scout leaders who led the ceremony were Rob Rotz and Mark's father, Nick McGuire. Some of the boys from Mark's Hope Group attended the event; they are pictured below. †



NEW BABY:

The Hoppe family welcomed a baby girl on Tuesday, January 24.

Wayde and Carrie named their new daughter Mercy Shelly. Baby Mercy, who was born at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Ypsilanti, weighed 7 pounds and measured 19 ¾ inches at birth. †



NEW ADDRESSES:



We welcome Wade Hampton, who had been living in Massachusetts, back to Michigan. Wade's new home is 735 W. Chicago Blvd., Detroit, 48202. You can call him at 313-887-0838.

Mark and Maddy Mumm have settled in California. They are staying with Maddy's mother at 2316 15th Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94116. The phone number is 415-661-4693. †



FUR RENDEZVOUS:

On Friday, February 17, our church enjoyed an excellent Fur Rondy dinner and talent show. This year the event was held at the Calvary Baptist Church building on Joy Road in Canton Township.

Mary Walker organized the dinner, which had a Mexican theme. Shaun Walker arranged the talent show, and Rick Routson served as master of ceremonies. The songs and skits were primarily designed to point people to Jesus. A large number of guests who were invited by church members came and enjoyed the evening. Fur Rendezvous pictures appear on the next page. †

Fur Rendezvous 2006



Xavier's
X-ray Vision

XAVIER'S

Songs & Verses by Bright Lights

"Who Wants to Go to Heaven?"

Skateboarding Videos



Gospel
Women



"I Wonder" by Grace Hoppe



Vanya in
"Jesus Freaks"



Peter's Jokes

BIBLE JEOPARDY!



"FOR ALL HAVE SINNED
AND FALL SHORT OF
THE GLORY OF GOD"
(ROMANS 3:23)

FUR REND





BIBLE READING GUIDE

Men of Faith & Prophecy

Wednesday, March 1: 1 Samuel 1

Who is Hannah? Why was Hannah bitterly sad? What did Peninnah do to increase Hannah's sadness? God's perfect plan is for one husband to be married to one wife, until parted by death. Who is Eli? What did Hannah pray for, and what did she promise to the Lord?

Thursday, March 2: 1 Samuel 2

Hannah gave her son Samuel to the Lord. How did God reward her? But God is not pleased with Eli's adult sons, Hophni and Phinehas. Why? What can we learn from this story about the importance of a father training and disciplining his children? And about children obeying their parents?

Friday, March 3: 1 Samuel 3

How did Samuel learn to recognize God's voice? What message did God have for Samuel? As Samuel grew, he was careful to have none of his words fall to the ground (v. 19). How does this set a standard for our own speaking habits?

Saturday, March 4: 1 Samuel 15

What command does God give Saul concerning the Amalekites? What excuses does Saul give for his disobedience? Fill in the words: "To _____ is better than sacrifice. For _____ is like the sin of divination." The old song says "TRUST and OBEY, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus...."

Sunday, March 5: 1 Samuel 16

Why does God send Samuel to Bethlehem? Why did Samuel think Eliab, the oldest brother, was surely the one to anoint? God corrects Samuel. Fill in the blank: "Man looks at the _____, but the Lord looks at the _____."

Monday, March 6: 1 Kings 17

Here we meet Elijah. What does he prophecy to Ahab? How does Elijah survive during the drought years? How does Elijah raise the widow's son from the dead? What kind of faith must Elijah have had even to pray for such a thing?

Tuesday, March 7: 1 Kings 18

Elijah challenges the prophets of Baal to prove once for all who is God: the Lord, or Baal. What specifically is the challenge? How does Elijah make the Lord's sacrifice even more convincing? What other miracle does Elijah perform at the end of the chapter?

Wednesday, March 8: 1 Kings 19

Elijah is suddenly fearful and depressed. Why do you think he is afraid of Jezebel after God has just worked so powerfully? How does God nurture Elijah? What directions does God give Elijah at Horeb? One of the best ways to overcome spiritual depression is to get new orders from God, giving you a fresh vision and a clear sense of purpose.

Thursday, March 9: 1 Kings 20

Who is Ben-Hadad? His vast army surrounds the Israelite capital. It looks hopeless for God's people. After Ahab receives a word of prophecy and a surprising victory, how does he disobey God? How does a prophet act out Ahab's disobedience?

Friday, March 10: 1 Kings 21

Ahab already had great wealth, but he is pouting because he can't have a vineyard. We live in the richest, most prosperous country in the history of the world. Let us not be fooled into looking to our stuff (what we have or what we want) to make us happy. How does Jezebel get the vineyard for Ahab?

Saturday, March 11: 1 Kings 22

Who is Jehoshaphat? Are the 400 prophets that Ahab has with him true prophets? How can you tell? What is their prophecy to Ahab? Who is Micaiah? What is Micaiah's prophecy? Ahab decides that he is going to do what he wants to, regardless of what God says. How does he try to prevent it God's prophecy from coming true?

Sunday, March 12: 2 Kings 1

How has the new King of Israel, Ahaziah, gotten injured? Instead of going to God for healing, who does the king want to consult? What message does God give through the prophet Elijah? Why does God send fire from heaven to consume the king's men?

Monday, March 13: 2 Kings 2

Why does Elisha, the younger prophet, refuse to separate from Elijah? How do the two men cross the Jordan River? How is Elijah carried into heaven? How can we tell that the power that had been on Elijah is now present with Elisha?

Tuesday, March 14: 2 Kings 3

God's people are still broken into two kingdoms. Who is king of Israel? Who is king of Judah? What predicament do these two kings get themselves into? Jehoshaphat, who

fears God, asks if there is any prophet available. What does Elisha tell the people to do? How does God bring victory for His people?

Wednesday, March 15: 2 Kings 4

Here are four amazing miracles. What does God do for the widow who is in debt? For the Shunammite woman and her son? For the prophets who got food poisoning? For the hundred hungry men? Can you think of similar miracles involving Jesus? The power of God remains the same.

Thursday, March 16: 2 Kings 5

Who is Naaman, and what problem does he have? Who tells him about the healing power of God? Can young children be effective witnesses for God? What does Elisha ask Naaman to do? Why is Naaman angry about it at first? After Naaman is healed he puts his faith in the Lord! Why does Elisha refuse a reward?

Friday, March 17: 2 Kings 6

How does God protect Elisha from an army of enemy soldiers? What does God allow Elisha and his servant to see in the spiritual realm? Is there unseen spiritual protection around you? When the city of Samaria is under siege, why does the king want to kill Elisha?

Saturday, March 18: 2 Kings 7

Samaria is still under siege. What word of prophecy does Elisha give? What scoffing reply does the king's officer give? How does God defeat the enemy? Who finds the Aramean camp abandoned? What happened to the king's officer who scoffed at Elisha's prophecy?

Sunday, March 19: 2 Kings 8

For those who love the Lord, God is at work in every detail, working all things together for our good. How is this principle seen in the story of the Shunammite woman? However, there are many others who do not love the Lord, such as the kings in this chapter. Who is Ben-Hadad? Who is Joram? Who is Ahaziah?

Monday, March 20: 2 Kings 9

Whom does Elisha anoint as the new king? Which two kings does Jehu attack and kill? The king of Judah put himself at risk by hanging out with the wicked neighbor king of Israel. What tactic does Jezebel try to use to avoid death? How does she die? Why is Jezebel rightly regarded as the most wicked of all queens?

Tuesday, March 21: 2 Kings 13

Jehoash goes to see the prophet Elisha, who is dying. Why does Elisha have the king shoot an arrow out the window, and what does this mean? Why strike arrows on the ground, and what does this mean? A key lesson: if God asks you to do something, do it a lot, not just a little!

Wednesday, March 22: Daniel 1

Who is Daniel? What is his name changed to? What are the Chaldean (Babylonian) names of his 3 friends? Why doesn't Daniel want to eat the king's choice food? When have you resisted going along with something that everyone "has" to do? God blesses those who obey Him. How did God bless Daniel?

Thursday, March 23: Daniel 2

King Nebuchadnezzar has a dream. Why does he want his Magicians and conjurers to tell him what the dream was before they give the interpretation? Why does God reveal the dream to Daniel? (see vv. 28, 30) Do you think God communicates in dreams today? Have you ever had a dream you thought was from God?

Friday, March 24: Daniel 3

Why won't Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego worship the statue of Nebuchadnezzar? What do they say to the king? Who else is in the furnace with them? In the midst of our trials, Jesus is the fourth man in the fire with us. How does the king respond, and how is God glorified?

Saturday, March 25: Daniel 4

What was the king's dream? What did it mean? How long was he like a wild beast? God uses a pagan king of a pagan nation to reveal His glory to all people. God's main goal is to glorify His name, and if His own people are unwilling to do it, He'll use someone else.

Sunday, March 26: Daniel 5

Who is the king of Babylon now? Why does he call for the aging prophet, Daniel? What does the writing on the wall mean? Why did God take the kingdom away from Belshazzar? God is in control of all nations and all rulers, even today.

Monday, March 27: Daniel 6

Why do the king's commissioners hate Daniel? How do they trick the king into getting rid of Daniel? What does the king say to Daniel before he shuts him in the lion's den? What does the king do that night? How does God glorify His name through Daniel and king Darius?

Tuesday, March 28: Daniel 7

What kind of animals does Daniel see in this vision? They represent the kingdoms of Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome, though the last beast probably also signifies the kingdom of the antichrist (see vv 23-27). Who is the

Ancient of Days? Who is the "one like a Son of Man"? Note: Jesus refers to Himself as "the Son of Man".

Wednesday, March 29: Daniel 8

What does Daniel see in this vision? Who tells him the interpretation of the vision? What do the ram and the goat represent? The details of this vision correspond directly to very specific historical events that happened many years later. Why does God show Daniel these things, and why does Daniel write it down for us?

Thursday, March 30: Daniel 9

How long is the Jewish exile supposed to last? How does Daniel find this out? (see Jer 25:11) What does Daniel do about this discovery? What is the main message of Daniel's prayer? How does God respond to Daniel? The word "week" refers to a period of seven years: this prophecy reveals the timing of Jesus' birth 2000 years ago.

Friday, March 31: Daniel 10

Why, and for how long, was Daniel mourning and fasting? Who does Daniel see in his vision? How does Daniel react to the presence of this angel? Have you ever had a physical reaction to God's presence? Who resisted the angel? Who helped him? Who or what is the "prince of the kingdom of Persia"?

Saturday, April 1: Daniel 11

Who is talking in this chapter? This chapter corresponds very accurately to events that happened during the kingdom of Greece., during and after the time of Alexander the Great. Verses 36-45 likely refer to the antichrist, since they do not correspond to the history of Greece.

Sunday, April 2: Daniel 12

The angel Michael, who protects the people of Israel, will arise in the end times. There will be a resurrection of the dead (v. 2) God gives us some knowledge about the end times, but he deliberately seals up some information (v. 4) Why do you think God does this?

Monday, April 3: Joel 1

When locusts swarm today, there are hundreds of millions of them. What does Joel tell the Israelites to do in response to their plague of locusts? How does this kind of repentance (weeping, wailing, fasting) compare to how we usually repent? What is the day of the Lord? (v15)

Tuesday, April 4: Joel 2

Whose army comes, and how is it like the swarm of locusts in chapter 1? Verses 12-13 are God's instructions for how to repent; what do we learn from them? What does God promise after they repent? What does repentance really mean, and why is it so important to God?

Wednesday, April 5: Joel 3

What is described in this chapter? Verse 9 says, "prepare for war". What will God's people know? (v17) What exactly does it mean to "know that I am the LORD your God"? How helpful is that knowledge in your life? If you really, really knew that everyday, how would your life be different?

Thursday, April 6: Malachi 1

God says that people are showing contempt for Him. How are they doing this? Christians don't offer animals for sacrifice today. What kind of offering do we bring today? Are you bringing your very best? God's Word says that to obey is better than sacrifice. Are you giving your best obedience?

Friday, April 7: Malachi 2

Why is God angry with the priests (vv 1-9). Why is God angry about people marrying unbelievers (vv 10-12)? About people who are faithless to their marriages (vv 13-16)? God says He hates divorce (v. 16). Divorce is a violence that destroys spouses, children, and communication with God.

Saturday, April 8: Malachi 3

Jesus is coming! What does this chapter say about that Day of Judgment when He comes? (vv. 1-5). How have people robbed God? (vv. 6-12). How have people spoken against God? (vv. 13-18) Have you robbed God or spoken against God, and what will you do about it?

Sunday, April 9: Malachi 4

Jesus is coming! What kind of sorrow will come to those who have rejected him? What kind of joy will come to those who revere His name? What ministry will Elijah perform before the day of the Lord? Why is it so important to God that the hearts of the children and fathers be united?

Monday, April 10: Revelation 1

The Apostle John is a prisoner because he is a Christian. What is John doing on the Lord's Day? What does he hear? What does the voice say to him? Who does he see? Describe the Lord Jesus as John saw Him that day. How does John react and why does he react that way?

Tuesday, April 11: Revelation 2

This chapter contains letters to four different churches. What does Jesus say is good about the church at Ephesus? What does Jesus say is wrong with it? What should they do? What is good about the church in Smyrna? Good and bad about the church in Pergamum? Good and bad about the church in Thyatira?

Wednesday, April 12: Revelation 3

Three more letter to churches. What does Jesus say is good and bad about the church in Sardis? What should the Christians in that

church do about it? What does He say about the church at Philadelphia? And about the church at Laodicea? If Jesus compared our church with the seven churches in Revelation, which one would we be most like? Why?

Thursday, April 13: Revelation 4

Now the Apostle John is taken into the throne room of Heaven. Who does John see on the throne? Who is surrounding the throne? There are also four Living Creatures. What are they doing? How long do they do it? What are the 24 elders doing at the end of the chapter? What does all this teach us about worship?

Friday, April 14: Revelation 5

We are still in the throne room of Heaven. A Lamb enters. Who is this? The same people who worshipped God the Father now worship Jesus. What does this teach us about worship? In verses 8 and 9, what specifically do they do to worship Jesus? What does this teach us?

Saturday, April 15: Revelation 6

Jesus begins opening the seals of a scroll, allowing the scroll to unroll and reveal God's righteous judgment. What specific form of judgment appears with the opening of the first seal? The second? Third? Fourth? Who is revealed when the fifth seal is opened? And what judgment accompanies the sixth seal?

Sunday, April 16: Revelation 7

At this season of final judgment, God causes a revival among the people of Israel. He saves for Himself 12,000 Jews from each of the 12 tribes of Israel. Now John looks again at the throne of Heaven and sees a great multitude. Who are these people? What is the "great tribulation" they have come out of?

Monday, April 17: Revelation 8

Now, the seventh and final seal is opened by Jesus, the Lamb of God. Within this seventh seal are seven trumpet blasts of further judgment. What judgment accompanies the first trumpet blast? The second? The third? The fourth?

Tuesday, April 18: Revelation 9

We are still seeing the unfolding of the seventh seal, and within this seal are seven trumpet blasts. What judgment accompanies the fifth trumpet? What judgment with the sixth? What sins do the people of the earth continue to engage in? Is our culture repenting of or rejoicing in these sins today?

Wed. April 19: Revelation 10 & 11

God's judgment continues to unfold. Chapter 11 speaks of 3 1/2 years of great tribulation in Jerusalem. What powers do the two witnesses have (verses 3-6)? What amazing thing happens to the two witnesses? Now at last the seventh trumpet is sounded.

Thursday, April 20: Revelation 12

John sees a vision of a woman who represents Israel. Who do you think the dragon represents? Satan has tried to destroy Israel many times, and he will try again in the Last Days. In this chapter, who protects Israel? Satan is enraged and goes off to make war against "the rest of her offspring" (verse 17). Who are these people?

Friday, April 21: Revelation 13

The Antichrist (the first beast) is revealed. Why do men worship him? How long will he have power? Satan is the real power behind this Antichrist. Those who will not worship the Antichrist are killed. Those who will worship receive a mark on the hand or forehead, allowing them to buy and sell. Do we already have this technology available today?

Saturday, April 22: Revelation 14

The Lord Jesus receives the worship of a new song. Why are songs so powerful in worship? How are songs misused by the world? The angels prepare to take in the harvest of human souls. If God harvested your soul today, would He find that you belong to Jesus, or would you be condemned?

Sunday, April 23: Revelation 15

Try to follow this. Within our Book of Revelation there is a scroll that Jesus opens. That scroll contains seven seals. The seventh seal contained seven trumpets. And now within the seventh trumpet we come to seven plagues, which are poured out in chapter 16. What is the significance of the number 7?

Monday, April 24: Revelation 16

Now the seven final plagues, poured out as bowlfuls of wrath from God. What is the first plague? What are the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh? Think back to the ten plagues God brought upon Egypt in the book of Exodus. Which plagues in Revelation are similar to those in Exodus? Which are different?

Tuesday, April 25: Revelation 17

In chapter 12, Israel was represented as a wo-

man. In chapter 17, the culture of this world is represented as a woman, too. She is seen as the great prostitute. Why is this fitting? Whom does she serve? Does Satan really love her? What does he do to her at the end of the chapter? What is Satan's plan for all who reject Jesus as Savior?

Wednesday, April 26: Revelation 18

Power and luxury and material things are no more, for the things of this world come crashing down. What are the things of this world that hold an attraction for you? Will those things endure when God brings His righteous judgment? Pray that you will have a lasting, eternal purpose for your life.

Thursday, April 27: Revelation 19

Jesus rides forth to defeat His enemies and to bring his friends together for the marriage supper of the Lamb. What does Jesus look like in this chapter? What name appears on Him? Who rides with Him into battle? What happens to the two beasts representing the Antichrist and his false prophetic spokesman?

Friday, April 28: Revelation 20

Jesus reigns for a thousand years here on earth. This period is referred to as the Millennium. Satan is released after the thousand years. There is a last battle. What happens to Satan? Every person who ever lived is brought to life. What happens to those whose names are not found in the book of life?

Saturday, April 29: Revelation 21

The old earth passes away. God reveals a new heavenly city of Jerusalem. Who will be present in the New Jerusalem? List as many things as you can find that this chapter says will NOT be in the new Jerusalem.

Sunday, April 30: Revelation 22

More about the heavenly Jerusalem. Think all the way back to God's creation in the Garden of Eden. In what ways is this creation in Revelation similar to Eden? In what ways is it different? What warnings are mentioned in this chapter? What invitations? What would you say is the overall message of the Book of Revelation?

**The FAITH
BUILDER**

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Mar/Apr 2006

Stick
With
Jesus!

TO:

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