


HOPE

GAZETTE
JUNE/JULY
2021





**Let the wicked abandon his way,
And the unrighteous person his
thoughts;
And let him return to the LORD,
And He will have compassion on
him, And to our God,
For He will abundantly pardon.
Isaiah 55:7**

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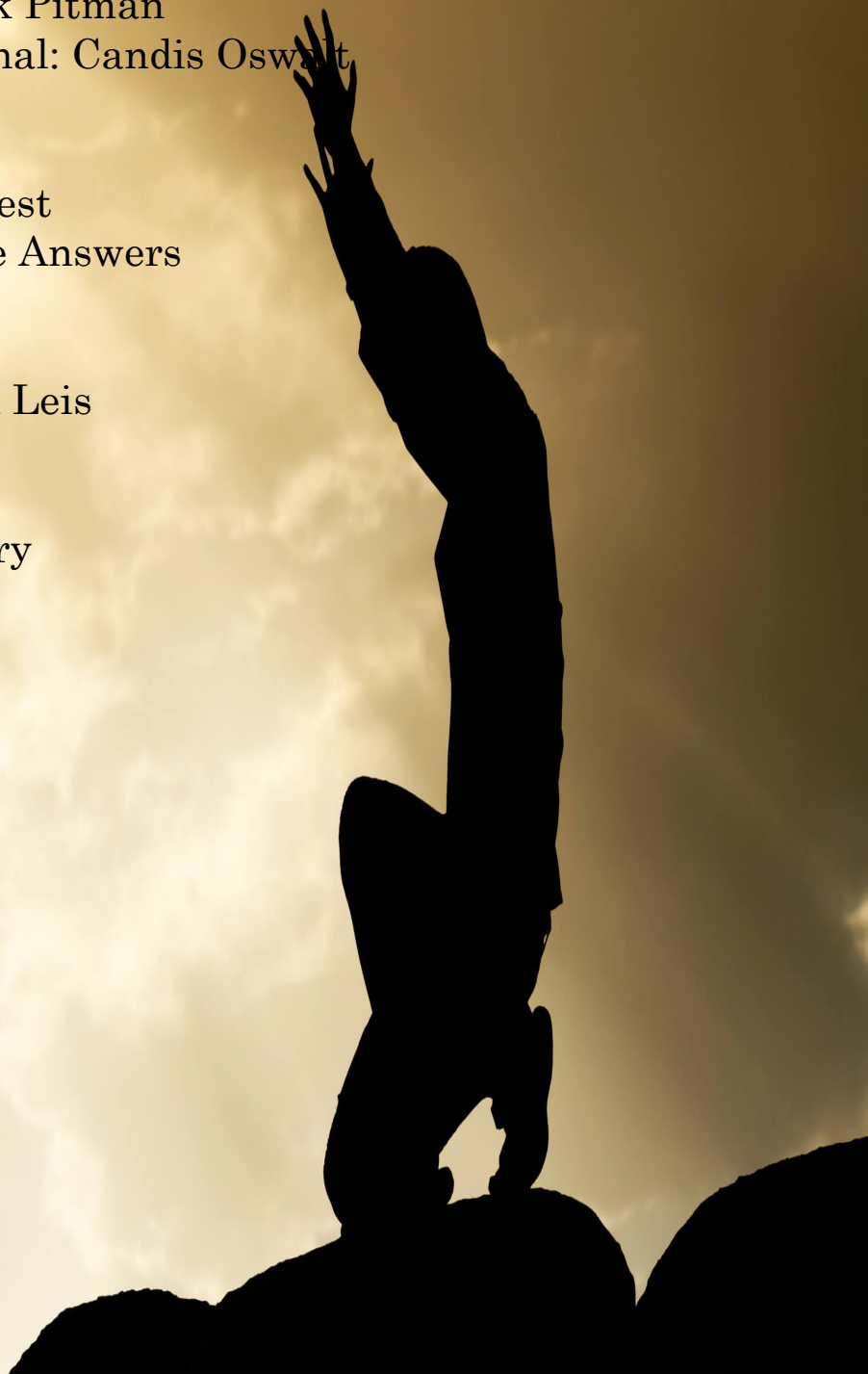
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SHAVOUT



ASCENSION OF JESUS AND PENTECOST

Author Isis Earnest

Recently we celebrated one of the most critical events in the world's history, in my opinion, the great Thanksgiving.

The Resurrection of Jesus that Sunday is for me a time where my family and friends come together to celebrate our Victorious Jesus, rising from the dead, Acts 1:3; Mathew 28:9-10; Luke 24:36-43; 1 Cor. 15:6. Exposing the lie of the enemy, in a brilliant display of true power -LOVE- God is faithful and cares for His workmanship, as Paul puts it in Ephesians 2:10.

I kept thinking that after the Glorious Resurrection, Jesus stayed on the earth another 40 days: teaching, eating, fellowshiping, LIVING among the living, instructing the disciples on the next steps of following Him then disappeared from their sight, not as a ghost but one that could be touch!

Reference Scriptures to those events: Mathew 28:9; Mark 16:9; John 20:14-17; John 20:19, doors shut, and there Jesus was among them. The Emmaus appearance Luke 24:13-31; John 20:26; John 21:1; Matthew 28:17

I was pondering, meditating on the Resurrection, my phone, which has a pre-programmed calendar, marked May 13th, as the Ascension of Jesus.

Remember? Forty days AFTER Resurrection, which for 2021 is May 13th. Some traditional churches bring it to memory; some don't, but I think the Ascension is worthy of remembering.

Let us dig and see what the Scriptures say and let the Scriptures come alive. Revelation 1:7 says, "'Look, he is coming with the clouds,' and 'every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all peoples on earth 'will mourn because of him.' So shall it be! Amen."

Matthew 26:64, in which Jesus tells the Sanhedrin they will see the Son "coming on the clouds of heaven."

Zechariah 12:10, which says that Jerusalem's inhabitants will mourn when they see "the one they have pierced."

I kept thinking, Lord, you are so thoughtful of us. You gave the disciples a Visual image on YOUR RETURN!

Acts 1:9-11 "He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. **8** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." **9** After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. **10** They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. **11** "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? **This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into Heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into Heaven.**"

Luke 24:50-53 "When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. **51** While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into Heaven. **52** Then, they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. **53** And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God."

Side note: for context, let us read verses 48-49. **48** You are witnesses of these things. **49** I am going to send you what my Father has promised, but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

Which it would come to pass on the Feast of Shavu'ot (Feast of weeks) or Pentecost, meaning 50; count 7 sabbaths from the feast of first-fruits. Side note as background to my point on the Ascension and Pentecost

Leviticus 23 tells us about this feast and how the Lord prescribed how to celebrate each of them.

The Feast of the Lord (Moed =appointed times)

1) Passover, 2) Unleavened bread, 3) First-fruits, already fulfilled in Jesus: death burial resurrection and 4) Pentecost fulfilled 50 days after first-fruits (count 50 days from First Fruits forward, these feasts were to be celebrated in the month of Nisan (March/April), Pentecost 50 days later in the month of Sivan (May/ June)

The last 3 Feast: 5) Trumpets, 6) Day of Atonement, and 7) Tabernacles, celebrated in the fall Feast and have not been fulfilled yet.

So, **Jesus Ascended on the 40th day!** After His bodily Resurrection in Acts 2, Jesus told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the "Promise will come." It would be ten more days for the Holy Spirit to come. (Acts 2:1) Not sure if the disciples understood the significance of the waiting... they knew

the appointed times; all males had to be in Jerusalem for sacrifices three times a year, Leviticus 23, those times were: Passover, Pentecost, and tabernacles.

Remember Luke 24:50-51 *"When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. **51 While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into Heaven.** It was a Physical Ascension, not a dream or a vision! Mark 16:19 "After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, **he was taken up into Heaven, and he sat at the right hand of God.**"*

Jesus ascended to Heaven 40 days after His Resurrection. Not just to go back home, BUT to take the throne of a victorious King! Rev. 3:21"... I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne."

Psalm 110:1 "seated at the Right Hand of God" verse 2.- "ruling among his enemies"

1 Peter 3:22 "who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand-with angels, authorities, and powers in submission to him."

Revelation 5:5-6 "Behold the Lion of The Tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed..... verse 6 in the midst of the throne and in the midst of the elders STOOD a Lamb as it has been slain...". A dead lamb would not be standing, just saying. BUT the slain lamb also tells us that he still has the holes in his hands, side, and feet pierced by those nails and the sword that pierced his side. John 20:27 He said to Thomas, *"Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."* Thomas's response? He saw those holes, no marks in his hands and side. My Lord and my God was his answer.

Psalm 110:4 gives us another description of Jesus as our intercessor in Heaven as a perfect High Priest.

Hebrews 9:24-28 "For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that were only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. **25** Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. **26** Otherwise, Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. However, he appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. **27** Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, **28** so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the

sins of many; **and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.**"

Jesus' Ascension necessary for our sake, John 7:38- 39 "Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." **39** By this, he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time, the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified."

Luke 24:49 -**48** You are witnesses of these things. **49 I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."**

Blessed are those who have not seen Him, yet we believe for the Power of the Holy Spirit testifies with our Spirit of the truth.

FEAST OF THE LORD

MOEDS, which means the appointed times, said they were like "rehearsals" of the real things to come, like the tabernacle and the temple.

Have you ever asked yourself why so many people from many nations were in Jerusalem at the time when Peter gave the sermon recorded in Acts 2:5?, and like today, other nations spoke other languages.

We can recognize regional accents. People have accents within the same language and vary depending on the region, same in other countries and languages.

Acts 2:5 *"Now they were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven."*

Acts 1:6-11 *"When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. **7** Utterly amazed, they asked: 'Aren't all **these who are speaking Galileans?** **8** Then how is it that each of us hears them in our **native language?** **9** Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,[b] **10** Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome **11** (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!"* Have you wondered and asked?

- How did those people recognize those men "were from Galilee" in Acts 1:7?

Remember in Luke 22: 58, Jesus, after his arrest, was at the High Priest for questioning, and someone said, "Certainly this fellow was with him (Jesus), for he is a Galilean" How did they know that? By Peter's accent!

- Acts 1 verse 6-11 How many countries are listed?

- Why were those people in Jerusalem from so many countries? Remember many times in the Jewish history they have been dispersed, and as people do, sometimes migration occurs for various reasons, Draught, wars, etc.

By the Law given to Moses by the Lord and it was a requirement for Jewish men to go to Jerusalem 3 times a year for the Feast of the Lord, Leviticus 23 gives an explanation. The Holy convocations of Passover, Pentecost (meaning 50), & Feast of Tabernacles.

Pentecost, we need to know and understand why the disciples needed to wait in Jerusalem Leviticus 23: 15-16 tells us, "count the OMER" the sheaf of grain for the offering of the TWO loaves as an offering.

The counting began on the Feast of First-fruits 50 days later the priest was to wave two loaves of bread from the first-fruits (The mystery of God that brings together Jew and Gentile thru Jesus, because of His sacrifice and Resurrection-1 Corinthians 10:17

This gives us a background of why so many were gathered in Jerusalem at the time the disciples waited for the Promise Jesus told them about before He ascended.

The scholar Alfred Edersheim in his book The Temple wrote: *"According to unanimous Jewish tradition, which was universally received at the time of Christ, the day of Pentecost was the anniversary of the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, which the Feast of Weeks was intended to commemorate. Dedication of the harvest, commencing with the presentation of the first omer on the Passover, and completed in the thank-offering of the TWO LOAVES at PENTECOST."*

New life for the Hebrews coming out of Egypt, the Law was given as a representation of a "new people"; Exodus 19:6 a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." Giving of the Law at Mt Sinai and sharing of the Spirit on Mt Zion on Pentecost Both events: Fire of The Spirit was visible to the people.

The interesting thing when we read Acts 2 disciples were all together in one place, a sound like the blowing of a VIOLENT wind, and tongue of fire rested on them: Do you know what was happening in the temple at that time? The priests were waving

the two loaves of bread and the morning sacrifice of Thanksgiving!

Acts 4:4-5 we read that after Peter's sermon, 3,000, REPENTED AND RECEIVED JESUS AS THE MESSIAH, as Savior, they were glad and were baptize.!!!!

John 16:7 I tell you the Truth: it is for your GOD that I go away. Unless I go away, The Counselor (Holy Spirit) WILL NOT COME TO YOU; but if I go I will send it to you"

So, you see the appointed times of the LORD come to fulfillment at the time HE has set, AND those FEASTS come to pass as He said they would.

We are not to be ignorant by His Mercy and Grace made known to us these things, so we make life choices. As the Spirit gives us the power to overcome sin and we become ONE NEW MAN /WOMAN.

Moses understood the importance of having the Spirit of God. In Numbers 11:29 we read: "But Moses replied, "Are you jealous for my sake? **I wish** that all the **LORD's people were prophets** and that **the LORD would put His Spirit upon them all!**"

References:

The Temple by Alfred Edersheim

Feast of the Lord, Pentecost page 171

Scripture references NIV

God Our Father





HAPPY FATHERS DAY!

Mark Pitman; Cindi McMenamin

To all the fathers, may you be reminded of the LOVE of your heavenly Father through this message of encouragement by Cindi McMenamin. I found this article in doing my research for this month's theme. It is an inspiring message and conveys the way our God is a perfect father to us. I hope you are encouraged by it and it touches your heart like it did mine. As I read this article reminded me of my earthly father and the ways he was a great inspiration to me throughout my life.

Mark Pitman

10 WAYS GOD IS THE PERFECT FATHER

If you - or your children - have wounds in your life because of a less-than-perfect father you are not alone. Having ministered to women for more than 30 years, I've heard the stories of absent fathers, abusive fathers, emotionally-distant fathers, and demanding or controlling fathers, all of which can negatively impact our perception of our Heavenly father.

Scripture says God's ways are "perfect" (Psalm 18:30) and that He is a "faithful God who does no wrong" and is "upright and just" (Deuteronomy 32:4). That makes Him the perfect Father you - or your children - never had.

In my book, *10 Secrets to Becoming a Worry-Free Mom*, I point out that this perfect Heavenly Father of ours has a way of filtering out the damage that you and your children don't need, as well as filling in the gaps to make up for something you or your children still need.

If you didn't have a father who was approachable, loving and had your very best in mind, God - as your Heavenly Father - is waiting to more than make up for what you never had. Here

are ten ways God can fill in the gaps and be the perfect Father, in case yours wasn't:

1. His patience and kindness never run out.

If you've ever felt you used up whatever patience or kindness your dad once had, you don't have to worry about overextending your Heavenly Father. Psalm 103:17 says "from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children." And Psalm 106:1 says "for he is good; his love endures forever."

That means not only that God's patience and kindness never wear out, but that God's ability to forgive you never wanes either. Psalm 103:12 assures us "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us." That means your Heavenly Father also never holds a grudge or brings up your past.

2. He is always approachable.

God never has a bad day, is never in a sour mood, and is never too busy or distracted for His child. When you are in relationship with His Son, Christ Jesus, you have complete access to your Heavenly Father's ear, His heart, His focused attention. Hebrews 4:16 tells us we can "draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

Furthermore, Psalm 121:3 tells us that God will not let our feet slip because He never slumbers. And in Psalm 138:3, David sang "When I called, you answered me; you greatly emboldened me" letting us know God is never too busy to hear our cries and come to our rescue.

3. You will never have to earn His love.

You may have felt that you had to earn your father's love and respect by accomplishing great things to make him proud of you. God is not a father like that. Romans 5:8 tells us that "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

While we were *still sinners*. While we were *still blowing it*. While we were *not measuring up*. While we were oblivious to Him and His love, He sent His Son to die for us. That is

unconditional, sacrificial love and it is unlike anything you can experience on this earth. God is a Father who *chose* to love you and you didn't do a thing to earn it.

4. You will never blow it enough to lose His love.

Since there was nothing you could do to earn your Heavenly Father's love, there is nothing you can do to lose it. Romans 8:38-39 tells us "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.

In other words, no circumstance, seen or unseen power, person, action or inaction on your part can separate you from God's love. That is powerful. And that is a promise that only your Heavenly Father has the power to fulfill. Every person on this earth who claims to love you and never leave you will still be separated from you (at least temporarily) through their death or yours. But God's Word promises that even in death there is no separation from God's love - ever (2 Corinthians 5:8).

5. He has your very best in mind.

It's natural for humans to be selfish and consider themselves before anyone else. So, if you had a dad who was unselfish, and willing to sacrifice his own comfort for yours, you had a gift - a glimpse of what Your Heavenly Father is like. Scripture tells us "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all-how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" (Romans 8:32).

In Matthew 7:11, Jesus said: "If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!" God not only has the ability to give you anything you desire (as long as it's good for you), He also knows your situation down the road and what will be best for you in the long run, as well as eternally.

6. He loves you enough to discipline you.

You might have a hard time with this, especially if you were disciplined by your own father out of his anger, rather than

his love. God's Word says in Proverbs 3:11-12: "do not despise the Lord's discipline, and do not resent his rebuke, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in."

Scripture also says, "Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them" (Proverbs 13:24). Have you ever had God refuse to give you something or take something away that you loved? Trust that your Heavenly Father was either protecting you from something or disciplining you out of love, or both.

7. His timing is perfect.

God doesn't make mistakes. Nor does He forget. And unlike human fathers, His timing is always perfect. When He withholds something from you, it's not necessarily because He's angry or punishing you, or just not listening to the concerns on your heart. Scripture tells us in Psalm 84:11, "No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly."

If you're walking uprightly and you're asking God for a good thing and He's not delivering, it either isn't truly good for you, or it isn't *time*. Trust Him. Trust what He knows. Trust His timing. And trust the process He's allowing you to go through. He knows how to give good gifts at just the right time.

8. He gives wisdom generously.

Did you have a father who held back in any way? Who only gave you advice when you applied it the last time he doled it out? Or who only gave you the bare minimum of what you needed - or not even that - to teach you a lesson or because he didn't trust you with the gift? Your Heavenly Father is not like that. James 1:5 says, "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you." That verse means your Heavenly Father will never say "I gave you wisdom once before and you didn't use it, so I'm not giving you anymore." He gives wisdom *generously*. To all. *Without finding fault*.

9. He lets you make your own choices.

While God has expectations of you, like your earthly father might have, He does not disown you or back out of your life when you select a different path. A wise, loving, and patient Father, He waits. And He "causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose" (Romans 8:28). That means when you come back to His best plan for your life, you find that it is something you really wanted, too, and you find He is able to use those mistakes for good in your life from that point on.

10. He knows you intimately.

It is one of the deepest needs of humans. To be intimately known. Yet sometimes we hide who we really are out of fear of rejection or that someone may lose interest in us when they discover what we are really like, warts and all. Scripture says your Heavenly Father knows you intimately.

In Psalm 139, David said "You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways" (Psalm 139:1-3). God knows your thoughts before you think them, your words before you say them, and your actions before you carry them out. And with all that intimate knowledge of you, He continues to love you like the perfect Father.

~ Cindi



ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

DEVOTIONAL

Author Candis Oswalt

FATHERLY ATTRIBUTES OF GOD?

Have you ever noticed that sometimes God will “ring your bell” in ways you did not realize He was going to? He did that to me with this devotion. When Mrs. Kasey Parrott asked me about writing on this topic, and I had prayed and said I would, my mind immediately started going to thoughts of “ok, what’s a father like, and what attributes of God show that?” Almost as soon as my mind started running in this fashion, the Lord, in his mercifulness, brought to mind something I had just read a few days before. I had even put a quote from the book as my Facebook status because it hit me, and I knew it was so true. The quote is, “False systems of theology and philosophy begin with man, and seek to work up to God. But this is a turning of things upside down. We must, in all our thinking, begin with God and work down to man.” By Arthur W Pink. Oh, my goodness, I had been doing just that. I was starting with “ok, what’s a father like” and working my way up to God instead of honing in on God is the ultimate example of Father, and all fathers should be striving to be like Father God.

Sadly, there are many of our sisters and brothers that have had fathers that did not cleave to the attributes God has/continues to give as examples of what a father should be. This can cause a need for a great amount of healing to take place when they first come to the Lord for salvation. So, I will endeavor in this devotion to show how certain of God’s attributes set the example that fathers the world over should strive to follow.

First, let us give a definition of attributes – a quality or feature regarded as a characteristic or inherent part of someone or something. Obviously, there are some attributes of God that are solely God’s and cannot be translated down to men as an example of fatherhood. His sovereignty, His omnipotence,

GOD IS GOOD

At first, reading this may seem a small thing to show as an attribute of God, but God is good in all ways and in all things and in all manner. Psalm 52:1 says, "the goodness of God endureth continually." All that He does is good because His very essence is good. 1 John 1:5 "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." This goodness of God is shown in His abundant provision for His creation and even in the great thoughts, he thought in creating man. This goodness is an attribute to be desired by fathers. In following the example of this attribute, He provides for his children in every manner necessary for their wellbeing, just as our heavenly Father does for His children. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above..." James 1:17a.

GOD IS KNOWLEDGE

As I stated earlier, the omniscience of God is an attribute that only God has. None of us will ever be omniscient. Psalm 139:6 "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it." However, the attribute of knowledge is another that earthly fathers should have and that God has given the example of and has provided to us. "For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding" Proverbs 2:6 "Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence" Ephesians 1:8. Just as we seek answers and bring our requests to our heavenly Father, so your children will come to you for knowledge (sometimes knowledge must be imparted even when they don't ask for it). They seek answers to their requests. Earthly fathers must seek wisdom from their heavenly Father, so they can "Train up a child in the way he should go..." Proverbs 22:6.

GOD IS FAITHFUL

"Your unfailing love, O Lord, is as vast as the heavens; your faithfulness reaches beyond the clouds." Psalm 36:5 (NLT). God keeps His promises. If He says it, He will do it. There is never any question on this. He promised Abraham his seed would be greater than the sands, and they are. He promised a Messiah and sent His only begotten son. God is faithful. This attribute is of utmost importance for a father to emulate. When a father gives his word, whether to his child or to someone else, he

must keep his word. If that promise was one of consequence for an action done by the child or one of reward for an action done by the child, the promise must be honored. Your no must mean no, and your yes must mean yes. A father should always follow this example shown clearly by God so that the child will grow up trusting and valuing his/her Father's thoughts, opinions, and his word.

GOD IS PATIENT

"Yahweh! The Lord! The God of compassion and mercy! I am slow to anger and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness." Exodus 34:6 (NLT).

"The Lord is slow to anger and great in power...". Nahum 1:3
There is no denying that if one knows God, God is patient or longsuffering, as others would call it. In the above scripture from Exodus, God is calling himself "slow to anger" or patient. Moreover, the scripture in Nahum is also God speaking through Nahum and stating I have been slow to anger, and I am great in power. In his book, The Attributes of God, Arthur W Pink says, "Personally, we would define the Divine patience as that power of control that God exercises over Himself..." This attribute of God's is a mighty example for fathers to follow—exercising their power, through the strength of the Lord, over themselves so that they are slow to anger and longsuffering with their children. This does not mean a pushover. This straight-up means what I have stated, controlling one's wrath/anger so that you may "provoke not your children to anger..." Col 3:21. Just as our Father God does not "lose it" and strike out in His holy wrath every time we mess up, so you earthly fathers must exercise patience when training up your children in the sight of the Lord.

GOD IS MERCIFUL

"The faithful love of the Lord never ends. His mercies never cease. Great is His faithfulness; His mercies begin each morning afresh." Lamentations 3:23. Mercy is what is exhibited after forgiveness is given. Forgiveness and mercy go hand in hand. There cannot be mercy without forgiveness. The Lord instructs us in Matthew 18:22 that we are to forgive seven times seventy times. This count starts anew every day, just as the Lord's mercy does. Hence patience also goes hand in hand with mercy and forgiveness. It can be hard to differentiate between these three at times, and so it is best to exhibit all of them as attributes in our own lives. Mercy is when one does not

receive the punishment that is deserved for the action or inaction they have done. No, this attribute does not negate what I stated in the attribute of faithfulness, that you must follow through with consequences you have stated will take place. This attribute of mercy is when the child comes, confesses, and asks forgiveness, and you say unto him/her I forgive you, thank you for being honest. I am not going to give you consequences this time but go and do not repeat this error. Just as when we confess our sins God is faithful to forgive our sins, and we are not given what we deserve for having rebelled against him but are given mercy through His son Jesus Christ. This then leads right into the last attribute I will cover in the devotion.

GOD IS LOVE

"...God is love." 1 John 4:8b. That is the whole of it. God is love. This attribute of God is what all the other attributes stem from. He is good, faithful, knowledgeable, patient, merciful towards us, His children because He is LOVE. The first part of the scripture states, "He that loveth not knoweth not God: for...". (1 John 4:8a) So, for any earthly father to take on any of the attributes of our Heavenly Father, he must first love. In Matthew 22:37-40 Jesus instructs, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like, unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Love is the beginning, there is no way to be a father after God's example without love. Scripture further tells us in Ephesians 5:25 "Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;" and in John 15:13 "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." This love towards your wife and your friends obviously extends to any children that God blesses your union with. Love your children as you do yourself. Give all of yourself to God, and then let His love pour through you to your children. There can be no other way as we do not have that pure selfless love without the love of Christ dwelling in us.

I am sure there may be some reading this devotion, and it is maybe tearing them up because they are thinking, I was not a good father, or I am not a good father. I have not exhibited or am not exhibiting these attributes in raising my children. Let me tell you the great good news then. Our heavenly Father is the God of reconciliation and has given that gift to us. As stated in 2 Corinthians 5:18, "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;" Do not give up, while there is breath there is hope. Commit that as of this moment, you will seek the Lord to follow his example of fatherhood as shown in these attributes. Talk to your grown children, asking their forgiveness and committing to a path of reconciliation through Jesus Christ. Show them Jesus Christ. Start this moment to fathering your young children as God has shown the example.

Here is a summary to keep in your head and heart to help you remember:

GOD IS

Good = Provide

Knowledge = Train and instruct

Faithful = Keep your word in all matters

Patient = Self-control, slow to anger, do not react in wrath

Merciful = forgiveness + not getting the consequences of behavior

LOVE = All the above stems from love and cannot be without LOVE.





*All Scripture is breathed out by God and
profitable for teaching, for reproof, for
correction, and for training in
righteousness, that the man of God may be
competent, equipped for every good work.*

Book Club: The Book of Acts

Author Kasey Parrott



Join the book club where we focus our attention to learn about one book of the Bible each month. Surveying the facts and making observations makes us better able to understand the history, audience, and meaning of the text as we work to apply it to our lives today.

General Observations

Primary Type of Literature	Historical Narrative
Other Notes	Chronological and Geographical elements used
Author	Luke (A Gentile Physician)
Recipients	Theophilus; Gentiles; Greeks
Length of Book	28 Chapters
Key Phrases/Terms	"You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." 1:8
Significant Words/Phrases Repeated	Growth of the church by the power of the Holy Spirit—Mentioned 52 times in the book.
Atmosphere/Tone/Mood	Gospel – Good news
Possible Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Response to the Great Commission• Transitions– from the ministry of Jesus to the apostles; from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant; from the Israel as God's witness nation to the church (both Jews and Gentiles).

The book of Acts is a bridge between the Gospels and the Letters. It tells how the gospel spread from largely rural Palestine where Jesus preached to the urban setting of the Greco-Roman world of Paul and his letters. The author, Luke, does not attempt to tell every story that could be told, but instead focuses on how God is at work, covertly or overtly, in every stage of the progress of the Christian proclamation towards the ends of the earth. He shows how the Holy Spirit spearheads the movement to new horizons. He also records the great missionary speeches that expound the theology of the early church.

Zondervan,. South Asia Bible Commentary (p. 1450). Zondervan Academic. Kindle Edition.

OUTLINE OF ACTS

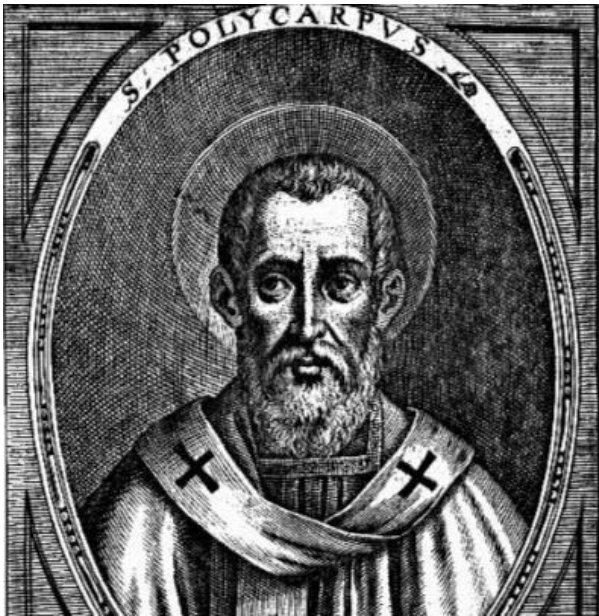
- Prologue (1:1–8)
- The Witness to Jerusalem (1:9–8:3)
 - The Anticipation of the Church (1:9–26)
 - The Founding of the Church (2:1–47)
 - The Growth of the Church (3:1–8:3)
 - Apostles: Preaching, healing, and enduring persecution (3:1–5:42)
 - Deacons: Praying, teaching, and enduring persecution (6:1–8:3)
- The Witness to Judea and Samaria (8:4–12:25)
 - The Gospel to the Samaritans (8:4–25)
 - The Conversion of a Gentile (8:26–40)
 - The Conversion of Saul (9:1–31)
 - The Gospel to Judea (9:32–43)
 - The Gospel to the Gentiles (10:1–11:30)
 - The Persecution by Herod (12:1–25)
- The Witness to the Ends of the Earth (13:1–28:31)
 - Paul's First Missionary Journey (13:1–14:28)
 - The Jerusalem Council (15:1–35)
 - Paul's Second Missionary Journey (15:36–18:22)
 - Paul's Third Missionary Journey (18:23–21:16)
 - Paul's Jerusalem and Caesarean Trials (21:17–26:32)
 - Paul's Journey to Rome (27:1–28:31)





CHRISTIAN CHURCH HISTORY—POLYCARP

Author Isis Earnest



The church organized itself 50 days after Jesus's death on the Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended as promised by Jesus and a fulfillment of the Feast of Weeks.

Most of the first Christians were Jewish converts, and the church was centered in Jerusalem. As the disciples spread the Good News that Messiah had come and was the man Jesus who was crucified, resurrected and now they experienced the Power given by the Holy Spirit on how to live and by signs the disciples and the newly converts (Jew and Gentiles) started to live and spread the

Gospel and lived as a New Man so the body started to grow as congregations – the church.

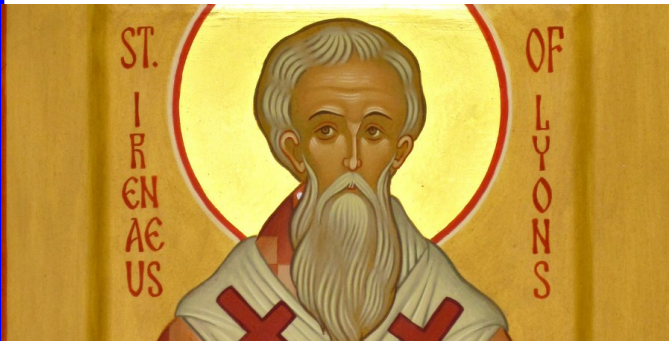
As we read the Book of Acts, it is clear followers of Jesus struggled as they spread and helped people understand what it really meant to be a Christian. From the Roman Perspective, Christians were another sect of Judaism, but to Jewish leaders Christians were “renegades” traitors of the faith.

Christianity continued to spread and many of Jesus followers were put to death for their faith, they claim Jesus as King, would not deny him; their new way of life was clearly different. The Roman Empire in its moral decline, middle of 100's AD, the moral depravity of the romans repulsed not only Jewish people but many Gentiles as well (Gentile a person that was not a Jew).

Christians offered the new Gentile converts not only a moral Law, the Jew converts, knew and were under the disciplined of the moral/ ethical Law of Moses. Christians claimed a direct fellowship with a Divine God that came in the flesh and made a dwelling among humans John 1:14. One

Tradition has it that he was personally discipled by the apostle John, the disciple of Jesus and the writer of the gospel of John. Polycarp was appointed His only existing writing, a pastoral letter to the church at Philippi, shows he had little formal education, and was unpretentious, humble, and direct.as bishop of Smyrna. He urged every believer to protect the apostles' teachings.

Irenaeus, 130-202 A.D., as a young man heard Polycarp preach and



said he was a man of resolute truth, regarded the memory of Polycarp as a link to the original apostles.

In his letter to Florinus, a fellow student of Polycarp who had become a Roman presbyter, Irenaeus relates how and when he became a Christian:

"I could tell you the place where the blessed Polycarp sat to preach the Word of God. It is yet present to my mind with what gravity he everywhere came in and went out; what was the sanctity of his deportment, the majesty of his countenance; and what were his holy exhortations to the people. I seem to hear him now relate how he conversed with John and many others who had seen Jesus Christ, the words he had heard from their mouths."

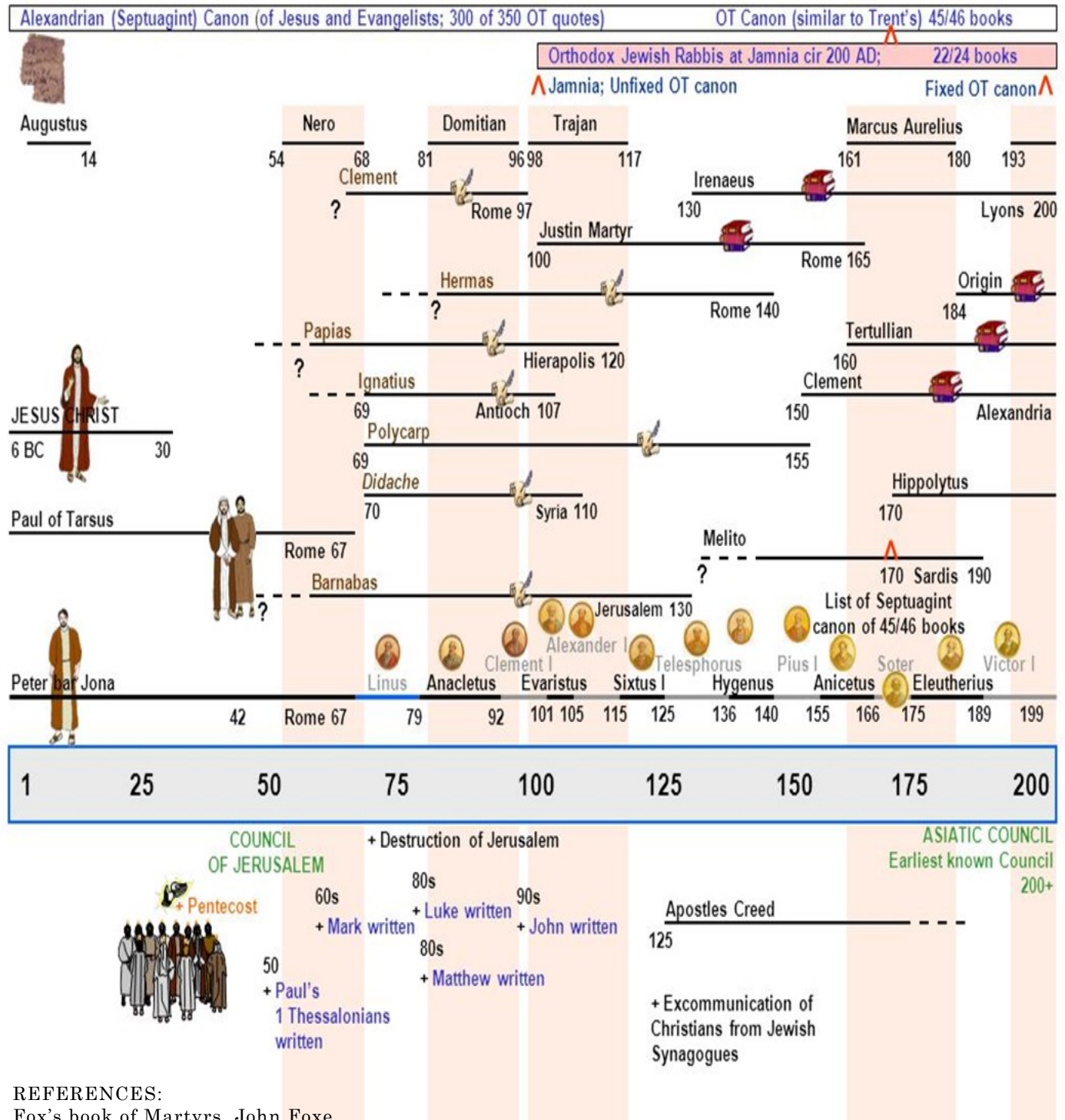
Controversies about Marcion teachings and other Christians were arguing about the day to celebrate Easter. The eastern regions of the Roman Empire, Polycarp was the Bishop in Smyrna, today Turkey. They celebrated the resurrection of Jesus during the Jewish Passover. In the Western, Christian waited until the Sunday after Passover to celebrate the resurrection. Polycarp traveled to Rome, met with the overseer of the Roman church, Anicetus, discussed and disagreed about the Easter issue.

Remember that Polycarp tried to change Marcion's mind on his wrong teachings, since Marcion would not, so he was declared a heretic.

It is not for certain when Polycarp was martyred. Eusibius dates his death on the third wave of persecutions under the reign of Marcus Aurelius in AD 161. Others during date it in AD 142 under the Senator Lucious Statius Quadratus who was a representing Marcus Aurelius in the Province of Eastern Roman Empire, the area of Turkey, where Smyrna was geographically located.

Lucious Q., headed the court proceedings of Polycarp, and is recorded that he said " Eighty-six years I have served the Lord, and He has done me no wrong. How then I can blaspheme my King and Savior? You threaten me with a fire that burns for a season, after a little while is quenched; you are ignorant of the fire of everlasting punishment that is prepared for the wicked"

Polycarp was burned at the stake and pierced with a spear for refusing to burn incense to the Roman Emperor. He said “I bless you Father, for judging me worthy of this hour, so that in the company of the martyrs I may share the cup of Christ”.



REFERENCES:
 Fox's book of Martyrs, John Foxe
 Christian History, T. P. Jones
 Polycarp -Wikipedia
 Timeline – Christian church history



Ask A Pastor

Please feel free to submit your questions to parroftkasey@gmail.com to receive an answer in the next edition!



What does it mean to “speak life” and is it biblical?

The most concise answer to this question is yes, it is Biblical, and it is found in one verse.

Proverbs 18:21(NIV)

*²¹ The tongue has the power of life and death,
and those who love it will eat its fruit.*

Your tongue, the member of your body that you use to communicate, to let your will be known, has the power to bring life and it can bring death.

When you are speaking life, you are using words to create life. Another way of saying “speak life” is to “prophesy.” When you are prophesying you are speaking words that bring “strengthening, encouraging, and comfort. You are bettering someone’s life with the words you speak.

1 Corinthians 14:3 (NIV)

*³ But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening,
encouraging and comfort.*

This is all good when we are just thinking of nice things to say to someone, but it goes to another level when we say words to people at the direction of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit can anoint our words to transform a person’s life. This transformation can be lifting someone out of depression to the literal, life giving words, Jesus used to raise Lazarus from the dead; “Lazarus come out!”

John 11:43(NIV)

⁴³ When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!”

Our Lords brother, James, (James 3:1-12) tells us to watch what we use our tongues for. Let’s use them for life and not death. – Speak Life!

Pastor Mike (PM)



FREEDOM TO ME

Mark Pitman

On this Fourth of July as we celebrate our country's birthday let us stop and consider how we as a nation got here. As we sing our country's anthem and shoot off our fireworks, consume our traditional food, let us remember those who gave their lives for our freedom. Let us go back to the beginning to the birth of our nation.

The date September 7, 1774, the First Meeting of the Continental Congress. There were fifty-six men who had come together from all the thirteen colonies. A collection of the most gifted, virtuous, and wealthiest men upon the continent, they had come together with a strong spirit of unity. Moving with secrecy and with great deliberation, they knew what they were planning would ultimately lead to treason in the eyes of the British.

Yet they were not afraid. In declaring their independence from earthly power and authority, our founding fathers declared independence upon Almighty God: "with firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence," Like the Pilgrims before them, they fully expected God to keep His side of the covenant as they obeyed His Word and followed His Spirit. They were not disappointed. They prayed and sought God in all these matters. One prayer went as such:

If God be for us, who can be against us? The enemy (the British) has approached us for calling on His name and professing our trust in Him. They have made a mock of our solemn fasts and every appearance of serious Christianity in the land... May our land be purged from all its sins! Then the Lord will be our refuge and our strength, a very present help in trouble, and we will have no reason to be afraid, though thousands of enemies set themselves against us round about. [Reverend Samuel Lanagdon, President of Harvard College, in an address to the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts, May 31, 1775.]

Another great statement came from the one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, "Statesmen may plan and speculate for liberty, but it is religion and morality alone which can establish the principles upon which freedom can securely stand." (John Adams)

That was the foundation upon which our nation was founded. Our founding fathers relied upon God for everything. We know the rest of the story and what eventually came to be. Today our nation is in the same predicament and we must stand our ground, or we will lose what our founding fathers fought and died for. So, let us get on our knees and cry out to God for our nation.

2 Chronicles 7: 14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

As we look back let us reflect on what freedom means to us personally. Let us take a personal inventory of our own lives and see if it stands up to the standard our founding fathers laid out for each individual citizen of this nation. We all have a personal obligation to do our part. For if united we stand, divided we will fall. [Robert Grosseteste].

The following is my own reflection of what freedom means to me:

- Favor with God: Finding favor with God doesn't mean everything becomes wonderful and rosy and beautiful and bright. But what it does mean? It means God Almighty has laid His hand upon my life, and He is going to use me for His eternal purpose.
- Responsibility: Obey the rule of law, pay my taxes, know my country's history. I am to be a productive member of country.
- Expression of my beliefs, faith: The First Amendment guarantees my freedom as it relates to religion, expression, assembly and the right to petition. It also guarantees the right for me to assemble peaceably and to petition my government.
- Entitlement to certain rights and advantages as a citizen: I have the right to freedom of thought, conscience, either alone or in community with others and in public, to manifest my religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.
- Duty to protect my rights, my family, to serve God, protect my country. By being a good family member and a good citizen, by working for my country, and obeying the laws, I am doing my duty to my country.
- Opportunity to excel: The Declaration of Independence states that we are "endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable rights, including the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."
- Mercy to forgive others through God for their downfalls and mistakes. The same mercy that God showed me I am to show that mercy to others.

How I do this in my life I have adopted a *Life Purpose Statement* which keeps me grounded and it is as follows:

God's Purpose for My **Life**

That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made comfortable unto His death. Philippians 3:10

Explore these verses:

Joshua 24:15 As for me and my house we will serve the Lord.

Proverbs: 3: 5-6 Trust in the Lord, lean not to thine own understanding in all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct thy path.

Proverbs 30: 7-9 Two things have I required of thee; deny me then not before I die. Remove from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty or riches; feed me with food convenient for me: lest I be full, and deny thee and say who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.

Ecclesiastes 12: 13 Let us hear the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep His commandments for this is the whole duty of man.

Micah 6:8 He hath showed thee O man what is good and what the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? Honesty, mercy and humility.

Matthew 6: 33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things will be added unto you. 22: 37-40, 28: 19-20.

John 4: 34 Do the will of the Father and to finish the work. 15: 9- 15, 17-4. I have glorified thee on earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

Acts: 20-24 But none of these things move me, neither count my life dear unto myself so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. Acts: 1-8 But ye shall receive power after the Holy Ghost is come upon you....and you shall be witnesses unto me...unto the uttermost parts of the earth.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

So, as we celebrate the birth of our nation, be safe, be proud, be vigilant, and give praise to our Heavenly Father for His great works. For blessed is the nation whose God is The Lord, the people He chose for His inheritance. Psalm 33:12 Amen!

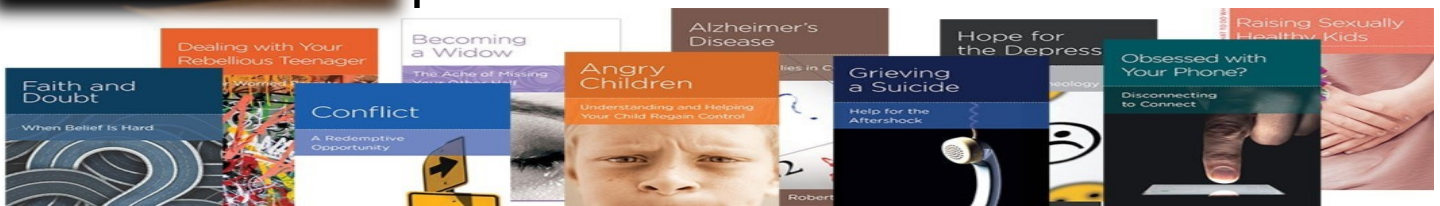
**Happy Birthday to America –
The Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave!**

Odds & Ends

Counselor's Corner



CHURCH COUNSELING SERVICES



This month's highlighted booklet is "Christ and Your Problems" by Jay E. Adams. Do you have problems that seem too great to bear? Do you wonder if there is an way out of the mess you are in? This helpful booklet was written to put such problem cases in perspective. Showing first that no one's problems are unique, Jay Adams offers genuine hope based on God's promise in 1 Corinthians 10:13. Readers will gain the courage needed to take responsible action, knowing that a real solution is to be found in God's way.

Please take advantage of our Counselor's Corner in the back of the church. For you....or a friend or loved one.

Counseling Services Offered to Church Members. *If you need help, or know someone who needs help, please let Pastor Larry or John Leis know.*

Counselingathope@gmail.com

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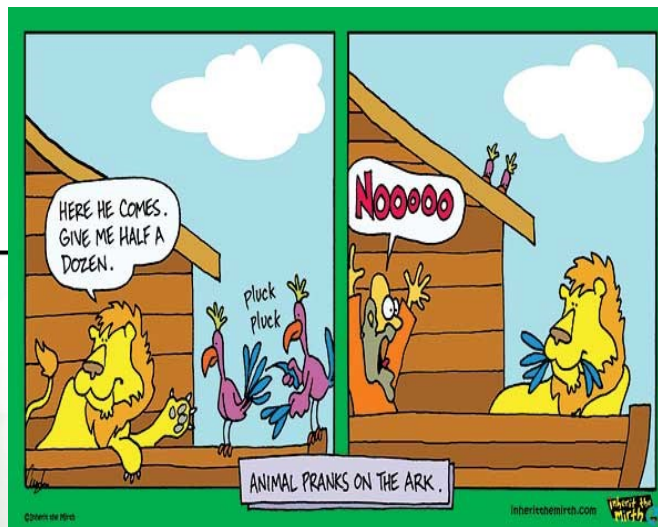
Trimming- \$40
Half Set - \$80
Full Set- \$100

Troy Price
Horseshoeing
School Graduate

Funnies



"You know, of course, there's a toll."



EMPLOYERS!!!

LOOKING FOR HELP?

If you are needing to hire new employees have you thought about hiring people with felonies in their background?

If you do, please email us below so that we can share the positions with parole, WorkOne, probation and other organizations to help people find jobs and move on. They have been told for years that no one hires felons, **IT IS NOT TRUE!!**

Join us now to make a difference someone's life.

LOOKING FOR A JOB? GOT A FELONY IN YOUR BACKGROUND?

Resources are available! Please contact Linda Webb for an information packet by emailing, calling, or writing to the address listed below. Resources include housing guides, food availability, and job information. Information is for both local and national resources. Help is available!

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MOTORCYCLE MATTERS

Health Benefits Related to Motorcycle Riding

Author Kasey Parrott



It is often said that riding is dangerous, that you take your life in your own hands and you must have some sort of death wish. There is more to riding than the obvious danger of crashing. Health experts say riding improves the following:

- ⇒ Mental Outlook
- ⇒ Core strength and stability
- ⇒ Neck strength
- ⇒ Stronger knees and thighs
- ⇒ Calorie burning

In a new neurobiological study funded by Harley-Davidson, a team of UCLA researchers found that riding a motorcycle decreased hormonal biomarkers of stress by an impressive 28%. Riding also increased alertness, similar to the effect of drinking a cup of coffee.

The scientists at UCLA's Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior recorded the brain activity, heart rate, and hormone levels of more than 50 experienced motorcyclists before, during, and after riding a motorcycle, driving a car, and resting. "The differences in participants' neurological and physiological responses between riding and other measured activities were quite pronounced," said Dr. Don Vaughn, one of the neuroscientists behind the study. "This could be significant for mitigating everyday stresses."

Key Health Benefits

- ⇒ Riding a motorcycle decreased hormonal biomarkers of stress by 28%
- ⇒ Sensory focus was enhanced while riding a motorcycle versus driving a car, an effect also observed in experienced meditators vs non-meditators
- ⇒ Changes in study participants' brain activity while riding suggested an increase in alertness similar to drinking a cup of coffee

Information from Brain Research Magazine
Vol. 1752; Modulation of attention and stress
with arousal: The mental and physical effects
of riding a motorcycle



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