

COME AND SEE

John 1:39

PROVIDED BY THRIVE LADIES MINISTRY
CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH, KANNAPOLIS, NC

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A New Perspective

BY JESSICA BROHMAN

2020 had been as a year of change and growth for me, and for most of you reading this. In the latter months of 2019, we all looked forward to 2020. Many of us even joked about having 20/20 vision. But God had different plans for me in 2020 that would change my perspective.

January of 2020 came with its own challenges, and each month after, didn't disappoint with life lessons and difficulties either. Some lessons, I never imagined myself facing. I know you had your own set of challenges during the year of chaos and inconsistency.

I chose self-reflection, only on the occasions when someone pointed out my faults or made me feel like I had caused a problem. I tried to apply the lessons I learned in church on Sundays and from my Bible studies. I remember in those moments, asking God to reveal to me where I needed to improve, or where I had gone wrong in a situation. I did my

best to listen to what I thought He was revealing to me, and make improvements based on that.

2020 hit the ground running...right for me! I knew I could not face these obstacles on my own. Now, more than ever, I realized I needed God to speak into my life continuously, in every moment.

My perspective changed when I decided to reflect and be aligned with His Word and in a continuous state of self-reflection; not of my own opinions or my own thoughts. It was then, that I also saw spiritual growth and most importantly, my worth in Him, Jesus Christ.

I had been focused on everyone else, fixing others, pleasing them, and putting myself last. I know you are thinking that we are not called to be selfish, however, what I am describing isn't selfish. By being in His Word daily, I am feeding my

soul and growing my relationship with Christ. It is then I start to understand and apply His teachings to my life. I see the areas that need adjusting and make changes for the better. I am improving my life and how I interact with those around me.

Romans 12:18, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" is the verse God has used to speak to me in 2020.

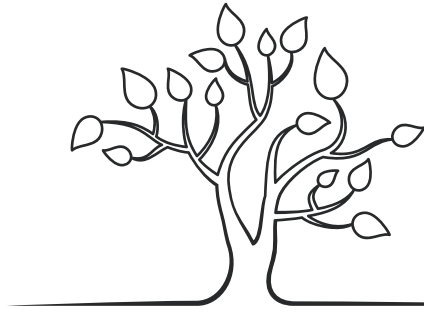
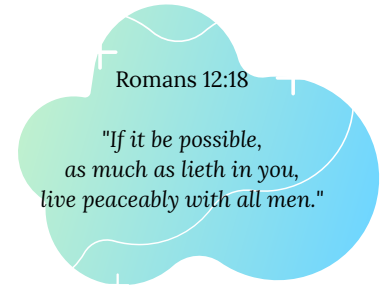
I would be lying if I said it has been easy to apply this verse to my life and be in a state of continuous self-reflection with all the obstacles and challenges that came my way this past year. With God's help, I have learned to accept my situation and trust that God's goodness will shine through the darkness.

I have set boundaries and I am growing. I am learning not to worry when others don't agree. I have forgiven people I didn't think deserved it and I have loved

people I didn't think I could. I am embracing what I thought my life would never look like. At the same time, I am rebuilding it with dreams I never thought would come true, especially during a world pandemic.

Feeling God's peace through it all is where I find myself today as I reflect on

2020. Many of us were waiting at the door of 2021, all but beating it down to go inside, and to leave 2020 behind. No judgment. For me, I want the experiences and lessons of 2020 to come with me into this new year as a reminder and continue to find joy in every moment where God has placed me.



Abiding in Christ

Hello, friends!

Do you know what it means to, "abide in Christ"? It is having a close, intimate relationship and knowing Him on a deep personal level. You can have that relationship with Him by prioritizing Him in your life; in your prayer life and getting to know Him by digging deeper into His Word. Abiding in Him is necessary in order to produce and grow good fruit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control. Galatians 5:22-23). And when you abide in Him, He promises to also abide in you.

I don't know about you, but I need Him every minute of every hour!

I want to challenge you to be more mindful of your personal walk with the Lord. Are there obstacles between you and God that are preventing you from experiencing that close relationship with Him? Are there things you are holding onto; toxic relationships, attitudes, habits, behaviors? We are called to be ALL IN. "And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23).

Each day, for the next 30 days, read and journal the corresponding scripture below and ask yourself the following questions:

1. What is it saying?
2. What does it mean to me?
3. What action can I take?
4. What have I learned about God?

I hope this encourages you and you are challenged to be ALL IN, abiding in Christ.

In His service,
Rebecca

Abiding in Christ Challenge

- | | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. John 8:31 | 11. John 15:7 | 21. John 8:31 |
| 2. Romans 8:9-10 | 12. Matthew 7:21-23 | 22. 1 John 3:4 |
| 3. Colossians 2:6 | 13. 1 John 2:27 | 23. Galatians 2:20 |
| 4. John 15:10-11 | 14. John 15:4-5 | 24. Acts 17:26-28 |
| 5. Philippians 3:8-9 | 15. Colossians 3:1-3 | 25. John 16:33 |
| 6. 1 John 2:28 | 16. Ephesians 3:17-19 | 26. 1 John 2:10 |
| 7. 2 John 1:9 | 17. 1 John 2:24 | 27. Revelation 3:10 |
| 8. Galatians 5:22-23 | 18. Romans 8:1 | 28. John 10:28-29 |
| 9. 1 John 1:5-6 | 19. James 1:22-27 | 29. John 15:2 |
| 10. Job 22:21-22 | 20. 2 Corinthians 5:17 | 30. Psalm 91:1-16 |



The Case of the Broken Halo Still My Little Angel

BY PHYLLIS LEMMON

I knew something was wrong that day when they came home. I'm not certain what set me off. It may have been their expressions, or it may have been the thick gray cloud that followed them in the door. But as I looked closer, I saw it. The halo had been broken!

Upon the birth of my first child, I was thrust into the world of motherhood. Ready or not, I was quickly bombarded with feelings of joy, excitement, hope, parental pride, as well as, tiredness, stress, frustration, fear, and anxiety - but always love. With all these emotions carefully packed in our traveling case, my husband and I sent our daughter on her way to kindergarten.

I cannot deny that there was a tear in my eye and a lump in my throat as I left her in the classroom that first day. I had been at home with her all these years and now I had to leave her in the care of someone else. Someone else was to take on part of the teaching responsibility in her life. What's more, someone else would have to comfort her and hug her should she hurt herself.

The short drive back to the house was much too far away from my baby. I was certain I was dropping her off at kindergarten and when she came home that afternoon, she would be ready to graduate from high school. (That's how

fast the years would fly, everyone told me.)

Well, we got by that first day, and first week, and first month and all was going pretty well. Mom and child were adjusting. Dad just shook his head and rolled his eyes a lot. (I'm not entirely sure what he meant by that). I still pretty much dared anyone to find any fault in my little angel. After all, hadn't I sent them the closest thing to perfection that school had ever seen?)

Then that day came.....

In walked my husband from the school pick-up run, followed by my daughter. In her hands laid the broken pieces of her halo. Just a simple school field trip to the fire station, but it had ended in tragedy. She bore no "happy note" that day but only the stinging words of her teacher: "Bethany had been too silly today. She would not listen and be quiet. I had to speak to her several times."

Immediately my traveling case fell open and in rushed a new set of emotions: embarrassment, disappointment, humbleness. We scolded her and made her write a note of apology to her teacher. But then, it was Bethany's turn to help teach me a lesson. The hurt in her five-year-old eyes was there, not

because of what she had done but because of how she had disappointed me.

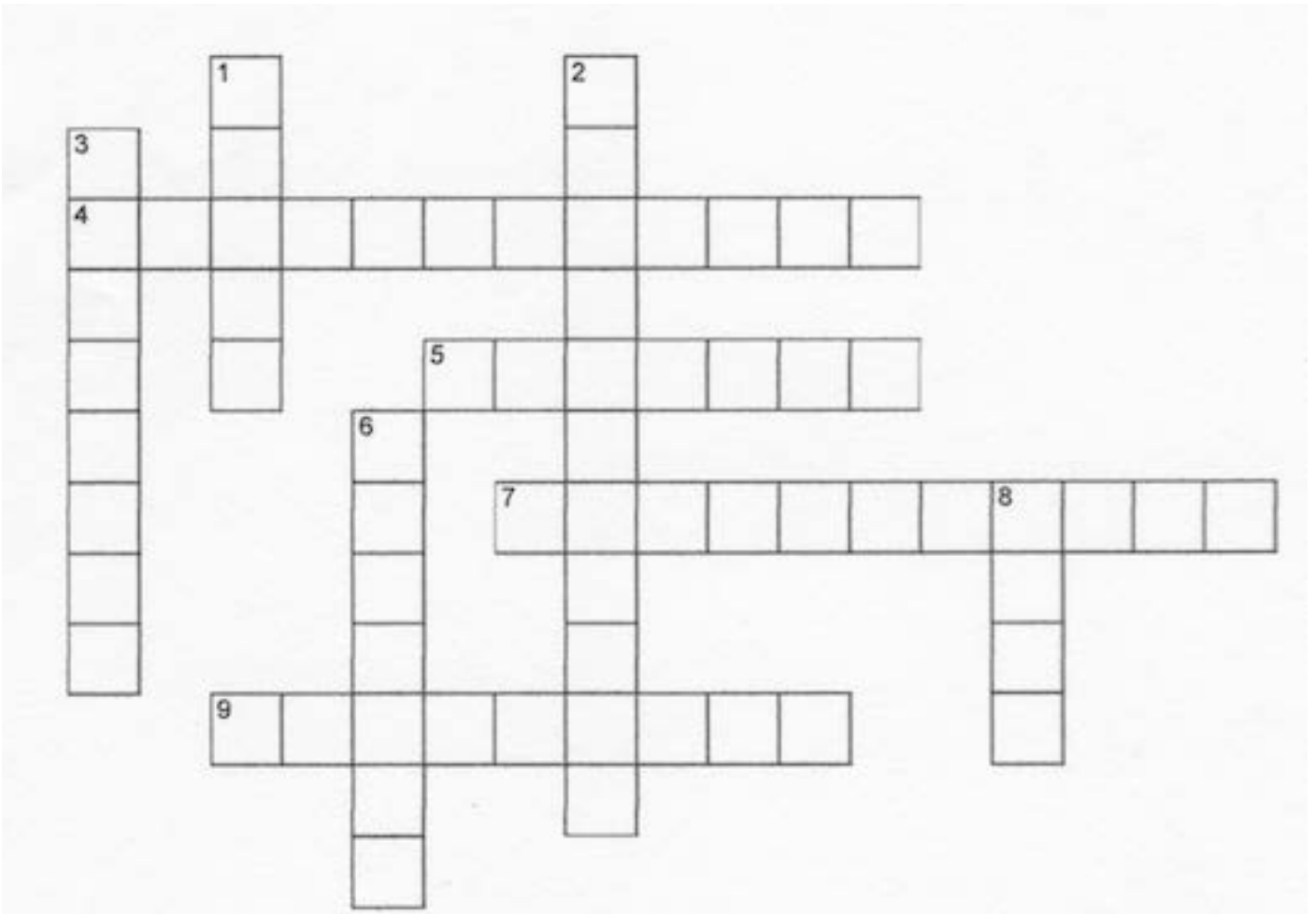
She stretched out her arms to me and pleaded, "Mommy, I'm so sorry! I love you!" She ached to hear my words of assurance of love for her. I took her in my arms, kissed and hugged her, and promised I would always love her.

I'm so thankful I'm a child of God! My heavenly Father watches as I struggle through life's challenges. He is eager to be called upon when I learn and grow and do so well! I look to my Father and I can almost see Him smiling at me. But then I fail. I disobey. I get distracted. I'm "too silly for my own good" perhaps, and I shame and disappoint my Heavenly Father.

I'm so thankful that God knows me with all my strengths and weaknesses. He doesn't compare me to His other children or expect too much from me. But he does challenge me, discipline me, and teach me, that I might be my very best for Him. I'm so thankful that when I have failed Him, and I look up at Him with child's eyes filled with hurt for the disappointment I have caused Him, He assures me of His unconditional love for me.

I John 1:3 "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."

Digging Deeper Crossword Contest *Renewed!*



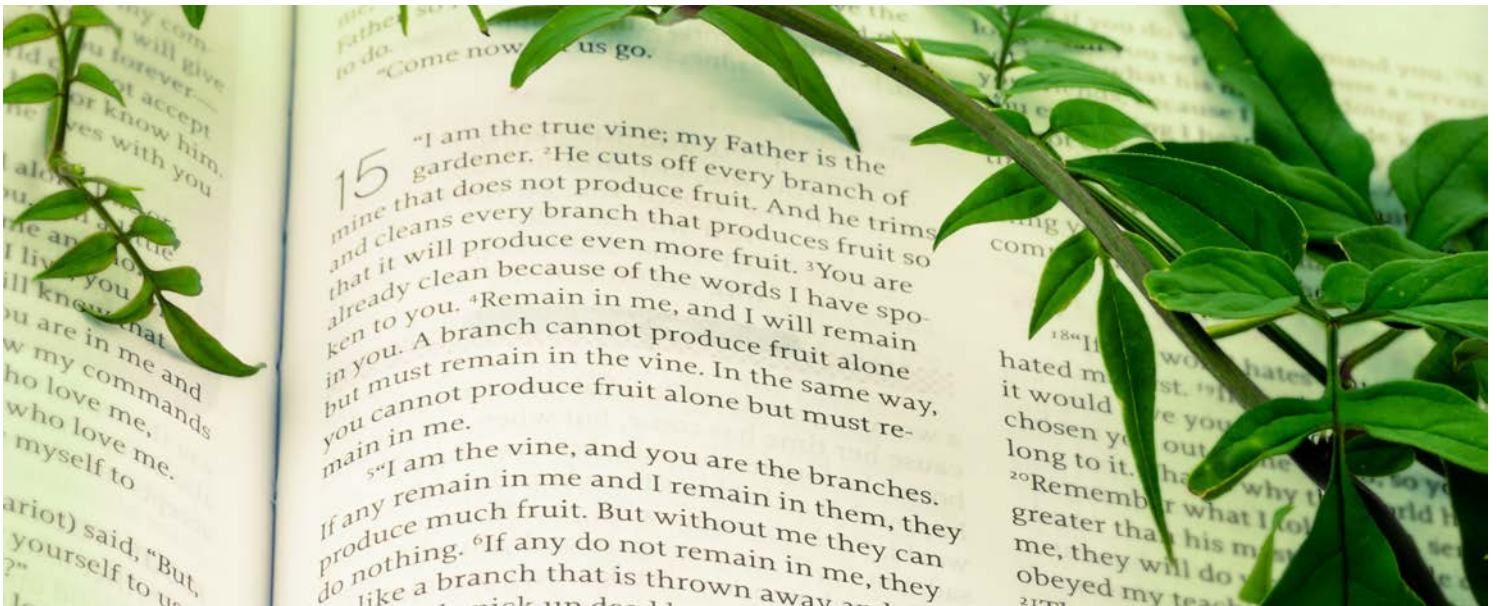
ACROSS

- 4 ...by the washing of_____ and renewing of the Holy Ghost. Titus 3:5
- 5 Behold, I show you a _____; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. 1 Cor. 15:51
- 7 A new _____ I give unto you, That ye love one another...John 13:34
- 9 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in _____ after the image of him that created him. Col. 3:10

DOWN

- 1 ...and renew a _____spirit within me. Ps. 51:10
- 2 And be not conformed to this world, but be ye _____by the renewing of your mind... Romans 12:2
- 3 Therefore if any man be in Christ, He is a new_____... II Cor. 5:17
- 6 But thanks be to God which giveth us the____ through our Lord Jesus Christ. I Cor. 15:57
- 8 And be renewed in the spirit of your_____. Eph. 4:24

Text your answers to 704-680-2613 to claim your prize! Be sure to include your name!



Abiding

BY JULIA POPE

What does it mean to "abide"?

Abide: to continue, to stay with.

Jesus said in John 15:4-5 that He is the vine and we are the branches. In Psalms 1:3 we also learn that the blessed man or the happy man is like a tree planted by the river of water.

Elizabeth George tells of an earthquake in California in 1994. She had a beautiful wall around her home that was torn down. The wall had given the home character. It had beautiful plants and vines with flowers that everyone admired. Her husband rebuilt the wall, but all those plants and vines had to be replanted. After he had worked very hard getting them planted just right, he went out to check and one of the big vines had died. He went and got the shovel to dig it up and as he grasp the vine it surprisingly just came up in his hand. He did not need the shovel because IT HAD NO ROOTS.

This is like our spiritual life. We must nurture the root system because it makes all the difference. Like a plant we either flourish or wither. If we want the abundant life Jesus promised His children, we must take care to anchor our root system deep in Him. What is the condition of your 'underground' life?

Read Psalm 1:1-3

The 1st word describes a person that is happy, blessed, one who is flourishing, thriving, and blooming.

How does she approach the word of God? Delighted, joyfully.

What does she do with what she finds in God's Word? Meditate.

What are the results of spending time in God's Word? Planted like a tree that brings forth fruit.

When we get alone with God's Word we are nurtured and fed. It is the great exchange time. I exchange my weariness for His strength, my weakness for His power, my darkness for His light, my problems for His solutions, my burdens for His freedom, my frustrations for His peace, my turmoil for His calm, my hopes for His promises, my afflictions for His balm of comfort, my questions for His answers, my confusion for His knowledge, my doubt for His assurance, my nothingness for His awesomeness, my temporal for His eternal, and my impossible for His possible.

Roots serve as a reservoir of what we need. What we store of God's Word will sustain us through the fiery trials, no matter how long they last. Do you have a favorite verse you use when you are going through trouble? My favorites are Jeremiah 33:3 "Call unto me and I

and I will answer thee and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." and "He will not fail thee nor forsake thee" (Deut. 31:6).

When your reserve is full of the good things of God and you meditate and trust in His Word, you will be like the blessed person described in Jeremiah 17:8 full of spiritual vitality and continual fruitfulness. God will pour out His blessings upon you and cause you to thrive as a well-watered garden (Isaiah 58:11).

Without a well-developed root system we become top-heavy. We have to be tied up, propped up, straightened up... until the next wind comes along and we fall over again. When we have a solid, strong root system we have the strength needed for standing firm in spite of the pressures of life.

Are you abiding daily in God's Word? Won't you purpose in your heart to spend more time near to God's heart by spending more time in His Word?

Editor's note: It is with great joy that we share this article in loving memory of our precious Julia Pope, written in 2016.

A Ask for guidance, for love; for your faith to be made perfect.

B Believe He will answer you; that He is there for you, that He loves you.

I Invest more time in reading God's word and meditating on it.

D Direct your attention to Him when ever you feel confused or afraid.

E Enjoy Him in the beauty around you; in music, in loving others.



John 15:4

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.



From the Pastor's Wife...

BY LAURA JANE HUNTER

When someone mentions “new year”, what comes to your mind? “Resolution”, “new beginnings”, and “start over” are just a few thoughts that come to my mind. In fact, over 140 million Americans will more than likely make a resolution for this new year and try to start fresh.

As we leave 2020 and begin 2021, many of us want to “start over”. We so badly hope and pray for a new year to bring positivity and change. We desire for things to be better for our friends and family. We hope for health and prosperity.

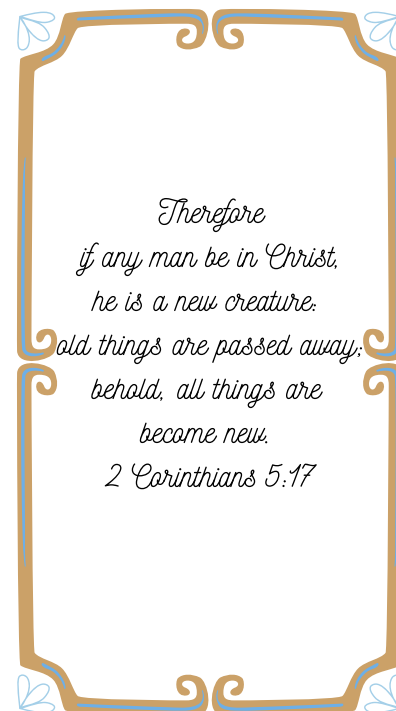
All these hopes and desires for things to be “new” are not bad. But have we ever stopped to think about the only One who can truly make all things “new”? Have we ever stopped to think that without a relationship with Him, nothing else matters? The Bible says,

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17). A relationship with Jesus means He has made you a new creature!

Along with your personal relationship with Christ, comes His promises. Lamentations 3: 22-23 says, “It is of the LORD’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.”

His mercies are new every day! He makes things new!

I pray that as you meditate on the new year and the new beginnings or fresh starts, that you focus more on the One who has the power to make all these things new. Stay focused on Him and He will lead and guide you this year...and every year!



Notes and Journaling

- Do you apply what you read in the Bible? Or do you sometimes allow your internal dialogue to take over?
- What is the most difficult challenge you are facing right now? Spend some time searching the Bible for verses that will help you apply God's truth so that you will walk in victory.
- **READ** Philippians 3:13-14
- **WRITE or DRAW** your thoughts:

UPCOMING EVENTS

MARCH 5-6: YOUTH DNow
APRIL 3: COMMUNITY EASTER EVENT

NOTE: ALL DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

THRIVE! LADIES BOOK CLUB!

MEETS EVERY OTHER SATURDAY @ 10:00 AM
THE HOLY GRIND COFFEE SHOP
CHINA GROVE, NC

****MEETINGS ARE TEMPORARILY POSTPONED
WE WILL UPDATE WITH AN EXCITING 2021
SCHEDULE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.**

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED, PLEASE CONTACT:
REBECCA FIELDEN 704-680-2613

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"NEW YEARS DAY IS A
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ONE'S EYES ON THE
ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS
WHAT THE YEAR IS TO
HOLD."

--ELISABETH ELLIOT

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