

BIBLE READING SCHEDULE

5 Day Chronological Bible Reading Program WWW.FIVEDAYBIBLEREADING.COM

Week Nineteen: *May 4-10*

Day 1: 1 Samuel 26-27; 1 Chronicles 8; Acts 18
Day 2: 1 Samuel 28-29; 1 Chronicles 9; Acts 19
Day 3: 1 Samuel 30-31; 1 Chronicles 10; Acts 20
Day 4: 2 Sam 1-2; 1 Chr 11; Psalm 96,106; Acts 21
Day 5: 2 Sam 3-5; 1 Chr 12; Psalm 122; Acts 22

Week Twenty-one: *May 18-24*

Day 1: 2 Samuel 13-14; Acts 28
Day 2: 2 Samuel 15-17; Psalms 3,63; Romans 1
Day 3: 2 Samuel 18-20; Psalm 34; Romans 2
Day 4: 2 Samuel 21-23; Psalm 18; Romans 3
Day 5: 2 Samuel 24; 1 Chronicles 21; Romans 4

Week Twenty: *May 11-17*

Day 1: 2 Samuel 6; 1 Chronicles 13; Psalm 60; Acts 23
Day 2: 1 Chronicles 14-16; Acts 24
Day 3: 2 Samuel 7-8; 1 Chronicles 17; Psalm 132; Acts 25
Day 4: 2 Samuel 9-10; 1 Chr 18-19; Psalm 89; Acts 26
Day 5: 2 Samuel 11-12; 1 Chr 20; Psalm 51,32; Acts 27

Week Twenty-two: *May 25-31*

Day 1: 1 Chronicles 22-25; Psalm 78; Romans 5
Day 2: 1 Kings 1; 1 Chronicles 26-28; Romans 6
Day 3: 1 Kings 2; 1 Chronicles 29; Romans 7
Day 4: 1 Kings 3; 2 Chronicles 1; Psalm 42; Romans 8
Day 5: 1 Kings 4; Proverbs 1-2; Psalm 43; Romans 9

Continued from Pastor's Desk

However, the liberties granted by this philosophy have often led to entertainment-driven gatherings rather than pure God-centered worship. I appreciate the words of the Reverend Terry Johns when he said, “the ultimate expression of our theology should be consistent with that which we profess. Worship services are what they are because of the theology that inspires them.” This means that how we worship is a reflection of what we believe about God and man. If we elevate God in our lives, He is the only object of our worship. He is our desire, and we yearn to give Him praise. However, if we lift up man as being worthy in any degree, then our worship tends to honor man and his desires more than God. It is vital that we worship individually and as a family of God. Worship reminds us of God and who He is and who we are. It prompts us to consider all that He has done for us. Paul gave us the benefits of worship as well: *to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Ephesians 4:12-14* We are commanded to worship, and each person will worship something or someone in this life. We must consider what our motivation for worship is because worship is not something that just happens for an hour on Sunday morning. It is a lifestyle.

May God bless you all,
Bro. Jim Tennerly

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In verse 30, he instructs them: *Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.* What will grieve God's Spirit? That admonition comes in the middle of a litany of things that would grieve God's Spirit: lying (v.25), unabated anger (v.26), stealing (v. 27), language critical of others (v. 29), bitter spirit and malice (v. 31). There are, as well, positive things that indicate a heart in good condition: Being kind, tenderhearted, forgiving, loving. (Ephesians 4:32-5:2) “How's your heart?” Make David's prayer, your prayer. Ask God to reveal to you anything in your life that is holding you back in Christian growth, grieving God's Holy Spirit, and causing you to miss out on the full measure of God's blessing. Check your heart-health in light of God's word as His Spirit searches and reveals to us measures we need to take to be heart healthy.

Blessed to serve,
Bro. Vernon

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We describe our time together Sunday morning as a “worship service.” We gather corporately to sing songs, read Scripture and listen to a sermon. Along with other churches around the globe, we engage in what we describe as acts of worship. It may look different depending on the church you are sitting in, but worship is our stated purpose for the gathering and the time we invest on Sunday. There are some questions related to worship we need to answer. The first thing we need to ask is what is worship? I am going to borrow from Theopedia for a helpful answer here. I believe the definition it provides is rather comprehensive: *Worship is an active response to the character, words and actions of God, initiated by His revelation and enabled by His redemption, whereby the mind is transformed (e.g. belief, repentance), the heart is renewed (e.g. love, trust), and actions are surrendered (e.g. obedience, service), all in accordance with His will and*

in order to declare His infinite worthiness. In both Hebrew and Greek, there are two categories of words for worship. The first is about body language that demonstrates respect and submission; to bow down, to kneel, to prostrate oneself. The second is about doing something for God that demonstrates sacrifice and obedience; to offer, to serve. (<https://www.theopedia.com/worship>) Is this how you think about worship? Do words like, “surrender,” “submission,” or “prostrate” come to your mind when you are preparing to worship? They are all important parts of genuine worship of God. The next thing to consider when we ruminate on our worship, and declare God’s worthiness, thoughts come to mind regarding how to properly worship God. There are basically two camps when it comes to what constitutes proper worship. The first, is the regulative principle which, in short, states that we worship exactly how the Bible tells us to. In other words, God wants to be worshipped how He tells us and not in some new or creative way

man invents as this often turns into idolatry. From the London Baptist Confession of Faith 1689 we read: *The light of nature shews that there is a God, who hath lordship and sovereignty over all; is just, good and doth good unto all; and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all the heart and all the soul, and with all the might. But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God, is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshipped according to the imagination and devices of men, nor the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representations, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures. (Jer 10:7; Mar 12:33; Deu 12:32; Exo 20:4-6)* On the other hand, is the normative principle of worship. This mindset teaches that man is free to worship God in any manner he pleases so long as it is not expressly forbidden in Scripture. Many promote this as a means to enhance creativity and a relaxed and relevant environment.

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Fear and the Sovereignty of God

"God is in control." These words can be a wonderful comfort to people struggling with common phobias, natural fears, or even deep-seated terrors. The reminder that God is in control often brings great relief. But there are times when the words "God is in control" might make matters worse. A terrified Christian may have already wrestled with the fact that God is sovereign, and come to the misguided conclusion that God is punishing him, or worse, that God has abandoned him. At the root of such fear and anxiety is not likely the issue of whether God is in control (a doctrine most Christians readily accept), but why God would allow Christians to feel uncertainty and dread.

The awareness of God's sovereignty may not be a source of relief in every case—only another source of doubt, frustration, and fear. Fear can do this to people, even Christians.

There are two points to consider about confronting our fears in the light of God's sovereignty. The first is to consider those biblical passages (there are many) which tell us what it means for God to be "in control." When we have a good (or better) grasp of God's control over all things, we discover that nothing which comes to pass is random or outside the will of God. The psalmist reminds us, *For I know that the Lord is great, and that our Lord is above all gods. Whatever the Lord pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth"* (Ps. 135:5-6). In Proverbs, we read that God's sovereignty extends even to seemingly incidental things: *"The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord"* (Prov. 16:33). This information is given to remind us that nothing outside the will of God can happen to us.

God knows when a sparrow falls from the sky, and if He cares for them, how much more does He care for us? (Matt. 6:26). Paul tells us that *"for those who love God all things work together for good"* (Rom. 8:28), and James states, *"Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God,' for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one"* (James 1:13). James adds, *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change"* (1:17).

God does not tempt us (or cause us to be afraid), He gives us all good things, and He promises to turn everything (even our fears) to our good. This short list of biblical passages reminds us that any fear we may be facing can bring God glory, be turned by God to our ultimate good, and grant us needed reassurance when we are afraid. Scripture calms our fears by reminding us that God is our heavenly Father who loves us and cares for us even when we fear Him, or dread His sovereign purposes. He still loves us even when we are afraid that He doesn't. The second thing to consider is that if anyone believed in God's absolute sovereignty, it was Jesus. The Gospels reveal that even though Jesus knew God's purpose in advance and that the outcome to His suffering would be a glorious triumph over death and the grave, He nevertheless felt both fear and anxiety before the ordeal of the cross. In the resolution of Jesus' fear and anxiety we can find great relief for our own.

In Matthew 26:36–38, we read *"Jesus went . . . to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, 'Sit here, while I go over there and pray.'*

And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, 'My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.'" Jesus also said, *"the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."* Then He prayed, *'My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done'"* (vv. 41–42). In Luke's account, the extent of Jesus' fear is revealed: *"And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground"* (Luke 22:44). Fear and anxiety are not necessarily sin—that Jesus was anxious before His suffering upon the cross proves this to be the case. Fear of pain or danger is quite natural. Yet in the midst of Jesus' anxiety in Gethsemane, He nevertheless trusted His Father to see Him through the horrific ordeal to come. Jesus may sweat drops of blood, but He drinks the cup of wrath to save us from our sins. Remarkably, Jesus is an example to us when we are afraid, and His suffering and death removes any guilt we may have for doubting God's promises or for fearing His approach or purposes. Jesus died for all our sins, including all sinful fear. Even better, we have a great high priest, who never sleeps nor slumbers, and who knows what it is like for us to experience fear and anxiety. It is Jesus to whom we pray when we are afraid, and it is Jesus who prays for us, even as we pray to Him (Heb. 4:14–16). This is what it means when we say "God is in control."

This article was written by Kim Riddlebarger and originally published on Ligonier.org on September 25th 2013.

Being, Becoming, and Mission

When we know what truly defines us, we can empty ourselves, as Christ did, and become like those we seek to win to Christ. Unlike Christ, Adam, insecure in his ultimate identity as one created in the likeness of God, attempted to grasp for divinity (Gen. 1:26; 3:5). This resulted in his failure as the representative man to fulfill his mission to bring his posterity into a perfect union with God. In contrast, Christ, secure in His identity as God's Son, humbly took on a human nature to redeem us and accomplish what Adam failed to do. Although Christ *"was in the form of God . . . [He] emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men"* (Phil. 2:6–7). Although Christ's emptying veiled His glory, it was not a loss in identity but a taking on of another nature to fulfill His mission to save us (Heb. 2:17).

As bearers of Christ's likeness, we have been freed to adopt other identities for the gospel's sake so that the power of Christ's sacrificial love may be manifested through us. We must be secure in our true identity as God's children if we are to be free from an inordinate attachment to secondary identities, such as ethnicity, political affiliation, social class, or any other cultural identity. If we treat secondary identities as ultimate, they become treasures that cannot be given up and also the lens through which we see others. Consequently, we build or create barriers, creating an unbiblical sense of "us" and "them", thus hindering our outreach to those whom we consider "different." Paul used differences due to secondary identities for the gospel's sake, while Peter demonstrates the pitfalls of clinging to such differences. Knowing who he was in Christ, Paul was free of all, yet he became a servant to all; knowing that in Christ there is neither Jew nor gentile, he became a Jew to the Jews; knowing that he was under the law of Christ, he became as one outside the law to reach those outside the law (Acts 16:1–5; 21:20–26; 1 Cor. 9:19–23).

In contrast, Peter undermined his mission when he elevated a secondary identity above being in Christ (Gal. 2:11–14). His becoming a Jew to the Jews was not in service to the gospel but was used to divide God's people based on a secondary identity. What Paul used as a tool to spread the gospel and help people find their ultimate identity in Christ, Peter used inadvertently to undercut his mission. To obey the Great Commission consistently, we must be grounded in our ultimate identity and must not slavishly clutch our secondary identities. Secure in Christ and enabled by grace, we never lose anything of eternal value when we, for Christ's sake, lovingly and humbly become like those unlike us. For the sake of the gospel, let us become all things to all people so they may join us in resting in our ultimate identity of being in Christ.

This article was written by Eric Kamoga and originally published on Ligonier.org, on April 17th 2021

Music Notes

A commercial that appears on TV often begins with a salesperson asking passer-bys, "How's your heart?" One person answers that she thinks her heart is pretty good. The salesperson then asks, "How do you know?" He then goes on to pitch the KardiaMobile, a device that will produce a medical grade EKG to detect heart arrhythmia.

When I thought about that commercial, a scripture came to mind. In Psalm 139:23, the Psalmist asks, in essence, "How's my heart?" David is thinking of his spiritual health before God.

This thought is voiced in David's prayer: *Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!* (ESV)

David wanted to be sure he was "heart-healthy" in God's estimate. There seems to be urgency in David's prayer. He wanted to know if there was anything in his life "grievous" to God.

Is there something, any device available, for discerning God's estimate of our spiritual hearts? How can we know if anything in our lives is grieving God?

There is, indeed, such a device which will tell us the condition of our hearts. It's called the Bible.

It is full of information that acts as a detector of heart condition. It is from the heart that the actions of men proceed (Proverbs 4:23). So, how do our actions line up with what the Bible teaches?

Jesus taught that from the heart proceeds evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetousness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, and foolishness (Mark 8:21-22). We find another clue as to heart condition in Ephesians 4. In that chapter, Paul admonishes the Christians in Ephesus to put aside their former manner of life and conduct themselves according to the new persons they were in Christ.

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