

1 December 2006

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I am so pleased that you have this set of devotions. Being in God's Word is very important. 2 Timothy 2:15 says, **Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.** As you do your best, God will add His blessing to your life.

I also know how busy we can all get in December and I want to encourage you to keep Jesus at the center of all your activities. He really is the reason for the season.

God bless you as you study God's Word this month.

Gladly in His Service,

Dr. Jason B. Brittain

Friday December 1

**Scripture Reading: Ezekiel 45-46
2 Peter 3**

Praise the Lord! In 2 Timothy, Paul is talking about a man who stood with him in the ministry. 2 Timothy 1:16-17 say, **May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. On the contrary, when he was in Rome, he searched hard for me until he found me.** Let's be the kind of people who stand with others and let's be refreshment to them.

I want to commend you for being in God's Word every day. There is always more for us to learn. You are doing your part and I can assure you that God will do His part.

Look at Ezekiel 45:15, **Also one sheep is to be taken from every flock of two hundred from the well-watered pastures of Israel. These will be used for the grain offerings, burnt offerings and fellowship offerings to make atonement for the people, declares the Sovereign LORD.**

This is a clear picture of Jesus coming as the Lamb of God and dying on the cross for our sins. We often see pictures of Jesus when we read the Old Testament and this is sure one of those times. God was covering the sins of the people with the blood of animals in the Old Testament. Praise the Lord for the fact that He has provided real and lasting forgiveness for us.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I am so thankful that I have given my life to You. Please help me to be faithful to You and to others. I know that I can only live like You want because You are helping me. Help me to stay close to You and please continue teaching me Your ways. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Saturday December 2

Scripture Reading: Ezekiel 47-48

1 John 1

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 1:18 says, **May the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day! You know very well in how many ways he helped me in Ephesus.** There are several things I could say about this verse but I want to make the point that every good thing in our lives is a gift from God. Paul was making this point when he said that Timothy had mercy because God has granted it to Him. We need to realize that all the good things in our lives are gifts from God and we need to be more thankful.

Well, we have made it to the end of the book of Ezekiel and guess what? God is still in control and His will is always being done! I know that might seem like a very simple point for me to make but I also know there are more than a few of you who need that reminder today. God is in control and we can trust Him.

Look at the last verse of Ezekiel, **"The distance all around will be 18,000 cubits. And the name of the city from that time on will be: the LORD is there."**

God is everywhere and He is always all-powerful. So, giving our lives to Him and living for Him is always the right thing to do. In your New Testament Readings, you will be reading Revelation this month and you are going to see these same things there. God is in control and He wins!

Prayer: Thank You Lord, for reminding me that everything good in my life is from You. Please give me more revelation about how all-inclusive that is and help me to know that I can always trust You. I am also thankful that You are always with me and I know that I don't have anything to fear. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Sunday December 3

Scripture Reading: Daniel 1-2 1 John 2

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 2:1 says, **You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.** Grace is God's unmerited favor. It is God blessing you when you don't deserve it. So, how do you suppose we can be strong in grace? Part of that process is really believing in God's grace and accepting it into your life.

Daniel was a young man who was sent into exile. He loved God and was committed to living for Him no matter what the cost and he did just that. I know that you sometimes feel like you are surrounded by worldly people but it was even worse for Daniel.

He was not only committed to God, he was also gifted by Him. God had given him the ability to interpret dreams. Look at Daniel 2:28, **but there is a God in Heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you lay on your bed are these:** Daniel knew that it was God Who revealed mysteries and he was always sure to give God the glory.

We need to be committed to living for God no matter what we face. We need to give God credit for all the good things in our lives.

Prayer: Lord, please help me to be strong in the grace that You have given me. I want to be strong so I can stand for You all the time. I know that Your ways are right and I want to choose them over the ways of the world. I also ask You to bless Church today. Help us all to be there ready and willing to worship You and to learn from Your Word. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Monday December 4

**Scripture Reading: Daniel 3-4
1 John 3**

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 2:2 says, **And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.** It always stands out to me that we are to entrust things to "reliable" men and then they will be qualified to teach others. You see, God is looking for faithfulness more than anything else and He is always ready to use faithful people more.

In Daniel 3, King Nebuchadnezzar wanted to be worshipped. So they built this huge statue and told everyone that they would be thrown into a burning furnace if they didn't bow down to it.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego would not bow to anyone or anything other than God. So, the king carried out his threat but God protected them!

We need to choose who we are going to serve and then we need to follow through with our choices. When we choose God, He will then take care of us. This doesn't mean we won't ever have to face hard things but at least we will be on the right side.

Prayer: Lord, I see that faithfulness is vitally important and I want to be more faithful. Please help me to know that I can do anything and everything that You have called me to do with Your help. I don't want to miss out on anything You have for me. Help me to choose to live for You and help me to never waiver on that choice when the heat gets turned up. Also, please bless all my brothers and sisters who are doing these devotions. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Tuesday December 5

Scripture Reading: Daniel 5-6

1 John 4

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 2:3 says, **Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.** This verse sure goes along with what we covered yesterday and it goes along with what we are going to cover today. Choose to live for God and never quit! If we face hard things, know that He will be with us to help.

In our reading for today, we have Daniel going through a trial very similar to the one we looked at yesterday. Now, there is a decree that no one should pray to God. Daniel was a man of prayer and he continued to pray just like he had before this.

You see, Daniel had chosen to serve God and he was following through on that choice. In this case, he was thrown into a den of hungry lions but God took care of him.

I hope you are getting the point that trusting God is always the right thing to do. Look at what Paul wrote about this in 2 Timothy 1:12, **That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know Whom I have believed, and am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him for that day.** God is able to take care of what we entrust to Him. So, let's entrust everything to Him and know that He will take care of it all.

Prayer: Lord, I want to live for You no matter what I face. I want to make this commitment and I want to keep it when I am in the battle. Help me to serve as a good soldier and help me to know that I am on the right side because I am on Your side. I am also thankful for the promise that You will never leave me nor forsake me. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Wednesday December 6

Scripture Reading: Daniel 7-8

1 John 5

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 2:4 says, **No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs - he wants to please his commanding officer.** When a person is in an army, they are serving others and they should be sold out to that process. We should be just as sold out to God and living for Him!

I have been preaching on the Kingdom of God at Creative and the book of Daniel sure has some things to say about it. Look at Daniel 7:18, **But the saints of the Most High will receive the Kingdom and will possess it forever - yes, for ever and ever.** This was a prophetic promise of a time when God's saints (that is you and me) will receive God's Kingdom and it will last forever and ever! Praise the Lord! We are living this out today.

Daniel 7:27 says, **Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole Heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His Kingdom will be an everlasting Kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey Him.** Did you notice what this verse said about us? If you missed it, go back and read it to see some of what God promises us. God is going to take care of us and He is going to see to it that we have everything that He has for us and some of those things are pretty extraordinary!

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I want to live fully for You. Please help me to know how to apply that in my life and if I ever get off track, help me to get straightened out quickly. I also ask You to help me to believe every bit of Your Word. I know that You have great things for me in Your Kingdom and I don't want to miss out on anything You have for me. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Thursday December 7

**Scripture Reading: Daniel 9-10
2 John**

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 2:5 says, **Similarly, if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor's crown unless he competes according to the rules.** Paul is using several different illustrations to show us how we should live for God. In this verse, he is saying we should be like athletes. We need to obey the rules (live like God wants) and we should compete to win.

As I looked in my Bible at Daniel 9, I noticed that the heading says, "Daniel's Prayer". A couple of days ago, we talked about Daniel being a man of prayer and that was evidently continuing. Look at what Hebrews 11:6 says, **And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.** God rewards those who earnestly and diligently seek Him.

Daniel 10:12 says, **Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them."** There was a delay in Daniel getting the answer to his prayers, but God was explaining that the answer was on the way as soon as he prayed, and God did get the answer through! So, pray, know that God hears you, and be confident that He will answer. Then never quit!

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I am so glad that I have given my life to You. Please help me to know how You want me to live and then help me to really do what You say. I also ask You to help me to know the importance of praying always and help me to never quit. I know that You are in control and that my prayers play a part. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Friday December 8

Scripture Reading: Daniel 11-12
3 John

Praise the Lord! Now Paul is using the illustration of a farmer. 2 Timothy 2:6 says, **The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops.** We need to work hard and know that there will be a harvest and we will get to receive a share of it! As you work hard for God, He knows what You are doing and your labors are never in vain. Galatians 6:9 says, **Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.**

Look at how the book of Daniel ended. Chapter 12, Verse 8 says, **I heard, but I did not understand. So I asked, "My lord, what will the outcome of all this be?"** With all the revelations Daniel had, he still didn't know everything.

Look at God's answer to him in verse 13, **As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance.** This was quite a revelation! God was basically telling him that he was going to die but there was going to be a resurrection coming. He would be part of it and he would get his inheritance then. The hope of the resurrection is usually a New Testament revelation but Daniel got it way ahead of time.

Prayer: Lord, I want to live for You and I don't ever want to give up. Please help me to remember that You are aware of everything I do and that You are going to reward me. I know that all of eternity is in Your hands and that includes my future. So, I am going to live faithfully for You and trust You for every detail in my life. I love You so much and I am glad that You are my Lord and Savior. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Saturday December 9

**Scripture Reading: Hosea 1-4
Jude**

Praise the Lord! We have been looking at several illustrations that Paul gave about living for God. Now, in 2 Timothy 2:7 he says, **Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.** It is good advice to reflect on what God is showing us. When we do that, we will receive more and more revelation from Him. This is also called meditating on the Word.

There is a wonderful promise right in the first chapter of Hosea and that is what I want us to cover today. Hosea 1:7 says, **Yet I will show love to the house of Judah; and I will save them - not by bow, sword or battle, or by horses and horsemen, but by the LORD their God.**

Please know that this was a specific promise to those who lived back then, but it can also apply to us today. Two things stand out to me. 1. God loves us! 2. He is going to save us!

Aren't you glad that our confidence is not in the things of the world? We don't trust in bows, swords, battles, horses, horsemen, tanks, armies, nuclear bombs, money or the economy. We trust in God!!! If we were to trust in any of those others things we wouldn't really be secure because someone else may have things that are more powerful than what we have. BUT when we trust in God, no one will ever have anything more powerful than Him!

Prayer: Lord, I love it when You speak to me from the Word. Please help me to really reflect on what You show me and help me to gain all the insight that You have. Then help me to reflect on Your Word even more because I know that You always have more for me. I also want to keep my trust and confidence in You and You alone. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Sunday December 10

**Scripture Reading: Hosea 5-8
Revelation 1**

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 2:8 says, **Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel.** Remember Jesus! This is always a good thing to do. Oh, I know we never really forget Him, but some people live like He isn't with them. We also need to remember that He has good news for us. That is what the word Gospel means.

Look at Hosea 6:6, **For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.** Whenever I see a verse that tells me something that God desires, I pay attention. You see, I want to give Him what He wants.

This verse tells us that He wants mercy rather than sacrifice. Sometimes people blow things and then try to make up for it by making some sacrifice. When we extend mercy to people, we are doing what He wants before the fact.

This verse also tells us that God wants us to acknowledge Him rather than making some other sacrifice. When we stand up for God and His presence in our lives, we will live like He wants and then we won't have to worry about any sacrifice other than the one that Jesus has made for us on the cross.

Prayer: Lord, I want to remember You all the time and I am so thankful for the Good News that You have brought into my life. Please help me to give You the things that You want and deserve. I want to be a person of mercy and I want to acknowledge You all the time. I also want to ask You to bless Church today. Help everyone there to experience Your presence and help us to grow in You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Monday December 11

**Scripture Reading: Hosea 9-11
Revelation 2**

Praise the Lord! Rather than giving you a verse from 2 Timothy today, I want to remind you to keep Jesus at the center of all your activities this month. I know this can be a very busy time of year, but as Christians we need to remember that Jesus is the real reason for the season! Keeping Him first in our lives will help us in so many ways.

Hosea 11:1 says, **When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My Son.** Since we are in the Christmas season, I want to show you that this is talking about the coming of Jesus.

Look at Matthew 2:13-15, **When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him." So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my Son."**

In Hosea, God said He would call His Son out of Egypt. In Matthew, we see it happening just like God said it would. Please let this remind you of how much God is in control and let it help you trust Him even more.

Prayer: Lord, I am so thankful for the Christmas season. Thank You for coming into the world and thank You for coming into my life. Help me to keep You at the center of everything I do all year and especially now. I also want to keep my trust in You and You alone. I know that You are well able to take care of me. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Tuesday December 12

**Scripture Reading: Hosea 12-14
Revelation 3**

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 2:8-9 say, **Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God's Word is not chained.** They were able to put Paul in chains but they couldn't stop the Gospel from going out. Paul kept a good attitude, witnessed to everyone he could and he spent a lot of time writing letters to Christians that would end up being part of the Word.

God always wants to take care of us, but people sometimes forget Him. Look at Hosea 13:5-6, **I cared for you in the desert, in the land of burning heat. When I fed them, they were satisfied; when they were satisfied, they became proud; then they forgot Me.** God took care of them but then they forgot Him. We need to seek Him when we have needs and when we are filled. That way we won't be misled.

The last verse of Hosea says, **Who is wise? He will realize these things. Who is discerning? He will understand them. The ways of the LORD are right; the righteous walk in them, but the rebellious stumble in them.** THE WAYS OF THE LORD ARE RIGHT! I tell you this quite often and I hope you really believe me.

Prayer: I thank You for the fact that You and Your Word can never be chained or stopped. Please continue Your good work in my life. Help me to seek You and Your ways all the time. I don't ever want to get off track for any reason. I also thank You that I am learning that Your ways are always right and I want to yield to them quickly and completely. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Wednesday December 13

**Scripture Reading: Joel
Revelation 4**

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 2:10 says, **Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.** Whenever you read a "Therefore" in the Word, stop and ask what it is there for? Paul had just reminded us that God's Word could not be chained and now he tells us to keep living for Jesus! Don't quit. Have endurance.

Look at the wonderful promise in Joel 2:25-26, **I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten - the great locust and the young locust, the other locusts and the locust swarm - My great army that I sent among you. You will have plenty to eat, until you are full, and you will praise the name of the LORD your God, who has worked wonders for you; never again will My people be shamed.**

God can restore everything the devil has stolen in your life. He is always stronger than the enemy and He is able to make us whole again. When that happens, it should cause us to praise God even more!

The next verse says, **Then you will know that I am in Israel, that I am the LORD your God, and that there is no other; never again will My people be shamed.** Then we will know that He is God!

Prayer: Lord, I want to live for You and never quit. I know that You are going to have the final say in all things and I want to be on Your side when that happens. Please continue to teach me Your ways and help me to serve You with all the strength that You supply me. I also ask You to restore everything the devil has stolen so everyone will know that You are God. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Thursday December 14

**Scripture Reading: Amos 1-3
Revelation 5**

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 2:11 says, **Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with Him, we will also live with Him.** All of the Word is trustworthy but truth stands out. We died with Him (when He bore our sins on the cross) and now we should live with Him. The more we remember the great price He paid for us, the better we will do.

God always blesses unity. Look at Amos 3:3, **Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?** We can be in unity when we believe the same things and when we are heading in the same direction. Here's part of how that works between you and me. I love God, I am basing my life on His Word, and I am living like He wants. You are doing the same things. So, we believe the same things and we are heading in the same direction. That means we are in unity and God always blesses unity!

There is also power released when we pray in unity. Matthew 18:19-20 say, **Again, I tell you that if two of you on Earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by My Father in Heaven. For where two or three come together in My name, there am I with them.** These verses even tell us that when we pray together in unity, Jesus shows up and adds His prayers to our prayers.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I am thankful for the Christian people You have brought into my life. Please help us all to keep growing in You, learning Your Word and heading in Your direction. As we do that, thank You for making us one in You. Help us to avoid anything that would hurt the unity that You are bringing us into and thank You that this is all possible because You came and died on the cross for our sins. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Friday December 15

**Scripture Reading: Amos 4-6
Revelation 6**

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 2:12 says, **if we endure, we will also reign with Him. If we disown Him, He will also disown us.** I know this sounds like a very serious statement and it is. We need to serve Him and we need to endure! When we stay close to Him, we won't have anything to worry about. He is well able to take care of us. I am so glad that Jesus is our Lord and Savior.

Every once in a while a verse will stick out from the Word and that is a good thing. It is usually the Lord trying to get us to realize something really important. When that happens while I am writing these devotions, I take it as a personal word for me and for you.

Here's what stood out to me for us today. Amos 5:4 says, **This is what the LORD says to the house of Israel: "Seek me and live!"** This is such a basic truth and yet we need it so much.

Matthew 6:33 says, **But seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.** John 10:10 says, **The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.** SEEK GOD AND LIVE!

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I love it when You speak to me from the Word. I want to SEEK YOU and I want all the life You have for me! Please help me to also have endurance. I don't want to start off right and then get weary and quit. I want to live for You all the way to the end and I know that in You there is no end. I also ask You to bless our weekend and help us to all to live like Your people should live. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Saturday December 16

**Scripture Reading: Amos 7-9
Revelation 7**

Praise the Lord! Keep Jesus at the center of your life and all your activities! That is what Christmas is all about. 2 Timothy 2:13 says, **If we are faithless, He will remain faithful, for He cannot disown Himself.** Praise the Lord that He is always faithful. Let's be faithful too. That is the best way to live. Even if we do let Him down, He won't ever quit on us.

Look at the call of Amos in Chapter 7, Verses 14-15, **Amos answered Amaziah, "I was neither a prophet nor a prophet's son, but I was a shepherd, and I also took care of sycamore-fig trees. But the LORD took me from tending the flock and said to me, 'Go, prophesy to My people Israel.'"**

Have you ever felt like you were not qualified to be called by God? Well, Amos felt that way too. Listen, it isn't ever a matter of us being qualified. It is always a matter of God's call on our lives. He calls us and He can equip us to do what He wants us to do. It would be a good thing for you to meditate on that because it will give you confidence. Confidence in Him and not in yourself.

Amos could do what God called him to do and we can do what God calls us to do. We just need to stay reliant upon Him.

Prayer: Lord, I am so thankful that You are always faithful to me. I ask You to help me to be more faithful to You. I also know that I can do anything and everything You call me to do as long as I have Your help. Help me to know what You want me to do and help me to stay close to You. Thank You for Philippians 4:13 that says, I can do everything through Him who gives me strength. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Sunday December 17

**Scripture Reading: Obadiah
Revelation 8**

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 2:14 says, **Keep reminding them of these things. Warn them before God against quarreling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen.** We need to be reminded of good things and we need to be warned to stay away from bad things. Quarreling and strife are things we need to avoid. They hurt the unity that God wants us to have and He always blesses unity.

Well, your Scripture Reading from the Old Testament was certainly shorter than it usually is. Look at Obadiah 1:15 for today, **The day of the LORD is near for all nations. As you have done, it will be done to you; your deeds will return upon your own head.**

God knows everything that goes on and we can trust Him to sort everything out. This verse tells us that a day is coming when nations will reap what they have sown. Matthew 25:31-33 say, **When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, He will sit on His throne in Heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on His right and the goats on His left.** They will be judged by how they lived. This sure makes me want to live right and we need to pray for our nation to be righteous.

Prayer: Lord, I want to live at peace with people and I want to avoid strife. Please help me to really put these things into practice in my life. I trust You to take care of people who do wrong and nations who do wrong. I just want to stay in the center of Your will and I want to trust all the rest to You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Monday December 18

**Scripture Reading: Jonah
Revelation 9**

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 2:15 says, **Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the Word of truth.** I could write a lot of things about this verse but I just want to commend you for doing your best as you study God's Word. It really will pay off in the long run. So, keep it up.

Haven't you always heard that God will never violate a person's free will? Well, how does that line up with the book of Jonah? God wanted Jonah to go to Nineveh. Jonah didn't want to go, and yet Jonah went and God's will was accomplished.

Now, let me go a little different direction for today. God loved the people in Nineveh and He wanted them to be saved. 2 Peter 3:9 says, **The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.** God wants everyone to be saved and that is good news. Luke 19:10 says, **For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.** Jesus came to seek and to save people just like you and me. We should be glad that He wanted to save the people in Nineveh and we should be glad that He wanted to save us and His will was done.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I am so thankful that I have given my life to You. Help me to do my best as I study Your Word and please help me along the way. I know that Your ways are always right and I don't ever want to run from Your will. If I ever do that, please get me back on track. I don't want to miss out on anything You have for me. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Tuesday December 19

**Scripture Reading: Micah 1-3
Revelation 10**

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 2:16 says, **Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly.** Isn't that interesting? Those who indulge in godless chatter will become more and more ungodly! I sure want to avoid anything that would lead me to be ungodly and I want to embrace things that will help me to be more godly!

Micah 1:1-2 say, **The Word of the LORD that came to Micah of Moresheth during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah - the vision he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem. Hear, O peoples, all of you, listen, O Earth and all who are in it, that the Sovereign LORD may witness against you, the Lord from His holy temple.**

God told Micah what to say and he said just what God wanted. I know this is one of those simple points that I often make, but we need to be faithful to say and do what God wants. He is God and we need to obey Him.

Next, these verses show us again that God knows all about what is going on and He is able to get His will done. The more we settle this in our thinking, the easier it will be for us to trust Him when we can't figure out how things are working out. We know the One who knows everything and we need to trust Him.

Prayer: Lord, I want to live a godly life so please help me to avoid things that work against that. I don't want to indulge in godless chatter. I want to speak the truth of Your Word all the time. I also want to trust You more. Help me to remember that You really do know everything. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Wednesday December 20

**Scripture Reading: Micah 4-5
Revelation 11**

Praise the Lord! In yesterday's verse from 2 Timothy, Paul told us to avoid godless chatter. For today he says, **Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus.** Godless chatter can spread like gangrene and that isn't ever good. We need to avoid godless chatter because it will affect us and it will spread to those around us. Let's base our lives on the truth of God's Word and be a blessing to others.

Have you ever watched a boxing match where the hand of the winner was raised up at the end? Picture that in your mind as you read Micah 5:9, **Your hand will be lifted up in triumph over your enemies, and all your foes will be destroyed.** YEA! WE WIN!

Romans 8:37 says, **No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.** Do you know what it means to be "more than a conqueror"? It means we get the victory without having to fight the battle.

Our hands will be raised up in victory over the devil and it will happen because Jesus won the victory for us. 2 Corinthians 9:15 says, **Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!** We are so blessed and all the blessings come because of Jesus.

Prayer: Lord, I want the influence of my life to always be positive and I know that will happen as I base everything I do on the Word. I am also so thankful for all the wonderful things You have provided for me. Help me to remember that every good gift in my life comes from You! Thank You for winning the victory for me. Help me to live like You want. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Thursday December 21

**Scripture Reading: Micah 6-7
Revelation 12**

Praise the Lord! God is so good to us and we are blessed to be able to study His Word. Paul writes, **Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have wandered away from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some.** We don't ever want to wander from the truth. When people do, they always miss out on God's best. These people were giving up on the resurrection and that is sure missing God's best.

Many times I talk to people who say they don't know what God wants them to do. I usually tell them to do what they know and that will position them to hear more. Micah 6:8 says, **He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.** If a person would really do those things listed, they would be in the place to hear more.

Micah 7:7-8 say, **But as for me, I watch in hope for the LORD, I wait for God my Savior; my God will hear me. Do not gloat over me, my enemy! Though I have fallen, I will rise. Though I sit in darkness, the LORD will be my light.** There might be a time when it looks like God's people are down, but don't count them out. God has a way of bringing us back to the place of victory in Him.

Prayer: Lord, please keep me in Your truth. I want to influence people for good and I know that I can only do that as I stay in line with You and Your Word. I also want to thank You for the things You are teaching me from Your Word and I want to be quick to put those things into action in my life. Help me to be a DOER of Your Word and not a HEARER only. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Friday December 22

**Scripture Reading: Nahum
Revelation 13**

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 2:19 says, **Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness."** I am so glad that we are known by God and that surely should help us to live holy lives. If there are things in your life that are leading you into wickedness, turn from them and don't go back.

The first part of Nahum 1:15 says, **Look, there on the mountains, the feet of one who brings good news, who proclaims peace!** This reminds me of Romans 10:15 which says, **And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"**

I know most people probably don't think their feet are beautiful, but we aren't talking about what we can see with our natural eyes. When a person is bringing good news, their feet are beautiful to God and they are certainly beautiful to those who are hearing the good news.

I have been in places in Africa where I was humbled by the reception I received. I had to remind myself that they were really honoring and receiving Jesus and the good news. I was just the messenger.

Prayer: Lord, I am so thankful that I am Yours and I really do want to live like You want me to live. Please help me to bring good news to those who I encounter in life. If anyone is ever impressed with my life, help me to point them to You because I know that You are the source of everything good in me. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Saturday December 23

**Scripture Reading: Habakkuk
Revelation 14**

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 2:20 says, **In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble.** In the verse we will look at tomorrow we will see that Paul is really talking about people here. We want to be those who are valuable and useful to God. We are like that when we let Him rule and reign in our lives and let Him use us any way He wants.

Look at how Habakkuk started off in chapter 1 verse 2: **How long, O LORD, must I call for help, but You do not listen? Or cry out to You, "Violence!" but You do not save?** Can you hear the frustration?

Now, look at how he ended in Habakkuk 3:17-19, **Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign LORD is my strength; He makes my feet like the feet of a deer, He enables me to go on the heights.**

Take time to read it all, but basically Habakkuk took all his questions to God and really listened to His answers. In the end, he was ready to trust God no matter what happened.

Prayer: Lord, I want to be used by You more. Please help me to bring all my questions and concerns to You and help me to believe what You say. I know that Your ways are always right and I choose to trust You even when I can't see how things are working out. I know You are in control and I want to live for You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Sunday December 24

**Scripture Reading: Zephaniah
Revelation 15**

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 2:21 says, **If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.** When we clean our lives up, God can use us more. Of course we need to remember that it is really He who is at work in us but we do play a part. So, clean your life up and let God use you more.

Look at Zephaniah 3:12, **But I will leave within you the meek and humble, who trust in the name of the LORD.** God was talking about some people that He was going to banish from His presence and this verse tells about some who could stay.

Those who were welcome were those who were meek and humble. Those traits led them to trust in God. Think about the opposite of these things. Those who are proud and arrogant will rely on themselves and God doesn't want them around.

Listen to what Jesus said in Matthew 5:5, **Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the Earth.** Let's realize how much we need Him, stay meek, stay humble and trust in Him! When we are like that, God likes having us around and He will meet our every need.

Prayer: Lord, I want to live for You. Please help me to know if there are things in my life that You want me to get rid of and then help me to clean up with Your help. I am so thankful that You have shown me that You want me to be totally reliant on You. Help me to be meek and humble. I know that trusting You is always the best way to live. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Monday December 25

**Scripture Reading: Haggai
Revelation 16**

Praise the Lord! Merry Christmas! I am so glad that You are studying God's Word every day and it is a privilege for me to help you by writing these devotions for you. In all that you do today, keep Jesus first and you will do much better. If you spend time with family and friends, tell them that You love them and that Jesus has made all the difference in your life.

Look at Haggai 1:5-7, **Now this is what the LORD Almighty says: "Give careful thought to your ways. You have planted much, but have harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it." This is what the LORD Almighty says: "Give careful thought to your ways."**

These verses start off and finish with the same thought. GIVE CAREFUL THOUGHT TO YOUR WAYS. The middle part describes a person who seems to have everything going wrong. They plant but don't harvest, they eat but aren't full, they put on clothes but aren't warm and they work but lose all that they make!

If you ever feel that way, God is speaking to you and saying, GIVE CAREFUL THOUGHT TO YOUR WAYS. If that is you, there are some things you need to learn and do differently in your life. You need God to teach you what to change. Then you need to do what He says.

Prayer: Lord, I am so thankful that You came into the world and my life. Please help me to represent You well today and help me to have all the blessings You have for me. Please teach me Your ways. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Tuesday December 26

**Scripture Reading: Zechariah 1-3
Revelation 17**

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 2:22 says, **Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.** Flee wrong things and pursue right things. If you need some help sorting those things out, start with this verse today and do it all with a pure heart.

To write these devotions, I turn to the chapters I assign you and see what jumps out at me. Sometimes it is some of the first verses I look at. That was the case today.

Zechariah 1:3 says, **Therefore tell the people: This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Return to Me,' declares the LORD Almighty, 'and I will return to you,' says the LORD Almighty.** ' The first part of James 4:8 says, **Come near to God and He will come near to you.** God is waiting for us to come near to Him and He is ready to come near to us when we do our part.

Having said that, there is something else in this verse that I want to show you. The things I just said are true and **GOD TOLD US ABOUT THEM!** Don't miss this point. He is ready to meet with us and He wants us to know that. He has revealed this whole process to us so we will come to Him! You see, this is Good News and God wanted us to know it.

Prayer: Lord, I love You, I want to flee from bad things and I want to pursue good things. Please help me. I am also so thankful that You are ready to draw near to me when I draw near to You. Thank You for letting me know this wonderful truth. Help me to really believe it and help me to use it to draw near to You more consistently. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Wednesday December 27

**Scripture Reading: Zechariah 4-6
Revelation 18**

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 2:23 says, **Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels.** It seems like Paul is trying to tell Timothy about as many things as he can in a short time. We are blessed to be able to read these things and put them into practice in our lives. Believe me, getting rid of things God tells us to get rid of is always a good thing to do.

Zechariah 4:6 is one of the best-known verses from this book. It says, **So he said to me, "This is the Word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty."** We need to know and remember that every good happening in our lives is all because of God! It isn't our might or power. It is all by His Spirit.

When I go to this verse I also like to read it in context. Zechariah 4:6-7 say, **So he said to me, "This is the Word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty. What are you, O mighty mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become level ground. Then he will bring out the capstone to shouts of 'God bless it! God bless it!'"** When God moves by His Spirit in our lives, we need to speak up and acknowledge that it was God who did it.

Prayer: Lord, I really do mean it when I say that I want to live like You want. Please continue to show me how to apply that I my everyday life. I know that everything good in my life is because of You and I want to be better at giving You all the credit for those things. I also want to commit the rest of this year and next year to You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Thursday December 28

**Scripture Reading: Zechariah 7-9
Revelation 19**

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 2:24 says, **And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.** You may not think you are called to teach others but you are. There are others who don't know as much as you do and you need to be ready and willing to help them. You don't have to know everything. You just need to be learning and willing to help others.

God wanted to bless His people and He was telling them how they should live. You see, living like God wanted would bring about the blessings.

Zechariah 8:15-17 say, **"So now I have determined to do good again to Jerusalem and Judah. Do not be afraid. These are the things you are to do: Speak the truth to each other, and render true and sound judgment in your courts; do not plot evil against your neighbor, and do not love to swear falsely. I hate all this," declares the LORD.**

Again I could talk about each of these things but I want to make the point that God revealed these things. God was not hiding His will from His people. God knows that His ways are right and that they will bring blessings and He willingly shares them with us because He wants us to be blessed!

Prayer: Lord, I am so thankful for all the things You are teaching me and I want to be willing to share what I know with others. Help me to do that with the strength that You supply. I also thank You for revealing Your ways to me. I know they are good and it is a blessing that You are showing them to me. I also ask You to bless all my brothers and sisters who are doing these devotions. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Friday December 29

**Scripture Reading: Zechariah 10-12
Revelation 20**

Praise the Lord! In 2 Timothy 2:25, Paul is telling Timothy how to act when someone doesn't agree with him, **Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth.** We need to be gentle with people and help them to see the truth. Arguing and quarreling don't work. We need to know what we believe, stand up for it and gently try to help others to see the truth.

Zechariah 10:1-2 draw a contrast between those who serve the Lord and those who serve idols. **Ask the LORD for rain in the springtime; it is the LORD who makes the storm clouds. He gives showers of rain to men, and plants of the field to everyone. The idols speak deceit, diviners see visions that lie; they tell dreams that are false, they give comfort in vain. Therefore the people wander like sheep oppressed for lack of a shepherd.**

God blesses and takes care of His people and those who serve idols end up wandering like sheep who are oppressed because they don't have a shepherd to lead them. Psalms 23:1 says, **The LORD is my Shepherd, I shall not be in want.** The Lord is our Shepherd and He will meet our every need. In light of this verse, I say, "I never lack ability, opportunity, wisdom, money or favor!"

Prayer: Lord, I am so thankful for Your gentleness and patience toward me. Please help me to be gentle and patient with others. I also want to follow You all the days of my life. Please help me to have more revelation of what a good deal it is to have You as my Lord and Shepherd. I am proud to be living for You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Saturday December 30

**Scripture Reading: Zechariah 13-14
Revelation 21**

Praise the Lord! The last verse of 2 Timothy 2 is still talking about how we should help people who don't know the truth and it says, **and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.** Everything we do should be done to help others to come to know the truth. If we encounter someone who is blinded by the devil, we need to help them see the truth.

At the end of the book of Zechariah, we see God winning again. His control is complete and His will is done. Zechariah 14:21 says, **Every pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be holy to the LORD Almighty, and all who come to sacrifice will take some of the pots and cook in them. And on that day there will no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the LORD Almighty.**

These statements about pots and things like that might seem foreign to us, but basically the Word is saying that everything and everyone is set apart for God and His purposes. Being set apart for God is called being sanctified.

Look at what Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24, **May God Himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and He will do it.** God wants us to be sanctified (set apart for His purposes) and He is going to get His will done.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I am so thankful for the good work You are doing in my life. I want to stay in Your will and keep my life closed to the devil and his schemes. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Sunday December 31

**Scripture Reading: Malachi
Revelation 22**

Praise the Lord! Well, we have made it to the end of 2006 and the beginning of 2007. Keep Jesus at the center of your life and we are going to have a great new year. Keep studying His Word and He will continue to show You the very best way to live. Matthew 6:33 says, **But seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.** Seek Him and His ways, and you will have His blessings on your life.

As we close this year, let me make a couple of comments from Malachi. In case you haven't ever decided to be a tither, take a little time and look at the blessings that are promised in Malachi 3:10-12 and then start tithing. Believe me, it is better to live on nine tenths of your income with God's blessing rather than all of it without His blessings.

The last verse of Malachi tells us of something He is going to do before the end. It says, **He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse.**

Believe God to restore relationships in the coming days. It is one of His promises to us and I don't want to miss out on anything He has for me.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I am so thankful for all the blessings You have brought into my life this year. I commit myself to You for the coming year and I look forward to learning more of Your ways. Please help me to represent You well in everything I do. Help me to seek You and Your ways first and to know that You will help me with all the rest of my life. In Jesus' Name, Amen.