

COVENANT^{EFC}

devotional journal 2014

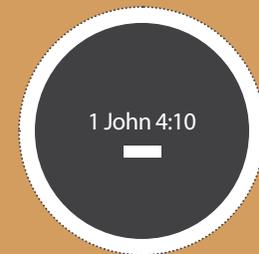
1 - 30 september



1 John 4:10

shine
righteously

shine
righteously



COVENANT EFC



JANUARY

This is the message we have heard from Him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.

1 John 1:5

february

1 JOHN 1:9

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

march

1 JOHN 2:15

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

APRIL

1 John 2:16

For all that is in the world – the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life – is not from the Father but is from the world.

may

And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

1 John 2:17

JUNE

1 JOHN 2:29

If you know that He is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of Him.

JULY

1 John 3:1

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know Him.

AUGUST

1 JOHN 4:4

Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

SEPTEMBER

1 JOHN 4:10

In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

OCTOBER

1 JOHN 4:12

No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and His love is perfected in us.

november

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

1 JOHN 4:18

december

And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

1 JOHN 5:11-12

foreword

by senior pastors

There must be something more in 2014!

**There must be something more every new year!
We long for something deeper, something satisfying,
something radical, something life-changing, something
that would really make a difference every new year.
What will that "something more" be for you?**

St. Augustine once said, *"To fall in love with God is the greatest of all romances; to seek Him, the greatest adventure; to find Him, the greatest human achievement."* The deepest longing of the soul is for intimacy with God. It begins with God and is rooted IN HIM! *"One thing I have asked from the Lord, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to meditate in His temple."* (Ps 27:4)

1. Intimacy as Our PURPOSE in Life:

"One thing I have asked from the Lord, that I shall seek..."

The goal of every disciple of Christ is not merely to do things for God – although these are significant parts of God's redemptive order as seen in the Great Commission. Enjoying the intimacy with God is part of the creative order as seen in the Great Commandment. The ONE thing that is the most important in 2014 is our relationship with God! Everything revolves around this one defining purpose.

2. Intimacy as Our PURSUIT in Life:

"One thing I have asked from the Lord, that I shall seek..."

Someone once said, "We do not see things as they are. We see them as we are." In other words, who we are determines what we see and what we pursue, and we become what we pursue. "I shall seek" expresses a determination to pursue intimacy with God. What are you pursuing in 2014? What are you seeking?

There must be something more than this!

3. Intimacy as Our PREOCCUPATION in Life:

"That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life..."

"All the days of my life" is not simply stating a period of time but a preoccupation of life! David declares "to dwell in the house of the Lord" as his prevailing desire, his grand preoccupation and his magnificent obsession. True spirituality stems not from some form of activity but from God's presence as the centre of his life. The dwelling place of God is in the quiet depths of our lives. May you experience and enjoy His presence throughout the year 2014!

4. Intimacy as Our PASSION in Life:

"To behold the beauty of the Lord and to meditate in His temple."

David made a decisive choice to not only see, but behold and be captivated by the beauty of the Lord. God is of ultimate importance in his life and God is the one who gives meaning to life. David committed himself to "meditate in His temple". A person is often defined by abilities, accomplishments, appearance, acquisitions and associations. But God defines us by our personal relationship with Him. May your passion for spiritual intimacy with God attract and fuel pre-believing friends to know God in 2014.

There Must be Something More Than This!

Psalm 27 was written in the context of fear and uncertainty. Fear is mentioned three times in two verses (vv. 1, 3). Yet, in spite of the anxieties and fears, David focused on God and saw God Almighty as his revelation, redemption and refuge (vv. 1-3).

May we like David say, *"When You said, 'Seek My face,' my heart said to You, 'Your face, O Lord, I shall seek.'" (v. 8).*

***In Christ,
Ps Tony and Ps Kay Kiong***

guide to using this journal



S.O.A.P.

1 Prepare your heart in God's presence

- Select a fixed time (preferably in the morning before you begin your day) and a quiet place where you can be alone and undisturbed.
- Observe a moment of silence as you acknowledge God's presence.
- Worship God with a song or hymn. (Refer to the list of worship songs provided.)
- Offer a prayer to God as you prepare to listen to His Word.

The English Standard Version (ESV) is the default Bible version translation unless otherwise specified.

2 Allow God to S.O.A.P. you with His Word and Spirit

Each daily devotional entry is divided into four parts:

Scripture — Take your time to meditate on the Scripture passage for the day. Pause and mull over words and phrases that stand out to you.

Observation — Jot down significant insights and reflections from the passage you have read. Use the guiding questions provided.

Application — Note down a specific and practical commitment to God's Word for you. Is there a command to obey, a sin to avoid, an example to follow, or a principle to live out? Where appropriate, share your devotional entry with someone.

Prayer — Bring your response to God in prayer using the suggested prayer for the day.

calendar

september 2014

| M | T | W | T | F | S | S |
|----|----|---|------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 IDMC | 5 IDMC | 6 IDMC | 7 Combined Anniversary Service |
| 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 15 | 16 | 17 Alpha Introduction Dinner | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 Prayer & Praise | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | | | | | |

Strongly Encouraged

october 2014

| M | T | W | T | F | S | S |
|----|----|----------------------------|----|------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| | | 1 Alpha Session | 2 | 3 | 4 ZM Training | 5 Hari Raya Haji Children's Fest |
| 6 | 7 | 8 Alpha Session | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 Baptism Service |
| 13 | 14 | 15 Alpha Session | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20 | 21 | 22 Alpha Session | 23 | 24 Deepavali | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 Alpha Session | 30 | | 31 Prayer & Praise | |

Strongly Encouraged

September 4,
Thursday
2014

Personal Distinctiveness: My Story to God's Glory

SCRIPTURE

John 21:15-22; 1 Peter 4:12-16

In John 21:15-22, Jesus restores Peter to Himself and His call for his life from his failure - he denied his Lord thrice (Jn 18:24-27). Jesus calls Peter to follow Him, to stretch out his hands to his Lord and be led to "where you do not wish to go" (v. 18), leading to a certain "kind of death" by which "he would glorify God" (v. 19). Then, Peter asks Jesus about "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (v. 20): "Lord, and what about this man?" (v. 21). Jesus' response to Peter is: "I have a distinctive call for him; and I have a distinctive call for you. You just follow Me in My call for you" (v. 22). At the heart of our God-given personal distinctiveness - in both living and dying - is how God will be glorified. Each of our lives is a distinctive story that God is writing. Your life and my life may be defined as "my story to God's glory". You may not understand or may even be perplexed over what God is writing in your life now. Wait and watch for His glory to appear! Meanwhile, heed this: "YOU follow Me!" (v. 22).

OBSERVATION

What does Peter say about the glory of God in discipleship in 1 Peter 4:12-16?

APPLICATION

How has God glorified Himself in the story of my life that He is writing?

PRAYER

God my Creator, my Redeemer,
my Father, I give You thanks
that my life is a story You
are writing, containing both
pleasant and painful episodes.
Let this story, as it unfolds,
declare: "Oh, the depth of the
riches both of the wisdom
and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable are His
judgments and unfathomable
His ways! To Him be the glory
forever." Amen.⁵

Prayer Pointers

- Give thanks:

- Pray for leaders:

- Pray for significant people:

- Pray for those in need:

- Pray for self:

⁵ Romans 11:33, 36

September 5,
Friday
2014

Personal Distinctiveness: Isn't It a Great Waste?

SCRIPTURE

Acts 12:1-12

James, the son of Zebedee, is mentioned only twice in the Book of Acts – once in the list of the apostles (Ac 1:13) and again when Herod persecuted the church (“he had James the brother of John put to death with a sword”, v. 2). Along with Peter and John, James was a key apostle in the inner circle of Jesus’ apostolic band (Mk 5:37; Mt 17:1; 26:37). In similar circumstances, Peter was arrested by Herod and rescued by the Lord (v. 11), but James was killed. It is interesting to note that Luke describes God’s rescue of Peter in great detail (vv. 6-10), but James’ death in just one simple sentence! When James was killed, the gospel had just begun to be proclaimed “to the ends of the earth” (Ac 1:8). Isn’t such an early demise of a key apostle of Jesus, from a strategic point of view, a great waste? It appears to be a “divine inefficiency”! Luke tells us why Stephen was martyred: It sparked off a great persecution of the church leading to world missions (Ac 7:59 – 8:1). As for James, we don’t know why. God alone knows.

OBSERVATION

What perspective(s) can you get from the way God worked in the lives of Peter and James?

APPLICATION

How should I look at my life considering how God worked in the lives of Peter and James?

PRAYER

Truly, O God, eternal and infinite, Your thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are our ways Your ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are Your ways higher than our ways, and Your thoughts than our thoughts!⁶ In my life, I can only say to You, “Have Thine own way, Lord, have Thine own way. Thou art the Potter, I am the clay.” Amen.

Prayer Pointers

- Give thanks:

- Pray for leaders:

- Pray for significant people:

- Pray for those in need:

- Pray for self:

⁶ Isaiah 55:8-9

September 6,
Saturday
2014

Personal Distinctiveness: Legacy of a Poor Widow

SCRIPTURE

Mark 12:41-44

If we are in the temple, seeing “people putting money into the treasury”, and “many rich people putting in large sums of money” (v. 41) and there arrives a woman (v. 42), whom we know nothing of,⁷ what will catch our attention? Judging just from appearance, this is how we would see the woman: “A poor widow” – ordinary. She “put in two small copper coins, which amount to one cent” – ordinary. But what does Jesus see in her and say about her? She “put in more than ALL the contributors to the treasury; for they ALL put in out of their surplus, BUT SHE, out of her poverty, put in ALL she owned, ALL she had to live on” (v. 43-44). Extraordinary! It is an unseen extraordinariness, which God alone can see. In that ordinary appearance and anonymity, there is absolute surrender, wholehearted devotion, total trust and sacrificial worship. She did what she did out of who she was. Unintentionally and unknowingly, her life would become a legacy, impacting and influencing millions of lives – and still is. God put her story into the Scriptures, and it became the Word of God!

OBSERVATION

What do you learn about God in this little story of the poor widow in Mark 12:41-44?

APPLICATION

How does what I learned about God in the poor widow's story affect my life?

PRAYER

Open my eyes to see You,
O God, who alone is the
Ultimate Reality who defines
ultimate reality! For so often
we see You in conventional
ways that are human and of
the world, but not as You
have revealed Yourself in the
Scriptures. O God, it's only
when I see You and know You
that I can truly see as You see.
Help me to see You and know
You! Amen.

Prayer Pointers

- Give thanks:

- Pray for leaders:

- Pray for significant people:

- Pray for those in need:

- Pray for self:

⁷ We now know about her only because we learned about it from the Gospel of Mark.

REFLECT:

What is one key thing that God said to me this week in light of what has happened?

RESPONSE:

a. What is one thing I need to do in light of what God is saying?

b. Journal your prayer.

GOD IS KIND

Our God is a kind God. We can be kind to others too.

Scripture - Psalm 117:2**1. ACTIVITY BITE**

Props: A bag of candies or marshmallows.

Have each person take a treat and share one kind thing that God has done for him or her.

2. CHAT TIME

Q1: What comes to your mind when you think of kindness?

Q2: How does God show His kindness to you as described in Acts 14:17?

Q3: What is one action you can do to show God's kindness to your non-Christian friends?

3. LEARNING POINT

Kindness is part of God's nature. It is something that God has shown for many generations even though many people reject Him. His greatest act of kindness happened when Jesus died on the cross for our sins. He sees the suffering of many people. He sees those who are helpless, hopeless and in despair. That is why He sends Jesus to save us when we don't deserve it. This is His act of kindness and He wants us to pass on this kindness to others too.

4. ACTION POINT

Think of one act of kindness you can do this week for your parents or school friends. Do it and share your experience with your parents.

5. PRAYER POWER

(Ask your children to pray after you.)

Dear God, I am grateful for Your kindness towards me. I want to be kind to others too. So please help me to do that. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

september one

family devotional week one

September 10,
Wednesday
2014

God Has Already Answered

SCRIPTURE

1 John 5:14-15; Romans 1:8-13

When we ask God “anything” “according to His will” (v. 14), we can be “confident” that “He hears us” – that is, “He takes note of our petitions and, in addition, He listens favourably to us (Jn 9:31; 11:41-42)”¹⁵. And when we “know that He hears us” “we have the requests which we have asked from Him” (v. 15) – that is, God has already answered us. “Our petitions are granted at once: The results of the granting are perceived in the future.”¹⁶ However, we do not always know or are always sure of God’s will, just like Paul (“if perhaps now at last by the will of God”, Ro 1:10; “if God wills”, Ac 18:21). Biblical faith is not all-knowing, but includes “not knowing” (Heb 11:8). So, God’s answer to our prayers “according to His will” may be “Yes”, “No”, “Wait” or “Something else”. Prayer is “the prescribed way of subordinating our will to His. It is by prayer that we seek God’s will, embrace it and align ourselves with it”¹⁷. And the infinite God’s answer is greater than our finite asking.

OBSERVATION

What can you learn about prayer and the will of God in Romans 1:8-13?

APPLICATION

What is God saying to me concerning what I am presently seeking or asking Him earnestly?

PRAYER

O Lord, because of Your unfailing covenant love, I can enter Your presence; I will worship You with deepest awe.¹⁸ Hear me as I pray; pay attention to my petitions. Listen to my cry for help, my King and my God, for I pray to no one but You. Listen to my voice in the morning, Lord. Each morning I bring my requests to You and wait expectantly.¹⁹ Amen.

Prayer Pointers

- Give thanks:

- Pray for leaders:

- Pray for significant people:

- Pray for those in need:

- Pray for self:

¹⁵ John Stott, *The Letters of John*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (IVP, 1964, 1988), 188

¹⁶ Alfred Plummer, as cited by John Stott, 188

¹⁷ John Stott, 188

¹⁸ Psalm 5:7

¹⁹ Psalm 5:1-3

September 11,
Thursday
2014

Struggling with God's Will

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 26:36-44

In Gethsemane, Jesus was feeling “deeply grieved” and “distressed” (vv. 37-38), and asked His Father if the cup of the cross could be passed from Him (v. 39). Jesus was struggling with obeying God’s will. Why did Jesus, whose life on earth was to do God’s will (Jn 4:34; 6:38), go through such deep emotional struggles? It was due to His anticipation of “the spiritual desolation of bearing our sin and its judgment on the cross”²⁰ (Mt 27:46). Mark in his parallel account (Mk 14:32-36), writing to encourage Jesus’ disciples facing persecution,²¹ “emphasises the humanity of Jesus,” that He “agonised alone just as many of His disciples would have to do. When facing a crisis, He prayed just as His followers should do.”²² Jesus – God who took on humanity (Php 2:6-7) – even when He was fully committed to doing God’s will and living perfectly at the centre of God’s will, was not free from real human emotional struggles. Jesus invites us to this fellowship of Gethsemane, that with Him we also pray, “Thy will be done” (v. 42).

OBSERVATION

Why did Jesus pray three times over the same matter in Gethsemane (Mt 26:36-44)?

APPLICATION

Which area of my life I ought to bring to the Lord in the fellowship of Gethsemane?

PRAYER

Almighty God, You have made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in You. Grant us purity of heart and strength of purpose, that no selfish passion may hinder us from knowing Your will, and no weakness hinder us from doing it; but that in Your light we may see light, and in Your service find our perfect freedom; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
(St Augustine of Hippo)

Prayer Pointers

- Give thanks:

- Pray for leaders:

- Pray for significant people:

- Pray for those in need:

- Pray for self:

²⁰ Walter L. Liefeld, Luke, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Zondervan, 1984), Vol. 8, 1032

²¹ James A. Brooks, Mark, *The New American Commentary* (Broadman, 1991), Vol. 23, 30

²² James A. Brooks, Vol. 23, 233

September 12,
Friday
2014

Interceding for Sinning Christians

SCRIPTURE

1 John 5:14-16; Galatians 6:1-2

It is in the assurance of God giving us anything we ask according to His will (vv. 14-15) that John talks about praying for a “brother committing a sin” (v. 16) – a Christian “enmeshed in some sin”²³, who has strayed away from God, “whose life in Christ is declining” . “The way to deal with sin in the congregation is to pray”²⁵ (“he will ask”²⁴, v. 16). The verb “expresses not the writer’s command but the Christian’s inevitable and spontaneous reaction”²⁶. And when we pray for a sinning Christian, we are assured that God will answer – “God will give that person life” (v. 16, NLT). This person “will be convicted by the Holy Spirit whom he has been grieving²⁷ or quenching²⁸, brought to renewed repentance and faith, and restored to walking in the light with God”²⁹. This kind of praying is vitally important and necessary at both, personal and community levels. We ought to be concerned, and on the lookout, as this is “sadly a common reality in church life” “in every congregation and every generation”³⁰.

OBSERVATION

What should we do with Christians whom we know are living in sin according to Galatians 6:1-2, besides praying?

APPLICATION

Who are the Christians living in sin that I want to commit myself to pray for?

PRAYER

Blessed are You, O God of mercy and grace, that there is still hope in You when You in Your holy wrath hide Your face from Your people. Cleanse us from all your iniquities by which we have sinned against You, as You have promised. Bring to us health and healing, and restore our fortunes and rebuild our lives through Jesus Christ our Lord.³¹ Amen.

Prayer Pointers

- Give thanks:
- Pray for leaders:
- Pray for significant people:
- Pray for those in need:
- Pray for self:

²³ David Jackman, 165

²⁴ David Jackman, 166

²⁵ John Stott, 188

²⁶ John Stott, 188

²⁷ Ephesians 4:30

²⁸ 1 Thessalonians 5:19

²⁹ David Jackman, 166

³⁰ David Jackman, 165

³¹ Adapted from Jeremiah 33:5-8

REFLECT:

What is one key thing that God said to me this week in light of what has happened?

RESPONSE:

a. What is one thing I need to do in light of what God is saying?

b. Journal your prayer.

GOD IS PATIENT

Our God is very patient. He wants us to be patient with everyone too.

Scripture - 2 Peter 3:9**1. ACTIVITY BITE**

Ask your children to list down the things that they have little patience for. For example, dinner being served late.

2. CHAT TIME

Q1: Are there things you did that caused someone to get impatient with you?

Q2: How do you know God is patient with you?

Q3: How can making the effort to be patient help us to be more like Jesus?

3. LEARNING POINT

We get impatient very easily because we don't get the things we want now or when others can't do certain tasks as well as we expect. But if you think for a moment, many times you do the same things that you get impatient about - delay in doing things or can't do a task as well as what others expect you to. God has every reason to be impatient with us because of our weaknesses but He chooses to be patient so that He can slowly work in our hearts to develop the patience like that of Jesus.

4. ACTION POINT

Think of the people and things that you have often been impatient with. Consider how God would want you to show patience for the items you have listed.

5. PRAYER POWER

(Ask your children to pray after you.)

God, thank You for Your patience towards me. I am sorry that I have not been very patient with others. Please help me to be more patient. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

september two

family devotional week two

September 15,
Monday
2014

Vital Necessity of Theological Knowledge

SCRIPTURE

1 John 5:18-20; Romans 10:1-3

John concludes his letter with “we know” (repeated three times in vv. 18-20) concerning certain fundamental truths. “We know” is “a state of knowledge rather than the action of coming to know something”³⁵. Underlined here is the vital necessity of theological knowledge characterised by certainty, conviction and confidence. Theological knowledge must be based on and built from the Scriptures. A key question we must find ourselves often asking when we grapple with the issues of life is: “What does Scripture say?” (Ro 4:3). Theological knowledge provides theological perspectives. How we live life is shaped by how we look at life. I was 41 when my son was born and I grappled with a reality. I asked God, “Will I live to see my son get married?” God spoke by giving me a theological perspective: “Sarah, with a God-given destiny, did not live to see Isaac get married” (cf. Ge 24:67). Before we can reach “a state of knowledge” of “we know”, there must be “the action of coming to know something”³⁶ – learning and knowing the Word of God.

OBSERVATION

Why is knowledge of the truth so important according to Romans 10:1-3?

APPLICATION

What is my attitude towards gaining and growing in knowledge of the truth?

PRAYER

Lord, keep me from having a zeal for God that is not in accordance to knowledge – knowledge of God as revealed in the Scriptures. Keep me from having a lazy mind and a lack of zeal to know the truth. Keep me from pride when I learn and grow in knowledge; for while knowledge is necessary, knowledge puffs up. Teach me to pursue knowledge with the love of God.³⁷ Amen.

Prayer Pointers

- Give thanks:

- Pray for leaders:

- Pray for significant people:

- Pray for those in need:

- Pray for self:

³⁵ I. Howard Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, The New International Commentary of the New Testament (Eerdmans, 1978), 251

³⁶ I. Howard Marshall, 251

³⁷ 1 Corinthians 8:1

September 18,
Thursday
2014

Is the World in Us?

SCRIPTURE

1 John 5:19; Philemon 23-24 with 2 Timothy 4:9-10

"Mankind is divided into two camps"⁴³ - "We are of God" and "the whole world is under the control of the evil one" (v. 19). The world is "dominated by the devil, who controls it with tyrannical authority, organising and orchestrating its life and activities to express his own rebellion and hatred against God"⁴⁴. But Satan is only God's creature, subject to God's authority, who can act only within divinely set perimeters (Job 1:12; 2:6), and his ultimate doom is assured (Rev 20:10). Every demonically inspired and influenced anti-God power, culture, philosophy and morality must be viewed with this theological perspective. Jesus, the atoning sacrifice for the same "whole world"⁴⁵ dominated by Satan (Job 2:2), calls His church to be different in it (1 Jn 2:15-17). John Stott solemnly warns, "Nowadays, the demarcation between church and world is confused"⁴⁶; because the church fails to discern and differentiate what is worldly and what is not. The church needs to live out that demarcation again. We need to do a humble honest reality check: The church is in the world; but is the world in the church?

OBSERVATION

What does Paul say about Demas in Philemon 23-24 and 2 Timothy 4:9-10?

APPLICATION

How can I avoid becoming like Demas?

PRAYER

Lord, give me a heart with good soil that hears and understands God's Word and bears fruit. Keep my heart from spiritual numbness and insensitivity; from having no root or no depth; a heart that fails to persevere through difficult circumstances; and from the worries of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires of other worldly things.⁴⁷ Amen.

Prayer Pointers

- Give thanks:

- Pray for leaders:

- Pray for significant people:

- Pray for those in need:

- Pray for self:

⁴³ I. Howard Marshall, 253

⁴⁴ David Jackman, 169

⁴⁵ The phrase "the whole world" occurs only twice in 1 John (2:2 and 5:19).

⁴⁶ John Stott, 196

⁴⁷ Mark 4:14-20

September 19,
Friday
2014

The Definitive Revelation of God

SCRIPTURE

1 John 5:20; 1 Timothy 6:15-16

"The Son of God has come" (v. 20) "in the flesh" (1 Jn 4:2; 5:6) to reveal God. "The Word became flesh" (Jn 1:14) is "the definitive revelation of God"⁴⁸ and "this particular human life was the most important means God has ever used to reveal Himself... In this specific human life, as never before or since, nor anywhere else in the sphere of creaturely existence, God expresses His innermost reality."⁴⁹ Jesus' life "most clearly revealed the nature and character of God"⁵⁰. Jesus has come as "the Saviour of the world" (1 Jn 4:14) to redeem fallen humankind (1 Jn 2:2). Divine redemption through the cross is also itself divine revelation: "The cross is the high point in divine revelation as well. For if God was personally present in Jesus, and if the cross was the climactic moment in Jesus' life, it follows that the cross is the supreme moment in the history of God's self-disclosure... What the cross reveals is therefore central to the nature of God. Through Calvary we peer, as it were, into the very heart of the divine reality."⁵¹

OBSERVATION

As you reflect on 1 Timothy 6:15-16, why is God's revealing of Himself in Jesus in human form so significant?

APPLICATION

What does the definitive revelation of God in Jesus in human form mean to me personally?

PRAYER

Almighty and everlasting God,
You have stooped to raise fallen
humanity by the child-bearing
of blessed Mary; grant that
we who have seen Your glory
revealed in our human nature,
and Your love made perfect
in our weakness, may daily be
renewed in Your image, and
conformed to the pattern of
Your Son, Jesus Christ our
Lord. (David Silk)⁵²

Prayer Pointers

- Give thanks:

- Pray for leaders:

- Pray for significant people:

- Pray for those in need:

- Pray for self:

⁴⁸ Richard Rice, *The Openness of God* (IVP-Paternoster, 1994), 39

⁴⁹ Richard Rice, 39

⁵⁰ Richard Rice, 43

⁵¹ Richard Rice, 44-45

⁵² *The SPCK Book of Christian Prayer*, 379

REFLECT:

What is one key thing that God said to me this week in light of what has happened?

RESPONSE:

a. What is one thing I need to do in light of what God is saying?

b. Journal your prayer.

GOD IS EVERYWHERE

God can be everywhere at the same time. So I can talk to Him anywhere.

Scripture - Psalm 139:7-12

1. ACTIVITY BITE

Go to www.whereswaldo.com and have fun searching for some characters.

2. CHAT TIME

Q1: Where do you think God is in the pictures (on the Where's Waldo website)?

Q2: How would you feel if God can't be with you now because He is somewhere in Australia?

Q3: What does Psalm 139:7-12 tell you about God's character?

3. LEARNING POINT

Being present everywhere is one of God's characters. It means that God can be in America, Africa, India and Singapore at the same time. How He does it is a miracle and a mystery. It tells us that He is very powerful. God is everywhere so that He can be with you and me always, anytime and anywhere. This is also a sign of His love. Thus we can talk to Him anytime and anywhere.

4. ACTION POINT

List down all the places you can possibly go to in the coming week. At each of these places, remember to say "thank you" to Him for being with you at that moment.

5. PRAYER POWER

(Ask your children to pray after you.)

Dear God, You are amazing because You can be at any place at any time. Thank You for being with me anywhere. I will praise You all the time. Amen.

september

family devotional week three

September 23,
Tuesday
2014

Walk Wisely and Rightly: Where We Live

SCRIPTURE

Proverbs 1:10-11a; Proverbs 13:20

In warning against the dangerous worldly influence, Proverbs 1:8-19 reflects a framework for living life – where we live, how we live, what we want, where we end and where God is. Ten out of 12 verses in Proverbs 1:8-19 focus on evil, underscoring three theological realities. The world we live in is filled with evil. We have to face evil. And we are prone to fall into evil. The godly-wise parents' warning starts with, "My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent" (v.10a): Beware of worldly influence. In Hebrew, "entice" means "to deceive or seduce"⁵⁵; and its noun form is "naïve" (Pr 1:4, 22). The "naïve" is one "who is easily led, gullible, silly", "believes everything", morally "wilful and irresponsible", and lives with "lazy thoughtlessness"⁵⁶. A child or youth can be naïve due to his/her immaturity and inexperience. However, this can also be true of adults. The enticers say, "Come with us" (v.11) – ungodly company. Godly company of parents with their children is crucial. Their influence can be strong enough to keep or save them from being of the world, while they must live in it.

OBSERVATION

What does Proverbs 13:20 say about company?

APPLICATION

How can I walk in wise company and be wise company to my children?

PRAYER

O God of love and mercy, help us to understand our children as they grow in years and in knowledge of Your world. Make us compassionate towards their temptations, struggles and failures, and encouraging in their seeking after truth and value for their lives; that together we may look for a better world than either they or we have ever known.⁵⁷ Amen.

Prayer Pointers

- Give thanks:

- Pray for family:

- Pray for bosses:

- Pray for peers and staff:

- Pray for self:

⁵⁵ Derek Kidner, *Proverbs*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (IVP, 1964), 39

⁵⁶ Derek Kidner, 39

⁵⁷ Adapted from *The SPCK Book of Christian Prayer*, 82

September 25,
Thursday
2014

Walk Wisely and Rightly: What We Want

SCRIPTURE

Proverbs 8:10-11, 18-21; Matthew 6:24-34

The world entices with “all kinds of precious wealth” (Pr 1:13), and wealth is one of those things that people want in life (“we shall find... we shall fill”). But is there anything wrong with wealth or being wealthy? Proverbs 8:10-11 and 18-21 give perspectives on wisdom and wealth that enable us to relate the two rightly and properly. Choice: If we are to choose between wisdom and wealth, what will we choose? Wisdom’s call is: “Choose my instruction rather than silver, and knowledge rather than pure gold” (v. 10, NLT). If we choose wisdom rather than wealth, we would be pursuing wisdom passionately. Wisdom is acquired from the Word of God in our walk with God. Value: “Wisdom is better (far more valuable) than jewels... better than gold, even pure gold... better than choicest silver” (vv. 11a, 19). Do we value wisdom more than wealth? Desire: “All desirable things cannot compare with” wisdom (v. 11b). Do we view wisdom in this manner? Do we desire wisdom more than anything else? (cf. Ps 16:2; 73:25) Righteousness: Riches and righteousness go hand in hand (v. 18). In wisdom, true riches are righteous riches.

OBSERVATION

What does Jesus say about anxiety, our needs, and what we want in life in Matthew 6:24-34?

APPLICATION

How will I deal with anxiety, needs and wants in my own life and in my children’s lives?

PRAYER

My heavenly Father, I thank You that You know my needs even before I ask You,⁶⁰ and You care about my needs, and You do understand and appreciate my tendency to be anxious about life. I cast all my anxiety on You⁶¹ who hold my tomorrow. Help me to serve You alone and seek You first with single-minded devotion and whole-hearted love. Amen.

Prayer Pointers

- Give thanks:
- Pray for leaders:
- Pray for significant people:
- Pray for those in need:
- Pray for self:

⁶⁰ Matthew 6:8

⁶¹ 1 Peter 5:7

September 26,
Friday
2014

Walk Wisely and Rightly: Where We End

SCRIPTURE

Proverbs 1:17-19; Galatians 6:7-10

Proverbs 1:17-19 shows where one who “gains by violence” (v. 19) will end. Every life will come to an end, sometime, somehow – either a good or a bad end. We can learn from the folly of evil so that we may end our lives well. Doing something useless: It is useless to spread the baited net in the sight of any bird (v. 17).⁶² “No one robs a bank when everyone is watching” (v. 17, MSG). “Every flying creature has the God-given instinct to avoid the fowler’s net, but these sinners set an ambush for themselves (v. 17)!” It’s so ironic that lower creation can be smarter than higher creation. Making unprofitable profit: Not every profit made is profitable. When we make a profit in the wrong way, it can take away our lives (v. 19) – not just physically, but more profoundly, spiritually. We can gain the whole world but lose our souls (Mk 8:36). Wisdom: Knowing that we can behave so foolishly, but can stop ourselves from doing so.

OBSERVATION

What does Paul say about the reality in life in Galatians 6:7-10?

APPLICATION

What area(s) in my life do I need to seriously think about and act upon in light of reaping what I sow?

PRAYER

Lord, keep me from the folly of investing my life in the things of this world that I will only hand to You to destroy with fire at Your Coming.⁶³ Help me to set my mind on the things above where You are, seated at the right hand of God, and to keep seeking them, and not on the things that are on earth. Amen.

Prayer Pointers

- Give thanks:
- Pray for leaders:
- Pray for significant people:
- Pray for those in need:
- Pray for self:

⁶² Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1-15*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Eerdmans, 2004), 195

⁶³ 2 Peter 3:10

REFLECT:

What is one key thing that God said to me this week in light of what has happened?

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RESPONSE:

a. What is one thing I need to do in light of what God is saying?

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b. Journal your prayer.

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GOD KNOWS EVERYTHING

There is nothing in this universe that God doesn't know.

Scripture - Psalm 147:5**1. ACTIVITY BITE**

Search for a trivia game for kids on the Internet and have fun guessing the answers.

2. CHAT TIME

Q1: Is it possible for God to know the answers to all the mysteries in the whole world?

Q2: Why would God want to know all my secrets thoughts?

Q3: If God knows what I am thinking now, what kind of thoughts should I be thinking of?

3. LEARNING POINT

Our all powerful God is able to know all things, the little ones and the mysterious ones. He knows our thoughts. Matthew 10:30 says that God even know the number of hairs on your head! He can even see the future and is perfectly in control. That is why we can trust fully in Him regarding what will happen to us tomorrow and the days to come. He cares for us and will make all things good for us in His time.

4. ACTION POINT

Tell yourself to start thinking about things that will please God. Whenever bad thoughts enter your mind (for example, you think of scolding your brother), try to think of good things instead.

5. PRAYER POWER

(Ask your children to pray after you.)

Dear Jesus, You know all things about me because You care for me. I am so happy to worship You as my God. Amen.

september

family devotional week four

September 30,
Tuesday
2014

Hard to See Idolatry

SCRIPTURE

1 John 5:21; Judges 17:1-6

As Christians who are monotheistic, idols in our conception and consciousness tend to be the images and objects representing deities worshipped by people who do not know “the only true God” (Jn 17:3). We have this “remove idols” ministry for people who turn to God from idols. These are idols we can easily and quickly see with our physical eyes. Idolatry, however, comes in many forms, and much of it comes in more subtle forms which are hard to see. They can be discerned and detected only by opened spiritual eyes. Idolatry has to do with how we perceive God and where we place God. Is God to us “the pocket-size God of evangelical over-familiarity, deprived of His majesty”⁶⁶? “We can all too easily think we have sewn God up, we know all about Him, we can predict His responses and even condition them. But what we have is not God. It is an idol of our own making, a thinly veiled excuse for worshipping ourselves”⁶⁷. Idolatry is anything that “occupies the place due to God”⁶⁸ and “squeezes God out of the central position towards the margin of my life”⁶⁹. We Christians also need “remove idols” ministry!

OBSERVATION

What can you learn about idolatry in Judges 17:1-6?

APPLICATION

What are some wrong views of God that I can discern and detect in my life?

PRAYER

Your Word has shown, O God, how it is possible for me to mention Your name in worship with an idolatrous idea of the true God, without myself knowing it. O save me and keep me from falling into such dangerous spiritual ignorance and theological falsehood! Help me to seek to know You as You truly are as You have revealed Yourself in the Scriptures. Amen.

Prayer Pointers

- Give thanks:

- Pray for family:

- Pray for bosses:

- Pray for peers and staff:

- Pray for self:

⁶⁶ David Jackman, 172

⁶⁷ David Jackman, 172

⁶⁸ B. F. Wescott - cited by David Jackman, 171

⁶⁹ David Jackman, 172

Missions Prayer

FOCUS OF THE MONTH

Nepal and Vietnam

GOD HAS OPENED THE DOORS FOR CEFC TO PARTNER WITH

churches in Nepal and recently Vietnam. In Nepal, Rev Glen Westwood, our regional coordinator for Indochina, works with key national leaders and church planters through IDMC training and Breakthrough Weekends. There are plans next year to teach the IDMC vision and principles in a church planter's training centre in Banepa, Nepal. We also hope to run a second Women's Breakthrough Weekend and the first Youth Breakthrough Weekend in Nepal next year.

CEFC is in contact with two influential church communities in North Vietnam and we hope to partner with them in planting disciple-making church plants. The church and its leadership in Vietnam needs much prayer. There is a constant threat of harsh persecution against the churches especially in the provinces of Vietnam.

PRAYER POINTERS

- 1) Pray for believers in Vietnam and Nepal to rise up in faith and for growth in authenticity and intentionality in their walk with God.
- 2) Pray that CEFC will be able to identify an anchor church in Nepal to partner with to champion discipleship in Nepal.
- 3) Pray for God's protection upon Vietnamese pastors and believers especially in the rural areas. Pray for divine favour to be upon them in the eyes of the authorities and communities in which they live and witness.
- 4) Pray for a bible school located in one of the churches CEFC is working with. This is the only official bible school in North Vietnam and was only given approval to open in 2013. Pray for the small group of students studying there, for wisdom and understanding and God's leading in their lives as they seek to serve fulltime upon graduation.

"Intercession is spiritual defiance of what is, in the name of what God has promised. Intercession visualises an alternative future to the one apparently fated by the momentum of current contradictory forces. It infuses the air of a time yet to be into the suffocating atmosphere of the present."

WALTER WINK

worship songs

BE WITH YOU

Verse 1

Saviour of my soul
I confide in You
Through all my darkest moments

In You I find my peace
My comfort when I'm weak
I trust in You
Through storm and raging sea

Verse 2

Faithful, You're my God
You're the glory and lifter of my head
Your light it fills my days
It leads me in Your ways
Forever I surrender all to You

Chorus

And I live to worship You
My Jesus You're the only one for me
Nothing will ever take Your place
My precious Saviour
Who can stand between my Lord and me

Lord I live to honour You
And I long to bring my life an offering
Take me higher
Draw me deeper
I give all to be with You

Words & Music: Sindy Stepvina
Year & Publisher: 2013 City Harvest Cover

BE THOU MY VISION

Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart
Nought be all else to me, save that Thou art
Thou my best thought, by day or by night
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light

Be Thou my Wisdom, and Thou my true Word
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord
Thou my great Father, and I Thy true son
Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise
Thou mine inheritance, now and always
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart
High King of heaven, my treasure Thou art

Chorus

Oh, God, be my everything, be my delight
Be Jesus, my glory My soul's satisfied
Oh, God, be my everything, be my delight
Be Jesus, my glory My soul's satisfied

High King of heaven, my victory won
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all

Words & Music: Eleanor Henrietta Hull | Mary Elizabeth Byrne
Year & Publisher: © Words: Public Domain
CCLI Song # 30639

COME AS YOU ARE

Verse 1

Come out of sadness from wherever you've been
 Come broken-hearted let rescue begin
 Come find your mercy, O sinner come kneel
 Earth has no sorrow that Heaven can't heal
 Earth has no sorrow that Heaven can't heal

Chorus 1

(So) Lay down your burdens, lay down your shame
 All who are broken lift up your face
 O wanderer come home
 You're not too far
 So lay down your hurt lay down your heart
 Come as you are

Verse 2

There's hope for the hopeless
 And all those who've strayed
 Come sit at the table, come taste the grace
 There's rest for the weary
 Rest that endures
 Earth has no sorrow that Heaven can't cure

Bridge

Come as you are
 Fall in His arms
 Come as you are

Verse 3

There's joy for the morning, O sinner be still
 Earth has no sorrow that Heaven can't heal
 Earth has no sorrow that Heaven can't heal

COME AS YOU ARE (CONT'D)

Ending

Come as you are
 Come as you are
 Come as you are

Ben Glover | David Crowder | Matt Maher
 Year & Publisher: © 2014 9t One Songs (Admin. by Crossroad Distributors Pty. Ltd.); Ariose Music (Admin. by Crossroad Distributors Pty. Ltd.); sixsteps Music (Admin. by Crossroad Distributors Pty. Ltd.); worshiptogether.com songs (Admin. by Crossroad Distributors Pty. Ltd.); Sony/ATV Tree Publishing (Admin. by Sony/ATV Music Publishing)
 CCLI Song # 7017790

THE SOLID ROCK

Verse 1

My hope is built on nothing less
 Than Jesus' blood and righteousness
 I dare not trust the sweetest frame
 But wholly lean on Jesus' name

Chorus 1

On Christ the solid Rock I stand
 All other ground is sinking sand
 All other ground is sinking sand

Verse 2

When darkness seems to hide His face
 I rest on His unchanging grace
 In ev'ry high and stormy gale
 My anchor holds within the veil

Verse 3

His oath, His covenant, His blood
 Support me in the whelming flood
 When all around my soul gives way
 He then is all my hope and stay

Verse 4

When He shall come with trumpet sound
 O may I then in Him be found
 Dressed in His righteousness alone
 Faultless to stand before the throne

Words & Music: Charlie Hall | Edward Mote | Kendall Combes | Trent Austin |
 William Batchelder Bradbury

Year & Publisher: © Words: Public Domain ; Music: 2004 sixsteps Music
 (Admin. by Crossroad Distributors Pty. Ltd.); worshiptogether.com songs
 (Admin. by Crossroad Distributors Pty. Ltd.)

CCLI Song # 4255633

PRAISE IS THE OFFERING

Verse 1

Come and let us sing for joy
 Let us praise and shout aloud
 To the lifter of our heads
 To the Rock we're standing on
 Your salvation is our song
 Now we can't stay silent
 We will sing how

Chorus

Great is Your love for me
 And great are the things You've done for me
 And praise is the offering we bring to You

All of our heart and soul
 And all that You are and more
 And praise is the offering we bring to You

Verse 2

Lord we come to worship You
 Lord we bow our hearts in awe
 By Your love we are redeemed
 We are Yours and You're our God
 Your salvation is our song
 Now we can't stay silent
 We will sing how

Verse 3

Lord we come to worship You
 Lord we bow our hearts in awe
 By Your love we are redeemed
 We are Yours and You're our God
 We are Yours and You're our God
 We are Yours and You're our God

Author: Glenn Packiam

Year & Publisher: © 2010 GWC Publishing

Song #: 5783647

GOD OF AGES

God of ages bringing glory here
 You are good
 You are good
 Son of righteousness
 You are all I seek
 With all my heart

Pre-chorus

Giver of life
 Hope for the lost is in You
 All of the earth shines with Your light
 Your glory

Chorus

You are the God who lives
 You are the God who heals
 You are my hope, my everything
 You brought salvation to us
 Offered Your peace to the world
 You are my Lord my everything

Verse 2

In Your promise and Your faithfulness
 I will trust all my days
 King forever, reign in majesty
 Be glorified

Words & Music : Ben Fielding
 Year & Publisher : © 2007 Hillsong Music Publishing
 CCLI Song # 4869933

PSALM 23

The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want
 He makes me lie in pastures green
 He leads me by the still, still waters
 His goodness restores my soul

And I will trust in You alone
 And I will trust in You alone
 For Your endless mercy follows me
 Your goodness will lead me home

He guides my ways in righteousness
 And He anoints my head with oil
 And my cup, it overflows with joy
 I feast on His pure delights

And I will trust in You alone
 And I will trust in You alone
 For Your endless mercy follows me
 Your goodness will lead me home

And though I walk the darkest path
 I will not fear the evil one
 For You are with me, and Your rod and staff
 Are the comfort I need to know

And I will trust in You alone
 And I will trust in You alone
 For Your endless mercy follows me
 Your goodness will lead me home

For Your endless mercy follows me
 Your goodness will lead me home

Words & Music: Stuart Townend
 Year & Publisher: © 1996 Thankyou Music (Admin. by EMI Christian Music
 Publishing)
 Song Number: #1585970

WONDERFUL GOD

Verse 1

There is no other God like You
 Who made the heavens and the earth
 And fills my heart with joy unending
 All I can do is give my life
 Offer to You a sacrifice
 Here is my heart for You unending

Bridge

All of my life, belongs to You alone
 With every breath, my song will rise to You

Chorus

You are the joy of every nation
 The giver of salvation
 Wonderful God
 You are God throughout the ages
 Enthroned upon our praises
 Wonderful God

Verse 2

Every morning when I rise
 It is Your presence I desire
 To see Your faithfulness unending

Mercy and goodness follow me
 For in Your presence I am free
 I put my trust in You unending

Author: Denis Campos
 Year & Publisher: © 2009 CFN Music
 CCLI Number: # # 5427037

SHINE JESUS SHINE

Chorus 1

Shine Jesus shine
 Fill this land
 With the Father's glory
 Blaze Spirit blaze
 Set our hearts on fire

Flow river flow
 Flood the nations
 With grace and mercy
 Send forth Your word Lord
 And let there be light

Verse 1

Lord the light of Your love is shining
 In the midst of the darkness shining
 Jesus Light of the world shine upon us
 Set us free by the truth You now bring us
 Shine on me, shine on me

Verse 2

Lord I come to Your awesome presence
 From the shadows into Your radiance
 By the blood I may enter Your brightness
 Search me try me consume all my darkness
 Shine on me, shine on me

Verse 3

As we gaze on Your kingly brightness
 So our faces display Your likeness
 Ever changing from glory to glory
 Mirrored here may our lives tell Your story
 Shine on me, shine on me

Words & Music: Graham Kendrick
 Year & Publisher: © 1987 Make Way Music
 CCLI Song # 30426

THE LOVE OF GOD

Verse 1

The love of God is greater far
 Than tongue or pen can ever tell
 It goes beyond the highest star
 And reaches to the lowest hell
 The guilty pair bowed down with care
 God gave His Son to win
 His erring child He reconciled
 And pardoned from his sin

Could we with ink the ocean fill
 And were the skies of parchment made
 Were every stalk on earth a quill
 And every man a scribe by trade
 To write the love of God above
 Would drain the ocean dry
 Nor could the scroll contain the whole
 Though stretched from sky to sky

Interlude

Hallelujah Hallelujah
 Hallelujah

O love of God how rich and pure
 How measureless and strong
 It shall forever more endure
 The saints and angels' song

Verse 2

When years of time shall pass away
 And earthly thrones and Kingdoms fall
 When men who here refuse to pray
 On rocks and hills and mountains call

God's love so sure shall still endure
 All measureless and strong
 Redeeming grace to Adam's race
 The saints' and angels' song

O love of God how rich and pure
 How measureless and strong
 It shall forever more endure
 The saints and angels' song

Words & Music: Frederick Martin Lehman | Meir Ben Isaac Nehorai
 Year & Publisher: © Words: 1917. Renewed 1945 Nazarene Publishing
 House (Admin. by Music Services, Inc.); Music: 1917. Renewed 1945
 Nazarene Publishing House (Admin. by Music Services, Inc.)
 CCLI Song # 18448

notes

A large, light brown rectangular area designed for writing notes. It features a vertical black line on the left side and horizontal dashed lines across the width of the area, providing a guide for text alignment.

COVENANT EFC

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