

LIFE-CHANGING  
SCRIPTURES

DAYBYDATE

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# JANUARY

**1st** - The scripture for today, January 1, is *John 1:1f, 14a* as found in the New Testament of the Bible:

*"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning....The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us."*

Genesis 3:8 says God walked on earth in the Garden of Eden. When Jesus came, God once again walked with us. But when Jesus left, did he leave us with no one to walk with?

Jesus said in John 14:17 that he was going to send another Comforter ~ the Spirit of Truth. And in John 17:17 he said God's Word is Truth. So, just as Jesus was the Word that people could watch, the Spirit is the Word that people can read.

We do not have to guess what God is wanting us to do. We have it written down to read, and consider, and contemplate, and re-read as many times as we want.

If you have a Bible in your home, why not read it through in a year beginning today? There are suggested schedules on the internet. Or you could even divide up the number of pages in your Bible by 365 to know how many pages to read each day.

Just remember, every time you get out your Bible and read it, once again God is walking with you.

**2nd** - The scripture for today, January 2, is *3rd John 1:2* as found in the New Testament of the Bible:

*"Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting*

*along well."*

Our health may be bad, our finances in an upheaval, our home damaged by wind or water, our job about to be lost. But we can still smile.

We can still rejoice that our "soul is getting along well."

When problems come into our life ~ and they do ~ remember the most important thing is your soul. No one and no thing can touch your soul as long as you are safe in the arms of Jesus. So, when problems do come, you can still with confidence rejoice that your "soul is getting along well."

**3rd** - The scripture for today, January 3, is *Jonah 1:3a* as found in the Old Testament of the Bible:

***"But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish."***

Do we spend our life running away from the Lord? Do we do it with busy-ness, with resentments, with disbelief that he even exists?

Is it even possible to run away from the Lord? Eventually, it is. But for a long time, the Lord runs after us. He does things to get our attention such as he did by causing a storm at sea where Jonah was on board his escape ship.

Perhaps there are storms in your life. Have you ever thought of them as God trying to get your attention? Perhaps you run here and there day after day, too busy to even think about God. But when disaster hits, it seems a lot of people suddenly remember God so they can blame him for their hardships. Perhaps they're blaming God, but at least they're thinking of him. Perhaps it's been years since they've thought seriously about God.

He has big shoulders. Go ahead and blame him for awhile, then remember how he loves you and just wants you by his side.

But don't wait too long. God only runs after us for so long. Eventually, he gives up on us. Don't wait so long that God gives up on you and treats you the way you have been treating him.

“God, I’m coming back. Help me.”

**4th** - The scripture for today, January 4, is *Philippians 1:4* as found in the New Testament of the Bible:

***"In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy."***

Do our prayers consist mostly of give me this, help me with that? Let us begin today to keep an on-going list of our prayer requests for the year, and another one of thanksgiving for when those prayers are answered. Let us begin today to tell God "Thank you."

Let us also begin today to look around at our circumstances ~ whatever they may be ~ with joy. There can be some kind of joy in every circumstance if we look at it through eyes of joy.

A majority of the people in Philippi in northern Greece on the border of today’s Bulgaria (called Thrace in the first century) were barbarian-looking warrior Thracians. But these rough warriors also brought joy with their beautiful sculptures.

Philippians is a book about peace among the warriors. This is the book that says, "And the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (4:7)

This is also the book that says, "I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (4:13).

Let us say, "thank you," and in the process recognize our joy.

**5th** - The scripture for today, January 5, is *Colossians 1:5* as found in the New Testament of the Bible:

***"...the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the Word of Truth, the gospel."***

Does your faith have its ups and downs? Is it strong sometimes

and weak sometimes? Do things sometimes go so wrong that you have trouble having faith in God? You can still hope. Do you grow angry at God sometimes? You can still hope. During such low times when faith does not come easy, you can still hope. Hope is the springboard of faith.

And stay close to the Word of Truth, for John 14:17 says the Comforter is the Spirit of Truth, and John 17:17 says Truth is the Word of God.

When your emotions are pulling you down, rely for a little awhile on only your logic, your intellect, until your emotions heal. Some day they will.

So keep on hoping ~ the springboard. And some day it will return to being faith.

**6th** - The scripture for today, January 6, is *Titus 1:6f* as found in the New Testament of the Bible:

***"An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless ~ not overbearing, not quick tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, nor pursuing dishonest gain."***

This is quite interesting. God does not leave us to guess what the qualifications of a church leader are. We don't have to have conferences or synods to decide on qualifications for this office, because God has already given them.

Something surprising here is that the word elder is used interchangeably with the word overseer (sometimes also translated bishop). The word elder comes from the Greek word *presbyter*. The word overseer/bishop is from the Greek word *episcopos*. Elder and overseer and bishop all are the same in this passage referring to the same office!

Here's something else interesting about the elder/overseer/bishop: The word pastor comes from the Greek word for shepherd. In Acts 20:17, Paul sent for the **elders** of the church in Ephesus to talk to them. When they arrived, he said,

“Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you **overseers**. Be shepherds [**pastors**] of the church of God which he bought with his own blood.”

Do you see the overlapping of the same office being called by different names? It's kind of like father and papa being the same.

Titus 1:6f uses elder and overseer for the same office. Overseer is the same in Greek as bishop. Acts 20:17 uses elder, overseer, shepherd (pastor) for the same office.

In our daily life we have different words meaning the same person; such as father, parent, head of the house, dad, breadwinner, papa ~ all names for the same position in the family.

So, too, for the family of God ~ the church ~ all these words overlap as names for the same office! And the qualifications for this office are found in our scripture for today, Titus 1:6f. Indeed, how interesting!

**7th** - The scripture for today, January 7, is 2nd *Timothy* 1:7 as found in the New Testament of the Bible:

***"For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love, and of self-discipline."***

Have you discovered some new truth in the Bible (new to you)? People fear the unknown. Do not fear it. Embrace it. Then share with others this new-found truth. The word "timidity" is sometimes translated "fear." Remind your friends of that new truth enough times that it is no longer an unknown and no longer something to be feared.

Do we fear reprisal among our church friends or leaders if we stand up for some new truth we have found in the Bible? God can help you.

God can give you the courage to speak out with power, with love, and with self-discipline as you explain that new-found truth.

Then be patient. God said, "My word will not return to me void" (Isaiah 55:11).

**8th** - The scripture for today, January 8, is 1st *Peter 1:8* as found in the New Testament of the Bible:

***"Though you have not seen him, you love him! And even though you do not see him now, you believe in him! And are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy!"***

This was written by Peter, one of Jesus' apostles, when he was old. Peter had seen Jesus for himself. He was an eye-witness.

After Jesus returned to heaven, it was the job of the apostles to tell people about him and repeat his words. They spent the rest of their lives doing just that. Oh, the joy they found when people believed, even though they had not seen him; and not only believed, but loved.

Thank God, these apostles wrote the New Testament so we would never have to guess what Jesus was like and never have to guess what his words were, even after the apostles died. In fact, we have the advantage because we do not have to wait for an apostle to come visit us and tell us. We can read about Jesus for ourselves over and over as many times as we like right in our home.

Yes, we have not seen Jesus. Yet, with his life and words before us, we believe. And we love. What inexpressible and glorious joy!

**9th** - The scripture for today, January 9, is *Joshua 1:9* as found in the Old Testament of the Bible:

***"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."***

God does not give us commands that are impossible to keep. Many require fortitude, but they are not impossible. Still, we fear we cannot keep them. Maybe we fear our co-workers because they do not keep certain commands. Maybe we fear our

neighbors, our family, or even our church friends because they do not keep certain commands.

Fear can paralyze us. But God gives us strength and courage. Therefore, when challenged to keep a commandment of God, regardless of what others are saying and doing, remember the Lord your God is with you wherever you are.

Hold fast! Stand firm! Do the right thing!

**10th** - The scripture for today, January 10, is **Colossians 1:10** as found in the New Testament of the Bible:

***"And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: Bearing fruit in every good work; Growing in the knowledge of God."***

Some people are always doing some good work for other people. It fills their thoughts and their life. Other people are always delving into the Bible to gain more knowledge of God. It fills their thoughts and life.

But we see here, we must have a balance. James 2:17 says faith without works is dead. On the other hand, Romans 10:2 says certain people were zealous for God, but their zeal was not based on knowledge.

We have to add to our Bible-based faith, good works. We have to add to our zealous good works, the knowledge of God from the Bible.

Are you prone to center your life on one or the other? Examine yourself, and determine today that you will add the other requirement to your life, and thus attain a spiritual balance. You can do it!

**11th** - The scripture for today, January 11, is **2nd Peter 1:11** as found in the New Testament of the Bible:

***"And you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."***



How often do we forget that earth is not our home? As an old gospel song says, "We're just traveling through." Do we really believe that? If someone told us tomorrow that we were going to die, would we go into a panic? Would we beg God to let us live another ten or twenty years? Would we feel this was the beginning of the end?

To a Christian, our dying is the end of the beginning. We have a whole "life" ahead of us in heaven. A never-ending life. Do we live like we believe it? Will we die looking forward to it?

**12th** - The scripture for today, January 12, is **James 1:12** as found in the New Testament of the Bible:

***"Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him."***

How loyal are you to God? Is your relationship up and down, depending on how your life is going at the moment? If you pray for something and don't get it, do you feel like God is punishing you? If everything seems to be going wrong, do you blame God instead of Satan? Do you pray over and over for God to relieve you of a particular burden, but relief hasn't come?

God has assignments for you. Where you are today is where he wants you. Your job is to stay loyal no matter how difficult things get.

Why? To prove that love is stronger than hatred. To prove that good is stronger than bad. To prove that God is stronger than Satan.

Determine today to thank God for whatever state you are in. And, even though you may feel helpless to do anything about it right now, in your helplessness, persevere!

**13th** - The scripture for today, January 13, is **Habakkuk 1:13** as found in the Old Testament of the Bible:

***"Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong."***

This pretty much explains why none of us deserves heaven. Only sinless people can be in heaven. Of course, we cannot be sinless. For thousands of years, God let mankind try any way we could to be perfect. Some people he gave the Law of Moses to, and some people he continued to let try on their own. Neither worked. No matter how hard we tried, we couldn't get it right.

The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). So, God gave us a temporary fix: We could kill an animal to die in our place, and offer it as a sacrifice, to take onto itself God's rage at destructive sin.

But Galatians 4:4 says, "When the time was come, God sent his Son." Finally, when mankind understood we needed outside help, God sent Jesus. Hebrews 4:15 says Jesus lived the perfect life that was impossible for us to live; he was completely free of sin. Then God offered his Son as the final sacrifice to die in our place ~ to be falsely accused of all the sins that WE had committed, to take onto himself God's anger, rage, and fury at OUR sins, to collect the terrible wages Satan metes out ~ death ~ for OUR sins.

That done, God ~ who can only dwell with sinlessness ~ is able to allow obedient, faithful people into his home, heaven.

**14th** - The scripture for today, January 14, is ***Hebrews 1:14*** as found in the New Testament of the Bible:

***"Are not all angels ministering spirits, sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?"***

Have you ever wondered if the Bible really mentions guardian angels? Well, here it is. But the angels do not minister to everyone ~ just to the saved who will inherit salvation.

As much as they minister to us, however, we are not to worship them and we are not to pray to them. For awhile, it was popular to collect pictures and statues of angels. Some people were saying there is no God, but there are guardian angels.

Where did they think angels come from? We are not to adore, worship or pray to angels (Revelation 19:10; 22:9). We are just to be grateful for them.

Let us thank God that he loves us enough to send the angels to minister to us until we reach the safety of his home, heaven.

**15th** - The scripture for today, January 15, is **Galatians 1:15f** as found in the New Testament of the Bible:

***"But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles...."***

Isn't this amazing! God knows before you are born what you will be doing for him later in life. He does not force you to do so, for we have free will. God knew Paul's future ~ that he would become a Christian. So he set him apart to preach among the Gentiles (non-Jews).

God knows ahead of time whether you are willing to obey what he tells you to do in his Bible and not what other people tell you to do. If you are willing, then he has work set aside for you.

You may not think your life has been very exciting. You may be waiting for God to give you a big important job to do for him. But the truth is, you ~ in your seemingly mundane life ~ may already be doing what God set aside for you to do.

Never underestimate yourself and what God can accomplish through you by his grace.

**16th** - The scripture for today, January 16, is **Ruth 1:16ff** as found in the Old Testament of the Bible:

***"Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May***

***the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me."***

Although Ruth was talking to her mother-in-law after the death of her husband (Naomi's son), this can be and sometimes is quoted by the bride and groom at their wedding. If only it were quoted more often. Not only at weddings, but at anniversaries. At birthdays of children and parents. During arguments, and low times and hard times and discouraging times.

These are the words of love ~ deep genuine, unselfish love. Let us so love one another that deeply.

**17th** - The scripture for today, January 17, is ***James 1:17*** as found in the New Testament of the Bible:

***"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."***

Do you sometimes feel slighted because other people get more gifts on special occasions (or even between special occasions) than you do? No need to feel that way. Christians get the goods ones. Christians get the perfect ones. We get them all! And our heavenly Father will never stop showering us with those "good gifts," those "perfect gifts."

These gifts are good and perfect because they are forever gifts. And what can be better than that?

**18th** - The scripture for today, January 18, is ***Isaiah 1:18*** as found in the Old Testament of the Bible:

***" 'Come now, let us reason together,' says the Lord. 'Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.' "***

When did this become possible? Revelation in the New

Testament explains in 7:14 we make our robes white by washing them in the blood of the Lamb.

What lamb? John the Baptist introduced the world to the Lamb. When he saw Jesus walking toward him in front of a crowd, he announced, "Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

What made Jesus the Lamb of God? Romans 6:23 says the wages of sin is death. In the Old Testament era, God allowed us to kill an animal in our place whenever we sinned. So for centuries, we would sin and sacrifice an animal, sin and sacrifice an animal and on and on, for we never could quit sinning.

Finally God offered one last sacrifice for all times. When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper (Communion), he did so during the Jewish Passover feast where they ate their meal of lamb. There is no mention that Jesus and his apostles ate the usual lamb. Instead, he passed around the usual wine and said from now on it represented his blood as the sacrificial Lamb. And he passed around the usual bread and said from now on it represented his body as the sacrificial Lamb. (Mark 14:12 22-25).

Sunday is the most special day of the week for Christians. Why? The early Christians under guidance of Jesus' apostles "broke bread" for the communion every first day of the week (Acts 20:7). May we always make this the central part of our worship on this special day. We can never do it too often. We can never too often say, "I'm sorry my sins caused You to go through your terrible death." We can never too often say, "Thank You."

**19th** - The scripture for today, January 19, is **James 1:19a** as found in the New Testament of the Bible:

***"Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires."***

There was a book published a few years ago entitled, *Hurt People Hurt People*. Have you ever wanted to say something

like, "How dare you think you know how bad I feel!" or "How dare you think you understand the ordeal I went through!" or "How dare you treat me like that!?" Those are accusing words. And what do they accomplish?

We may feel justified in explaining how bad we were treated by someone. But, in reality, it makes the hurt keep going and going and going.... Perhaps this is a cycle you've been in for a long time with someone. Who is going to stop the cycle?

Satan is the accuser (Revelation 12:10). God is the forgiver. Even Jesus forgave his killers. When we have been hurt, let us be ready to listen to the other person's hurt instead of accuse. And in the process, "bring about the righteous life that God desires."

**20th** - The scripture for today, January 20, is **2nd Peter 1:20f** as found in the New Testament of the Bible:

***"Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."***

Isn't this interesting? It's a definition of prophecy. Prophecy is Scripture. It isn't just telling the future. It's telling the mind of God. Sometimes in the Old Testament God warned his people that if they did so-and-so, this would happen, but if they did such-and-such, that would happen.

But ultimately all prophecy was telling people how much God loved them and wanted them in the long run to be happy. The Old Testament has much of that in it, and all the New Testament does. It is your Creator's Words.

You are so blessed that you do not have to guess what is on God's mind. Many other religions have to guess ~ Hinduism, Buddhism, and so on. But you have God's very own words in black and white to read over and over whenever you like ~ prophecy which is Scripture.

Read it. Absorb it. Love it. It was written by the Lover of

your Soul.

**21st** - The scripture for today, January 21, is *Job 1:21* as found in the Old Testament of the Bible:

***“Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised.”*** “

Job had every reason to turn against God. In one day his entire wealth was stolen from him, nearly all his servants were killed by an invading army, and all his children died in a storm. Why hadn’t God protected him if he loved him so much?

We often forget that Satan exists also. Just remember, whatever Satan does, God can undo.

On a physical level, Satan is the accuser (Revelation 12:10), but God is the forgiver. Satan can cause us to get sick, but God can heal. Satan can cause us to die, but God can bring us back to life. Satan can make us miserable in this world, but God can take us to a better world.

Shall we leave God to fight Satan alone? We were made in his image. And how do we fight Satan? Romans 12:21 says, “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

On a spiritual level, sometimes we are not only separated from material things, but sometimes we are forced to be separated from other Christians. What can be the result? God’s kingdom arises in yet another place. James wrote to the Jewish Christians “scattered among the nations” (James 1:1). Peter wrote to “God’s elect, strangers in the world, scattered....” (I Peter 1:1).

Romans 8:28 says, “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him.” There’s more....

*In all these things we are more than conquerors through him  
who loved us.*

*For I am convinced that neither death nor life,  
Neither angels nor demons,  
Neither the present nor the future,*

*Nor any powers,  
Neither height nor depth,  
Nor anything else in all creation  
Will be able to separate us from the  
Love of God  
That is in Christ Jesus our Lord.  
(Romans 8:37-39)*

How can we be “more than conquerors” unless we have something to conquer? How can we have “victory in Jesus” unless we have something to be victorious over?

Each of us has periodic assignments from God. What bad thing has happened in your life lately? That is your assignment.

Or, must Jesus bear the cross alone?

**22nd** - The scripture for today, January 22, is *Ephesians 1:22* as found in the New Testament of the Bible:

*"And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way."*

What makes this so interesting is that the church is the body of Christ. And what else is the church? Matthew 16:17-18 says the church is the kingdom of heaven. Ephesians 5:25 & 32 says the church is his bride. Revelation 21:2, 9-10 says the church bride is the new Holy City Jerusalem. Colossians 1:18 says Jesus is the head of his body ~ the only head ~ on earth and in heaven.

And what does Jesus think of the church? Ephesians 5:25-27 says he loved the church so much that he gave himself up for her, to make her radiant ~ no stains, no wrinkles, no blemishes.

Why would anyone not want to be part of this?

Such love.

Such eternal love.

**23rd** - The scripture for today, January 23, is *Romans*



**1:23** as found in the New Testament of the Bible:

***"...and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles."***

Do you ever wish you could see God, touch God, look God in the eye? Everyone has. And we may wonder why we can't.

If this were the case, then God wouldn't be God. He wouldn't be omnipresent (present everywhere). He would only be able to listen to one prayer at a time, and the rest of the world's prayers would go unheard.

Let us be grateful our God is so great that He cannot be limited. He is so great He cannot be pictured. He is so great that He fills heaven. He is so great that He fills our hearts and our souls.

**24th** - The scripture for today, January 24, is ***Jude 1:24*** as found in the New Testament of the Bible:

***"To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy ~ "***

God is perfect, and so cannot dwell with faults and imperfection. We have faults. Romans 3:23 says everyone sins. And Romans 6:23 says the wages of sin is death. But God always has wanted us to live with him. What a dilemma!

God solved our problem at great expense. He sent His Son, Jesus, to earth who lived the faultless life for us. Then God offered His perfect Son, His only Son, Jesus, to die in our place.

After that, God told the world that He would consider us "without fault" vicariously through Jesus. He's already paid the penalty for our sins. All we have to do is believe He did and follow his instructions to keep us out of hell.

How amazing ~ God's love for us!

**25th** - The scripture for today, January 25, is **James 1:25** as found in the New Testament of the Bible:

***"But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it ~ he will be blessed in what he does."***

A lot of people do not understand that there was the Law of Moses with over 600 commands in the Old Testament, and the Law of Jesus with very few commands in the New Testament. Colossians 2:14 says Jesus nailed the old Law to the cross. Jesus' new law is one of freedom from all the requirements of the old law.

Do we really believe this? Some people dip back into the Old Law of Moses to bring back those old forms of worship (musical instruments, separate priesthood, etc.), or to bind people to regulations that are no longer binding (tithing, burning candles, etc.). That has all been nailed to the cross. But how are we supposed to know unless we read the Old Testament ~ not just the stories, but also the commands? Like the commands to stone for adultery, etc.

Then we can understand.

Let us truly let loose of the Old Law of Moses and cling to the "perfect Law that gives freedom" in Christ.

Then let us bow to Him in gratitude for doing this for us, and say "Thank you."

**26th** - The scripture for today, January 26, is **1st Samuel 1:26f** as found in the Old Testament of the Bible:

***"And she said to him, 'As surely as you live, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you praying to the Lord. I prayed for this child and the Lord has granted me what I asked of him.' "***

Hannah was telling the priest that God had answered her

prayer. How often do you tell someone God has answered your prayer? Or do you wander aimlessly from prayer request to prayer request, and let the answer drift away from you unnoticed? Or worse, do you ask others to pray for something, but after once or twice you stop praying yourself?

Begin today to keep a list of your prayer requests. Write down the date you first began to pray for each. If your requests are all about yourself, begin including your neighbors, your co-workers, people you attend church with, your relatives, people in the newspaper.

Then begin a second list of your answers and the dates. You will be amazed how fast your Prayers Answered list grows. Do not let the answers drift away from you unnoticed.

Notice them.

Claim them.

Tell others.

And spend the rest of your life thanking God over and over and over....

**27th** - The scripture for today, January 27, is **James 1:27** as found in the New Testament of the Bible:

***"Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: To look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world."***

Although there are plenty of people who claim they do enough good works that they don't have to go to church, the opposite occurs also. Do you go to church every time the doors are open, and attend all the potluck dinners, and participate in the singing, and teach a class? So far, so good.

But what about the rest? James says we must do our part to look after people in distress. If we say we don't have time, we must look at our priorities. We take the time to do what we choose to do. James also says we can't pray on Sunday and swear on Monday. We can't sing on Sunday and cheat on Monday. We can't praise God on Sunday and lie on Monday.

Christianity does include "going to church" because it was commanded in Hebrews 10:25; and Sunday is the day to keep the weekly Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7). But this must be balanced with a moral life and good works. Are you balanced?

**28th** - The scripture for today, January 28, is **1st Chronicles 1:28** as found in the Old Testament of the Bible:

***"The sons of Abraham: Isaac and Ishmael."***

Are you a parent with a grown or nearly-grown child who is going in the wrong direction? Have you tried everything you can think of, and nothing is working? Do you know in your heart that you have been a good example and things shouldn't have turned out as they have?

Abraham has been called the Father of the Faithful. Yet he had one son who followed Jehovah ~ Isaac ~ and one son who followed idols ~ Ishmael. Certainly Abraham tried everything he could to "talk some sense" into Ishmael. Certainly he prayed earnestly for Ishmael. So what went wrong?

Just as God has given each of us free will, our children also have free will. Just as God will never force us to follow him, we cannot force our children to follow God. You did not refrain from having your children because they may have difficulties in their life, and neither did God. And when our children rebel and break our hearts, imagine what God goes through when we rebel and break his heart.

Who knows? Perhaps your child will return to God some day in your old age, or even after you have died. If your child deep down has a good heart, that is enough for God to work with. Keep hope alive.

**29th** - The scripture for today, January 29, is **Colossians 1:29** as found in the New Testament of the Bible:

***"To this end I labor, struggling with all His energy which so powerfully works in me."***

Wow! Hyper-active Paul, Paul who preached even while in jail, Paul who always went back to preaching after he'd been beaten and told not to, Paul with the A-type personality said he got all that energy from Jesus Christ (see verse 28).

Who provides your energy? It depends on what you are being driven to do. It depends on what consumes you. It depends on what you're spending your time doing. It depends on what is on your mind all the time. Think about it today. On what things do you use the energy of Jesus?

**30th** - The scripture for today, January 30, is *1st Corinthians 1:30* as found in the New Testament of the Bible:

*"It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us "wisdom" from God ~ that is, our...*

*...righteousness,*

*...holiness and,*

*...redemption."*

What is wisdom from God? Here it is spelled out. It is three things. Let's look at it backwards. When we are redeemed from our sins, we gain God's holiness and God's rightness. We don't know how to be sinless, so we cannot have righteousness and holiness on our own. But Jesus knew how, and so became sinless for us.

We cannot let what He did for us drift by. That is not wisdom. Wisdom is to follow Jesus so He can give us His sinlessness (at least in the eyes of God). What a privilege He has given to us! And how unworthy we are!

**31st** - The scripture for today, January 31, is *Genesis 1:31* as found in the Old Testament of the Bible:

*"God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning ~ the sixth*

*day."*

Oh how God loves to spoil us! He didn't create a barren earth and then order us to get to work and plant something. He got everything just right. And then.... And then.... And then his crowning glory ~ he created us! Special us!

However, as perfect as he made earth, he left some joyful things for us to create ourselves, for he made us like him ~ creative. He left the jewels unmined, the buildings unerected, the songs unwritten, the paintings unpainted, the ships unbuilt, the sculptures uncarved....

Here we are surrounded by everything we need to imitate one part of God ~ his creative side. Today, create something!

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