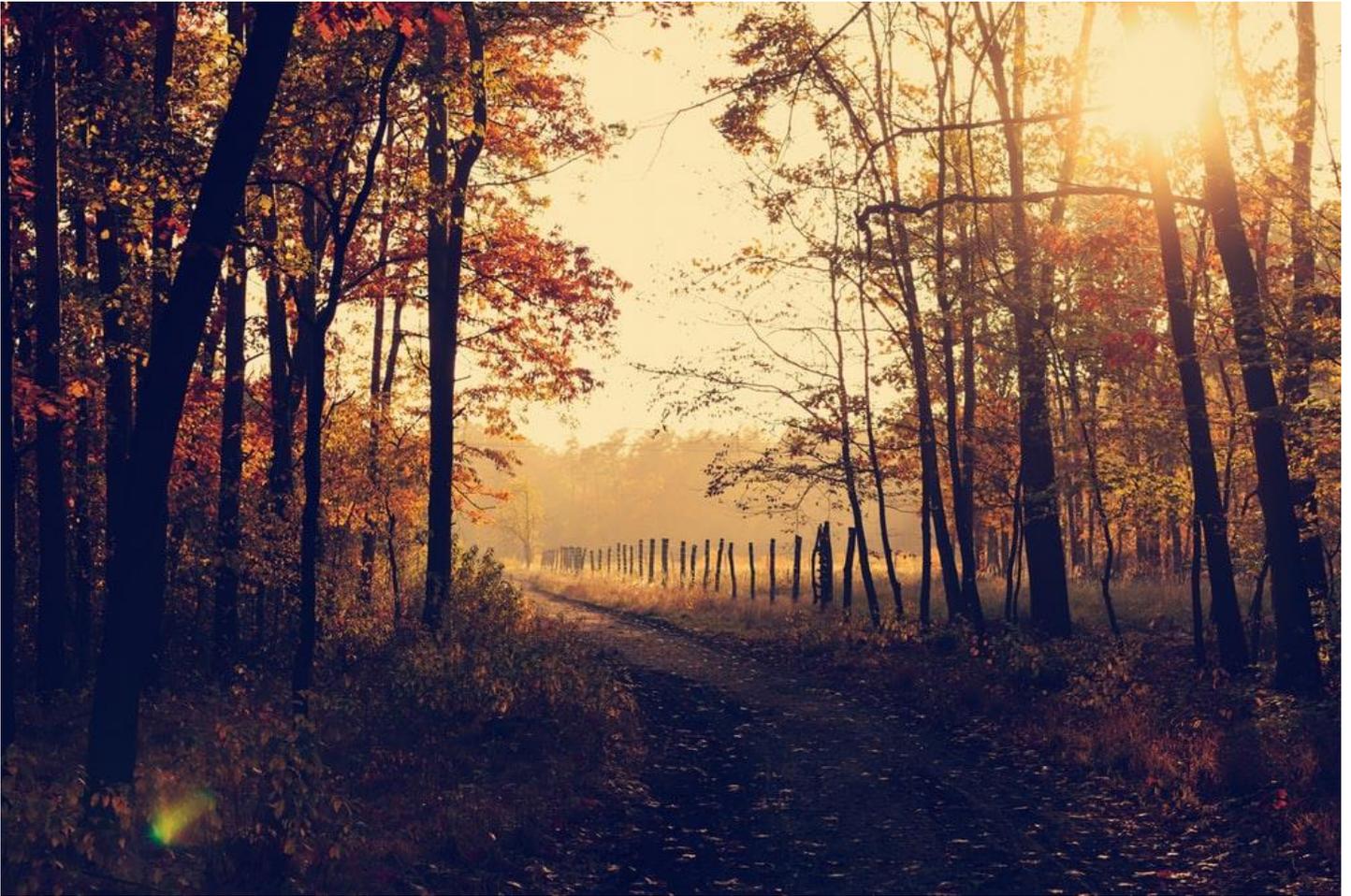


# *Prayer Devotions*



## **November 2021**

**Luke 18:1**

**Pray Always and Never Give Up**

## ***Prayer for Persecuted Church***

### **Pray for those in the midst of persecution**

*Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body. Hebrews 13:3*

Global watchdog Open Doors reports that 322 Christians are killed every month for their faith while millions more suffer persecution on a routine basis.

Please pray that these believers will not only stay committed to the call of Christ but also will respond in love to the evil shown by their aggressors. God's love will open doors for these believers to share the Gospel even more.

This Month's Countries, these are some of the most dangerous countries to follow Jesus:

**Mozambique**

**Malaysia**

**Indonesia**

**Daily Prayers for November...** “Gratitude is the healthiest of all human emotions. The more you express gratitude for what you have, the more likely you will have even more to express gratitude for.” (**Zig Ziglar**)

“Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”  
**Thessalonians 5:18**

**Monday, November 1st:** We often hear the challenge to be the best we can be, but we can also have an inner voice that will echo that maybe our best isn't good enough...maybe we aren't good enough. And in a sense that is true. On our own we aren't good enough, but that doesn't mean we've been disqualified. Even though we have a God who will call us to great things that are beyond what we could even imagine, we also have an enemy who would like nothing better than to keep us from fulfilling God's purposes. We have a battle on our hands, and we begin fighting that battle on our knees in our prayer closets, but at some point, we need to come out of the closet. It wouldn't be sufficient if God told us to plant a garden if we just kept praying and asking Him to bring that dream of a garden to fruition. We should ask Him for some specifics, but then we need to get out there and till some soil, follow His timing on when and where to plant, plant the seeds He has given us, and continue to water, weed, and watch for signs of life. The obvious analogy here is for sharing His word, but it could also represent a ministry He is calling you to plant or any other number of dreams He may place in your heart. Our job is to tune our ears to listening to His guidance rather than voice of the one who is giving us a litany of reasons that tell us we will never succeed. Remember when Gideon was called, he had an impressive list of reasons that could have disqualified him, and he even asked God to confirm more than once that he was hearing correctly, but when he finally overcame his reservations, he obediently went forth in the power of the one who had commissioned him, and the results were nothing short of miraculous. And that's exactly why the enemy was trying to discourage him. Gideon's fleshly mind told him his family was the least, he was the youngest, he was actually a bit of a coward, and the Lord had allowed them to be oppressed, so why had He not intervened? All of this was true, but God was giving him a replacement identity as a valiant warrior. And to top it off, God told Gideon that surely, He would be with him. It's true we have an accuser, but we also have an advocate! And we are told in Revelation 12:10, "...the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night." Rather than retreating in fear, try raising a hallelujah in the enemy's presence and advancing in the power of the King!

**Genesis 22:17; 1 Peter 5:8; James 4:7; 1 John 4:1-4**

**Tuesday, November 2nd:** AUTHORITY: I am for you and not against you. You have been rescued out of the kingdom of darkness and transferred into the marvelous light of My Son, Jesus Christ. I am a strong tower for you to run into. I have not left you alone in a fallen world. Greater is He that is in you than he who is in the world. As the world seems to grow darker, I am the light shining in the darkness. Just remember, that you are in this world, but you are not of this world. You are not at war with flesh and blood. “For we are not fighting against flesh and blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.” (Ephesians 6:12) This battle is not yours to fight alone. I am always with you. I will fight for you. The victory is yours, but the battle is Mine. Your spiritual enemy wants to intimidate you with fear. Fear is a weapon used by the enemy to get you distracted from My power. The enemy cannot stand against My word. My word is alive and active. It is sharper than any double-edged sword. My word, spoken by you, is like an arrow that pierces the lies and exposes the enemies’ schemes. But... you are more than a conqueror. When you speak My Word the angels are watching over to perform it. My dearly beloved: “Listen carefully: I have given you authority {that you now possess} to tread on serpents and scorpions, and {the ability to exercise authority} over all the power of the enemy (Satan); and nothing will {in any way} harm you.” (Lk. 10:19 AMP)

**Romans 8:31, 37; Colossians 1:13; 1 Peter 2:9; Proverbs 18:10; 1 John 4:4; John 1:5, 17:16; Joshua 1:9; Exodus 14:14; 2 Chronicles 20:15; Hebrews 4:12; Psalm 103:20**

**Wednesday, November 3rd:** We like labels. When we're buying something, we want to know ahead of time what's in the package and maybe even the ingredients and a run down on how beneficial or damaging the contents might be. Labels can be comforting; they give a sense of order to things. People can also have labels, although we call them nicknames or maybe identifiers for where they're from, what group they associate with, their socio-economic background, or maybe one of their predominant features. Peter was called the Rock (not to be confused with Dwayne Johnson), but he just as easily could have been called Impetuous Peter or Profanity Peter. He did, after all, cut off the ear of one of the soldiers and then deny Jesus three times, even resorting to cursing to make his point. And then of course there's Doubting Thomas. We don't really know why he wasn't with the other disciples when Jesus appeared to them, but the fact is they were all hiding, and had any one of them been in Thomas' place they very well could have had the very same doubts. Maybe he could better have been called Truthful Thomas. The point is, labels were assigned that related to one aspect of the person being described. We do the same thing, or maybe a label has been given you that others use to define you. Whatever it is, there's always so much more to the picture than the small percentage that we or others usually see. There can be both a positive and negative side to labels. Hopefully our lives are a reflection of Jesus Christ to the extent that others get a positive impression of what it is to follow Him. But we need to remember that if that's how we've been labeled, hopefully the "contents" will match the label. And when we label others, we need to understand that we don't know all there is about them and there may be underlying factors that have impacted them in a way that causes them to exhibit traits that really shouldn't define them. Only God knows their heart, and thankfully He shows grace to us when we aren't walking in a manner worthy of our calling. May we seek to extend the same to others and may we also look for those things that we can encourage in others to build them up rather than define them by limited observations that may trap them in an unwarranted identifier. Labels limit, but God's grace and love are lavish.

**1 Samuel 16:7; Matthew 7:1-5; Colossians 3:12-15**

**Thursday, November 4th:** Most of us like to feel that we're helpful people. Granted, there are those who have a gift for serving, but all of us would hopefully want to be seen as being caring and useful. There are times, however, when that desire could potentially become an impediment to the task at hand rather than a blessing. Take as an example putting away the tools that were used for a large and complex project. We want to help, but we don't know exactly where something is supposed to go, so we just choose what we think looks like a good spot; but it's really just a guess – maybe even a somewhat educated guess. How much better for the person to whom the tools belong if we just leave them and allow the owner to spend a minimal amount of time and effort to put them away themselves rather than having to waste time and effort trying to locate where they were placed. Or we could simply ask where they belong. Sometimes we can do this with God when He's dealing with an issue in us or in someone else. We become impatient or believe we can fix whatever needs fixing in our own strength or resourcefulness. How often do we charge ahead, depending on our ingenuity and limited knowledge of the situation without stopping to ask the One responsible for the resolution of the issue to direct our action? Even when we think we know the right thing to do, it's always better to ask first if what **seems** best really **is** the right course of action in this given situation. It doesn't even have to be a lengthy and eloquent discourse, although there could be serious and extenuating circumstances that would call for greater understanding. But in many cases a simple, "Lord, what would You have me do?" will suffice. Then wait for Him to respond, and there's nothing wrong with asking Him to verify His direction if you have questions. Better to err on the side of caution. I fully believe that He will honor our desire to help, and if we're not supposed to do anything because He's in the process of refining, He will find a way that we can understand to let us know. His ways are always higher than ours, His thoughts than ours, and He knows our hearts. He's far more interested in humble submission to Him than hasty or hapless service.

**Proverbs 3:5-6, 16:1-3, 9; James 1:5; Jeremiah 33:3**

**Friday, November 5th:** SING PRAISES - “My lips will shout for joy when I sing praise to You-----I whom You have delivered.” (Psalm 71:23) The enemy wants to steal your joy, rob you of your happiness and kill your plans. When your heart is heavy with discouragement it’s time to get up and put on your garments of praise. I inhabit the praises of My people. I delight in your song of thanksgiving. I have given you the greatest weapon to defeat discouragement. When you raise your voice of praise to Me you shall be filled with an anointing of joy that bubbles out of your spirit. Your spirit will be so lifted that you will have new strength for the day. Sorrow and sighing have to flee away as you lift up a joyful sound. Praise is the sound that defeats the enemy. Your praise fills the atmosphere with joy. My word shows you the power of praise to win the victory. “And when he (the king) had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the Lord, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: Praise the LORD, for His mercy endures forever.” (2Chronicles 20:21) Do not give the enemy any ground. When you raise your voice to the King of Kings, the sound is glorious in heaven and pierces the darkness. My children sing for joy. I’m listening for the joyful sound coming from you. “Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises.” (Psalm 47:6)

**John 10:10, Isaiah 61:3, Psalm 22:3, Isaiah 51:1**

**Saturday, November 6th:** There's a line in an old hymn that always used to puzzle me. In "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing" hymnist Robert Robinson begins the second verse with a pledge to raise his Ebenezer. My initial mental image was that of Scrooge, which I was certain was not correct, so I did a little research. An Ebenezer is a stone of help, and its significance is from 1 Samuel 7 when Israel had forsaken the Lord and the prophet directed them to return to Him wholeheartedly, removing all their foreign gods and directing their hearts to the Lord. They obeyed, and as a result the Philistines who were assembling to attack were routed through God's intervention. Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen, naming it Ebenezer and saying, "Thus far the Lord has helped us." It was to serve as a remembrance for them of God's faithfulness and sovereignty. We might call it a milestone. Something that reminds of the fact that although the journey may not be over yet, we're closer than we were and we're still on the right road. If we keep on course, we can be encouraged that we will reach our desired haven. It's a cause for celebration. We need to have "stones of remembrance" in our lives to remind us of His faithfulness. When taking a long road trip, one could easily become disheartened with the hours of driving if it weren't for those markers that keep reminding us of how many miles to our destination. As long as you're keeping on the right road, the distance gets shorter and shorter, and you know that the destination is still ahead and is getting closer. The same is true in our spiritual journey. Find ways to mark for remembrance those times when you see the hand of God intervening for you and directing you in the way you should go. Then when you start to become weary, look at those milestones and be encouraged. He is still faithful, just as He has been before, and He will continue to be in the future because that's just who He is! Raise your personal Ebenezer and thank the Lord for His fountain of blessings.

**Psalm 77:11-14, 145:3-7; Philippians 4:6-7; Isaiah 46:9**

**Sunday, November 7th:** We've seen the violence against women and citizens in general in places like Afghanistan, Yemen, and Nigeria; but the threat is exponentially higher if you also happen to be a Christian. In mid-September the Reverend Silas Yakubi Ali in the Nigerian state of Kaduna was found hacked to death with machetes about 1000 yards from his home, and at least ten other Christians, among them two pregnant women, were also found murdered. These are the facts that we rarely hear on the news, and the sad truth is that without being reminded of such atrocities we can easily forget to pray for these precious brothers and sisters in Christ. Today is the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church. We in the United States don't even have a grid for what it is to have to fear for your life and the lives of your loved ones simply because of your faith in Jesus. Embarrassment or ridicule for our beliefs is our typical association with what we would consider persecution. In North Korea the government offers incentives to those who will identify Christians, and the penalty for being revealed is either death on the spot or spending the rest of your life in a labor camp, and the threat extends to family members to the fourth generation! If you're not sure how to pray for these brothers and sisters, try praying Psalm 35:1-6 for them, inserting a third person plural pronoun or what would be appropriate for the sentence in every place the pronoun is first person. ["Contend, O LORD, with those who contend with (me) *our persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ*. Fight against those who fight against (me) *them*."] And then go from there, asking the Holy Spirit to inspire your words and to intervene when there are no words. Pray for them regularly and ask our Father to reveal to them His mercy, grace, and presence, and to let them feel the prayers of the saints rising to His throne on their behalf.

**Acts 4:29-30; 1 Corinthians 1:9-11; Hebrews 13:3**

**Monday, November 8th:** It sounds so basic and simple, but I find I often need to remind myself that His ways are higher – He is more than what I can conceive. In theory we know this is true, and we can even quote convincing Scriptures to support that confession of faith. But what do we do with our faith when He doesn't do what we thought He would do, or what we wanted Him to do? How do we handle the loved one who dies of cancer despite our most fervent prayers? Or the spouse who is locked in a destructive or addictive behavior, and no matter how much we pray for them and seek to be what we believe God is calling us to be, the physical reality remains stagnant. When He doesn't stop something that He easily could have. That's when we must come to grips with the reality that God is the Healer, but that isn't all He is. He is also the resurrection and the life, but He had to go to the cross and die in order to become the resurrection. He is I AM. Perhaps when Moses asked who he should tell Pharaoh had sent him, God's answer was meant to encompass more than we can comprehend, or as some commentators have expressed, "I AM HE WHO IS, and WHO WILL BE." He is self-existent, immutable, incomprehensible, and eternal. He exists outside our concept of time, and the more we learn about Him, the more we come to understand and accept that we will never be able to comprehend all that He is. When the disciples watched Him die on a Roman cross, it seriously challenged everything they had believed and caused them to question what they thought they knew about Him. And He gave them three days to wrestle with their doubts. My hometown pastor used to say that if you never had any questions about your faith, you probably weren't taking it seriously. It takes faith. Not blind faith, but tried and tested faith. And when He surprises you with how He does or doesn't do what you expected, praise Him for being I AM.

**Exodus 3:14; Isaiah 55:9; John 8:58; Revelation 1:8, 21:6**

**Tuesday, November 9th**: Few would probably argue that there are many things in our country and in the world that we would like to see changed. Unfortunately, change can be an uncomfortable word because it means that there are some things that we may need to alter in ourselves. The Bible is pretty clear that we are intended to be overcomers – not overlookers. Being an overcomer would suggest engagement; to overcome means to conquer or defeat, or to win despite obstacles. We can't just pretend there's no problem, but we also can't expect to emerge victorious without some opposition or without coming up with a battle plan and arming ourselves. Our very first line of defense can be found on our knees, and we need to look at these prayers as more than polite dialogue outlining what the needs are. God is already intensely aware of the plight, and He expects our prayers to be intentional and fervent for the tearing down of strongholds! A little-known servant of the Lord knew how to pray fervently for what was important in his eye. He had most likely founded the church in Colossae, and we read that he wrestled in prayer for the believers there. Wrestlers need to be conditioned, intentional, tenacious, and alert. They need to be aware of their opponent and learn to anticipate his moves, always ready to defend and counter, always looking for any areas of vulnerability. They can't allow themselves the luxury of resting in the midst of the fray. This is how Epaphras prayed. Victories are not won with sporadic or half-hearted assaults. If we truly care about the outcome, we will be warriors in prayer – intentional, fervent, focused, and fierce prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance and wisdom to give you holy strategies and the commitment to persevere.

**Colossians 4:12; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Ephesians 6:12; 2 Chronicles 7:13-15**

**Wednesday, November 10th:** My daughter has learned well (from experience when she was still living at home) the power of praying that all things will be brought to light when she's praying for her children. She was actually awakened from a deep sleep with the urging to check her daughter's phone and found some deleted material that disturbed her. It wasn't horrific, but it was enough to cause her to have a serious confrontation and to bring some strong consequences into play. In the initial come-to-Jesus discussion, my granddaughter tried to first play innocent and then acted totally confused as to what had instigated the behavior. Even when confronted with the evidence, she tried to wriggle her way out, but was finally convinced that Momma will always find out! We never totally outgrow that faulty mentality. Even when we can cover up our unseemly secrets to those around us, at some point we will all have to give an account to our Daddy, and nothing gets past Him. Nothing. What a sobering reality that should be to all of us. And as my daughter pointed out to her daughter, as long as the sin is being concealed it can't be dealt with, and it's causing a corruption in her heart that has the potential to harm not only her but the people she loves. The initial admission is painful and possibly shameful, but the release that comes when it is no longer hidden in darkness but instead is brought to light and washed clean cannot be matched. It is glorious release. Only then can you walk in the freedom of forgiveness, knowing when you face Him you will receive His mercy and thus experience grace. Come out of the shadows and come clean. We all have those things that we need to confront in our own lives. Know that the sooner we acknowledge and confess those things that we feel need to be hidden, the more we will grow up. Thank You, Jesus, for the price You paid to cover that which we cannot.

**Hebrews 4:11-16; Luke 8:17; Isaiah 53:4-6**

**Thursday, November 11th:** Today is Veterans Day, originally called Armistice Day to mark the anniversary of the ending of WWI. “To us in America, the reflections of Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country’s service and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of the nations.” (President Woodrow Wilson) Then after WWII a veteran of that war named Raymond Weeks suggested that it be expanded to honor all veterans, and this became law nine years later on May 26, 1954. It is only fitting and proper that we show our respect and gratitude to those who have served in our armed forces at the cost of time away from their families and in being sent to places that are hostile both in the quality of living conditions and often in their physical safety. Many come home with physical and emotional scars, and they not only feel isolated, but it can be a struggle for them to find help in dealing with reentry into “normal” life. If you see a soldier in uniform or if you know a serviceman personally, tell them thank you. Pray that they will feel honored and understood, be healed and comforted, and if they don’t already know Jesus, they will be saved for all eternity. Thank You, Lord, for those who are willing to preserve our freedoms and even to lay down their lives. We know that this is a reflection of what You have done for us and help us to learn from that mindset and to become the same for Your army. And if you’re a veteran reading this – THANK YOU!

**John 15:13; Romans 13:7; Psalm 29:11**

**Friday, November 12th:** There tends to be, sometimes, a watered-down understanding of and approach to worship. Many view it as the prologue to the message, and although they may enjoy the music and even raise their hands, it's more of a ritual or an emotional response to the music than an intentional bowing down and paying homage to our Lord. We worship Him because He is worthy, and when we do so there is a much greater likelihood that we will truly hear what He wants to communicate to us in the message. Our hearts will be prepared and in tune with His. Our praise and worship open the gates of heaven and invite the Holy Spirit to fill us with understanding and with open, humble hearts and minds. Sadly, it is possible to participate in amazing worship music, hear an anointed message, and then leave without ever being changed because the soil was never properly prepared to receive the seed. Instead, let's determine to come early enough to converse with others in the lobby and then enter the sanctuary and have a heartfelt conversation with Him. The Biblical definitions of worship reflect an attitude of prostrating oneself, bowing down in reverence, showing devout respect and acknowledgement of His superiority, and it also means to kiss. It's this beautiful picture of going to your Father as His dependent child, pouring out your heart to Him and thanking Him for His loving care and provision, and then climbing into His lap so He can embrace you and reveal His heart. He knows exactly what we need, but we have to be open and receptive to what He wants us to hear. Let's make the most of this opportunity by doing more than just going through the motions. Purposefully prepare your heart to rest in His Presence and to receive all that He desires to give.

**Psalm 66:1-7, 95:6, 100; James 4:10**

**Saturday, November 13th:** Franklin D. Roosevelt made the statement in his inaugural address in 1933, “**Let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance.**” To be fair, there was ample reason for some to be fearful. The country was in the throes of economic crisis and depression in the spirit of the people. The desire to turn the situation around was admirable and even seemingly successful, but it also turned the attention of our country to finding relief in the government and in our own ingenuity and resourcefulness rather than in our heavenly Father. Once again, we find ourselves in the midst of economic crisis and uncertainty, and once again we see the powers that be suggesting we raise our debt ceiling rather than raise our faith expectations from He who is the source of everything. Take a look at any piece of coined or printed currency and you will find the inscription “In God we trust.” But do we really? Are we trusting the almighty dollar or Almighty God? The root of fear is misplaced trust. When we place our full trust in God, it will be evidenced in the frequency and fervency of our prayer life. We know that we have a loving Father who is undeniably capable of handling anything we are facing, so if we are afraid, it would only make sense that we would go to Him for reassurance and help. Prayer is our greatest expression of trust. As Solomon counsels us, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.”

**Proverbs 3:5-6; Psalm 56:3-4; James 1:2-6; Philippians 4:6-7**

**Sunday, November 14th:** Looking heavenward on a partially cloudy morning before the sun had risen, I saw the twinkling of stars behind the clouds, and it gave me such a profound sense of God's eternal and steadfast constancy. He is always there. It doesn't depend on our ability to actually see Him to know that despite anything that is happening in our present circumstances, He is still in the heavens and as sure as the sun will rise and the clouds will eventually give way to blue skies, we will once again have a clearer vision of His Presence. It's underscored in the bridge of "Way Maker" – even when we don't see it, He's working; even when we don't feel it, He's working; He never stops working. What a comfort. What a blessed assurance. There will be times when we look into the dark sky, and it will appear as utter darkness. Other times the clouds of temporary circumstances will obscure portions of the sky, but we will see small breaks in those clouds and behind them will be the affirmation that the stars are still there, firmly placed as always. And then there will be those mountaintop experiences when there is nothing to dim or veil the brilliance, and we will witness the stars in all their splendor. This is how it is in our experience with the One who created them. Circumstances can sometimes cause us to temporarily lose sight of His Presence, but we can always rest assured that He is still there shining more brightly than we can imagine, and eventually we will once again behold Him in all His splendor. The heavens declare not only His glory but also His eternal faithfulness.

**Lamentations 3:22-23; Psalms 19:1, 36:5-9, 119:89-90**

**Monday, November 15th:** Every weekend there are people hearing a word from God that prompts them to accept Jesus as their Savior. This should be a time of great celebration for both them and us, but we all need to also understand that it's more than just a get-out-of-jail-free card. They need to be fed, nourished, and trained up in the way in which they need go forward toward spiritual maturity. They need to be discipled. Once a mother delivers a child, she doesn't heave a sigh of relief that the job is finished and just roll over – it's just beginning! We all begin physically and spiritually with milk, then solid foods that are easier to digest, and finally the meat. We need to learn to feed ourselves and to depend on choosing the food that will develop our bodies in strength and good health. We need to constantly be challenged, guided, and encouraged to grow up. Very few children welcome having chores; very few tweens want to learn to control their attitudes; very few teens welcome having to get a job, much less be gently pushed from the nest to move out on their own. It would be so much more comfortable to stay home and let Mom and Dad buy the food, do the dirty laundry, and take care of everything. New believers are much the same in their spiritual development; they need guidance and support. Let's take our place in this family of His and be mindful of those who are younger in their faith. Model for them how to stand, walk and run, and then encourage them to do the same. Just as parents don't shame their children when they stumble or fall, be encouragers and advocates who help them to get up and try again. And we need to be examples of the same to them – always striving forward, challenging ourselves to go deeper in our understanding and obedience to the harder paths before us.

**Romans 15:1-6; 1 Thessalonians 5:14**

**Tuesday, November 16th:** There's so much more to reading the Bible than parables and poetry, history and prophecy, or something to check off your list of things to do for the day. The Bible is a spiritual book that needs to be read with a desire to absorb spiritual truths. When we approach it any other way it becomes little more than an academic exercise. We may learn facts, but we're spiritually blind to the revelation and power that come when the scales have been removed from our eyes. Spiritual blindness will rob us of understanding, and it isn't merely a malady of the unsaved. If you think you already know that verse, that chapter, that book well enough that you don't need to read it again, you're blind. There are so many layers to His word, and our circumstances and experience are always changing. What seemed irrelevant one day may become our rhema the next time we read it. Have you ever come across a passage or verse and thought to yourself – has that always been there? We need to ask the Holy Spirit to open our eyes that we may see wonderful things from His word. We should have a holy hunger to uncover all the amazing truths that can be found when we search for them in humility with expectation. And then we need to internalize what we've discovered. The most brilliant, gifted surgeon in the world would be ineffectual if he or she never put what they knew into practice. Imagine the lives that would be jeopardized or lost as a result. We have access to words of eternal life! Let's get to know the Great Physician so well that we become His hands and feet, readily available to utilize all that He reveals to us in the way we live it out. Lord, help us to open our hearts and minds as we open Your word. Thank You that in Your strength we can live the lives You have created for us to live in obedience and with purpose.

**Ephesians 1:18, 2:10; Jeremiah 29:11-13; Psalm 119:17-18**

**Wednesday, November 17th:** When horses race, their bridles are often equipped with blinders to keep them from becoming distracted by what's going on around them. This can be a very positive thing for us at times also. But we all have certain areas in our lives where we have blinders that we may not even be aware of or perhaps that have been put on us by someone we trusted, and we don't challenge the need to possibly remove them. I'm talking about preconceptions we have about how certain things "should" be that become distractions to our receiving from God something that He wants to show us. When a younger person with holes in his jeans is delivering a message, are we more focused on what he has to share or the fact that his appearance doesn't fit our mold? Are we unable to worship God if the music is too contemporary or the wrong volume? Jesus was a master at pushing the envelope and forcing His religious contemporaries to either expand their understanding of His kingdom or to stubbornly and blindly reject Him. When he healed a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath, or when he made a lame man walk again after He had told the man that his sins were forgiven, the religious leaders of the day cried blasphemy. Even though they knew the prophecies about Him and had witnessed His awareness of their thoughts, they refused to accept that maybe, just maybe, what they thought they knew wasn't all there was to know about Messiah. Lord, forgive us for the times we have held so tightly to our personal theology that we've missed a revelation You had for us. Open our hearts and minds to Your truth and give us the wisdom to authenticate our beliefs with Your word and through prayer and Godly counsel. Remove our blinders.

**1 Corinthians 2:6-10; Matthew 23:23-26; 12:10-14; 2 Corinthians 3:7-18**

**Thursday, November 18th:** There would be little argument that our country does not appear to be headed in the right direction – our economy is fragile, there is rampant division on many fronts, violence is on the rise, and we don't have much confidence in what we are being told because the stories change regularly, and once trusted institutions are at odds with each other as to what is true. Where we are could be mirrored in the words of Isaiah 59:14-15a, "Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands far away; for truth has stumbled in the street and uprightness cannot enter. Yes, truth is lacking, and he who turns aside from evil makes himself a prey." Obviously, this isn't the first time this has happened. God's perspective on Israel then pretty accurately reflects where we are today. To get a better understanding of why Israel was in such dire straits, back up in chapter 59 to verses 3-9 and the list of grievances against them is quite convicting and familiar: they practiced and approved violence and murder, they were liars, they made frivolous lawsuits, there was confusion and mistrust, they didn't know the way of peace and they perverted justice, so justice was far from them. Later in this chapter Isaiah warns that their sins testify against them. Truth stumbled in the streets and justice had been turned back. So, what's the solution? Know the real truth, make it your own personal truth to live by, do justice and love mercy. We've been sanctified in the truth for a reason – to be sent into the world that Jesus died for that they may also be redeemed, transformed, and sent in His name. The world needs to be brought back into order - into life - and that requires the breath of His Spirit reviving them; but that won't happen if we don't first allow His life-giving breath to flow through us. Invite the Holy Spirit to breath into you daily. Seek to be revived afresh. Ask Him to set a fire in your soul that will in turn ignite the flames of revival in those around you and pray that it would spread throughout the world.

**2 Chronicles 7:14; 2 Timothy 4:1-5**

**Friday, November 19th:** I was praying for God to show us a clear path to revival, and His answer was that He's already shown us the path; we've just allowed so much to cover it that we can barely see it anymore. We discard directives that we feel are outdated or uncomfortable, littering the path; we create short cuts because we've heard ideas that sound interesting even though they aren't on the map, and suddenly we aren't exactly sure where we got off track or how to get back to where we were. We haven't been diligent to keep the path free from weeds and potholes, and quite honestly there have been times when we thought there might be a better path somewhere. A. W. Tozer put it this way: "The fact of the matter is we have the message, but we have not the authority and the power to shake a city for God. We have the truth, but the truth does not grip our hearts as it should do. We have the Bible, but to so many of us it is just a textbook, and it has never really gripped our lives to become part of the warp and woof of our character." The times are serious and that calls for us to get serious. The definition of revival is: the process of bringing back to life, consciousness, or full strength; a reawakening; the renewal of the validity of a contract. In order for a true Great Awakening to take place, there needs to be revival beginning in individuals. It's the movement of one person following a clearly defined path outlined in the Word of God which results in that man becoming filled up to all the fullness of God through the Holy Spirit. That is revival. The awakening comes when the filling of that one person spills over into the lives of others and from there it multiplies exponentially. And that's how one million souls can be reached for the Kingdom. The more of us who are willing to commit to "being the one" the faster that can become a reality. You will hear a voice behind you saying, "This is the way; walk in it."

**Psalm 16:11; Proverbs 4:11-14, 25-27; Isaiah 30:21**

**Saturday, November 20th:** With all of the divisiveness in our country right now, it's pretty easy to get offended. The definition of offend is: to cause resentful displeasure; to hurt or cause pain to; to err in conduct; to cause to fall into sinful ways. The natural human response to such is to retaliate, and it is typically in a less-than-gentle manner. The Greek word used for offense is interesting. It is *skandalon* and it means a snare, a stumbling block, or a cause for falling away. Doesn't that sound just like something our adversary would want to instigate? Think of a stumbling block in terms of stubbing your toe – you get angry! Something has caused pain and displeasure for you. As a result, you stumbled and probably let out a yelp and maybe even more. I love how the Message expresses Ecclesiastes 7:9 – “Don't be quick to fly off the handle. Anger boomerangs. You can spot a fool by the lumps on his head.” Yelling at the chair leg that jumped out and tripped you is one thing but having the same response to a person is another story. We really need to learn to temper our tempers. There are always going to be things that will offend us, but if we're going to represent Jesus, we're going to need to learn to respond rather than react, knowing that the anger of man does not accomplish the purposes of God. It takes humility and self-control to hold our tongues and turn the other cheek. This doesn't mean you ignore the offense; it simply means you learn to diffuse rather than detonate. A soft answer turns away wrath and it also leaves the door open for the possibility of meaningful dialogue.

**Proverbs 19:11; Ecclesiastes 7:9; James 1:19-20**

**Sunday, November 21st:** You may or may not be familiar with the tern “Wrong-way Corrigan.” Douglas Corrigan had earned a footnote in history as one of the mechanics on Charles Lindbergh’s *Spirit of St. Louis* which made the first solo trans-Atlantic flight, but Corrigan’s his dream was to make the flight himself. So, he purchased a 1929 aircraft off a trash heap, refurbished it and flew it from California to New York. This in itself earned him national notoriety because people were amazed the plane made it that far, but when he immediately submitted flight plans to fly across the Atlantic his request was denied because it was deemed a suicide mission. On July 17, 1938, Corrigan took off from New York ostensibly to return to California, but shortly after take-off he made a 180 and 28 hours later landed in Ireland. His claim was that he had gotten disoriented, and this earned him the “wrong-way” moniker, but in truth he had fulfilled his dream against seemingly insurmountable odds. At this particular point in history the church is being called to not rest on our past accomplishments but rather to forge ahead with a divinely appointed flight plan that may seem overwhelming – even impossible. We need to actively, dynamically represent Jesus in an arena that may prove to be less than receptive and could even be hostile. It might cost us reputation. The mission won’t be easy, we most assuredly will face obstacles and forces trying to stop us before we even get off the ground, and there will certainly be those who will tell us how foolish and potentially dangerous the proposal is. We’re asking them to accept that what they believe and promote is based on falsehoods that will ultimately lead to the death of their very souls, but we’re giving them a free and marvelous alternative – life! Real love for them and commitment to our Father’s plan is risky. Don’t timidly “love them to death” – graciously love them to life. Dream big, love well, aim high, and be willing to take flight on an amazing mission.

**Colossians 3:1-3; 2 Corinthians 3:9-12; Acts 14:2-7**

**Monday, November 22nd:** It's unfortunate that churches sometimes almost seem to be in competition with one another. To break it down ever further, the same can be true of ministries within the same body of believers. Pentecostals think of Baptists as the frozen chosen, the Baptists see Catholics as being in serious error in their belief in ritualistic confession and penance through mumbling a dozen hail Mary's, and the Catholics believe all the rest of us are going to hell. Shouldn't we all be on the same team? Don't we all ultimately answer to the same CEO? Doris Kearns Goodwin's book Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln describes how Lincoln appointed a cabinet of his three biggest rivals (who loathed him) and united them to win the Civil War. If three egotistical, opinionated politicians could come together to support a man they couldn't stand in order to achieve a common cause, then we as Christians should be able to do the same. Lincoln chose to focus on the strengths of his cabinet members. Sounds a little like Philippians 4:8 doesn't it? What often gets in the way of unity is pride. We have to be willing to follow the example of Jesus and lay aside any rights or privilege we may think we have and humble ourselves in obedience to our Father and to His purposes. As Helen Keller once said, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." We all have different strengths to bring to the party because each of us is a part of the body – first the body of our home church, but also a part of the global body of Christ. The only one who should ever receive credit for any achievements we celebrate is the one for whom we are striving. The world, our country, and our community all need to see the love of Jesus through the body of His church. Holy Spirit, we ask that you would unify Your church, opening doors in our city that would lead to a holy revival.

**Mark 3:25; Philippians 2:1-7, 14-16, 4:8; Romans 12:1-5**

**Tuesday, November 23rd:** CREATED FOR GOOD WORKS: It is time for My people to arise and let your light shine that I might be glorified in the earth. Awake! This is a time and an hour when men are desperately seeking answers to all of the confusion swirling around. The enemy is working over-time to create havoc in the spiritual world. This is the time for My church to rise up and be a light to those around you who sit in darkness. I am calling you to blow a trumpet and sound an alarm. You know the one true God. You have been chosen for this Kairos time in history, to proclaim that Jesus is the light of the world. Is your light shining? I have given you the armor of God to stand against the enemy. Come into My presence daily and be strengthened by My love, that I long to lavish on you. You will go out from my presence with joy. I will lead you in the way you should go. It is My goodness that leads men to repentance. You are My ambassador that leads men to see My goodness. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16) You are part of the body of Christ and your life has a purpose only you can fulfill. As you yield to Me and become pliable in my hands, I will mold you and shape you and prepare you for what is ahead. You are... “My handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works (which I, the Lord,) prepared in advance for you to do.”

**Ephesians 2:10; Isaiah 60:1; Joel 2:1; John 8:12; Psalm 16:11; Proverbs 3:6; Romans 2:4; 2 Corinthians 5:20**

**Wednesday, November 24th:** In 1 Kings 3:5-14 Solomon is at the very beginning of his reign as king, and God speaks to him in a dream, “Ask what you wish Me to give you.” Solomon is very aware of what a powerful leader his father David was, and he also acknowledges his own lack of experience. He wisely asks for an understanding heart to judge the people and to discern between good and evil. He uses an interesting phrase leading up to his petition; he says he doesn’t know how to go out or come in. That’s actually a military reference. We know that David was a valiant leader in battle, and the people trusted him to lead them out to the battle arena and back into the safety of their homes. And when God directed Moses to the top of the mountain of Abarim to show him the Promised Land, He also told him that once he had seen it, he would be gathered to his people. Moses then asked the Lord to appoint a man over the congregation of Israel who would go out and come in before them, who would lead them out and bring them in so they wouldn’t be like sheep without a shepherd. So, what was the “going out and coming in” that marked David and Moses? They were both worshipers. They knew the importance of being in the Lord’s presence before they did anything else. Then they would be equipped to “go out” to battle taking the Presence with them. In fact, the Presence of God was so powerful on Moses when he had been with God that the people couldn’t even look at him. We are still in a battle, and we definitely need discernment to distinguish between good and evil because the lines have gotten very blurred. More than ever, we need to be empowered through going into His presence. When the Queen of Sheba came to test Solomon, she was quite impressed with his vast wisdom; but when she saw the house he had built, the food at the table, the orderly seating of the servants, the attendance of those who ministered, and the stairway by which he went up to the house of the Lord, it literally took her breath away. Our “house” has the bread of life to offer, it should reflect order and respectful service, but it should be our going into His presence and the glory, peace and wisdom that this produces that has the greatest impact. We also are His temple, and we want the world to see His presence in our lives. In Ezekiel 46:9 the people were instructed that when they came before the Lord to worship, they would enter by way of one gate and go out by way of the opposite gate. We are never to leave his Presence the same as we entered. There should be a noticeable change. Who knows? Perhaps one day we will be so immersed in our worship that our faces will glow! And in that power, we’re equipped to go out – this is how we fight our battles!

**Numbers 27:15-17; Deuteronomy 31:1-2; John 10:9**

**Thursday, November 25th:** As John Piper stated in his book A Godward Life, "If we do not believe that we are deeply dependent on God for all we have or hope to have, the very spring of gratitude and faith runs dry." Most of us do a pretty good job of expressing our thankfulness at the Thanksgiving table that's laden with sumptuous fare, but what about the other 364 days of the year? Isn't He just as faithful and generous on those days as well? Being thankful is a choice, and honestly, it's one we should be making on a daily, hourly, moment-by-moment basis. By all means, it's good to set apart a time to intentionally reflect on all He has done for us to remind us of His faithfulness. Let it be, however, a catalyst to reminding us that every good and perfect gift is from Him, nothing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly, and He is the source of everything down to the very air we breathe. Now that's something to be thankful for! Pray that we will always remember to give Him the honor, thanks, praise, and adoration He so richly and rightly deserves. Happy Thanksgiving!

**Psalm 73:25-26, 50:23; Revelation 7:12**

**Friday, November 26th:** There's an old hymn that pretty much says it all for us, especially in these times when everything around us seems to be so out of whack and alarming. The opening verse is, "Turn your eyes upon Jesus; look full in His wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace." So simple and yet so profound. We have so many things that can distract us from what is really important, but we know that distractions come from the enemy, and he comes only to steal and kill and destroy. Jesus, on the other hand, comes to give life abundantly. He also gives us peace, purpose, a future and a hope. The author of Hebrews reminds us that we are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses to remind us of His faithfulness in the past and His promises for tomorrow. Revisit your list of the things that you can be thankful for, and remember to include the times He has intervened in the past. Then lay aside the cares and distractions that would take your eyes off Him and rather make Him your central focus – eyes on the prize. I especially like the way the Message puts it – "So, my dear Christian friends, companions in following this call to the heights, take a good hard look at Jesus. He's the centerpiece of everything we believe, faithful in everything God gave Him to do." (Hebrews 3:1) As we turn our eyes upon Him, may we also become as He was, faithful in everything God gives us.

**Hebrews 12:1-2; Philippians 3:12-14; John 10:10**

**Saturday, November 27th:** The Bible is filled with symbols, and living in Arizona, several are very relatable for us – serpents and scorpions. Arizona is home to rattle snakes and bark scorpions. Both pose serious threats, with the rattle snake being responsible for the vast majority of snake bites in the U.S. and the bark scorpion being the most venomous species of scorpion in North America. We know the importance of being able to recognize them, being aware of the places they are likely to be found and avoiding encounters whenever possible. We also know how foolish it would be to try to control bark scorpions by spraying Raid around our baseboards! Neither would we try to ignore the existence of snakes and scorpions because they often hide under rocks where we don't readily see them. They're real, they're a threat, and they must be dealt with. Do you think God knew all this about rattle snakes and scorpions and that may have been one of the reasons He used them as a symbol for demonic beings? We need to recognize they are a spiritual reality, and we are in a spiritual battle. When Jesus had sent out the 70 and they returned with joy, telling Him that even the demons were subject to them, Jesus told them that He had given them authority to tread on scorpions and serpents and over *all* the power of the enemy. He was not speaking of anthropods or reptiles; He was giving a vivid understanding of how vile and cunning our spiritual enemies are. We can't act like they aren't real or that they don't in fact pose a threat. It would also be a mistake to think that we can combat them with anything other than spiritual weapons. Don't take a pea shooter to a gunfight. Use the resources God has placed at our disposal and use them with confidence because He has given us the authority to do so when we are walking in His power. Armor up daily.

**Luke 10:17-19; 2 Corinthians 10:3-4; Ephesians 6:12-18**

**Sunday, November 28th:** SHOUT WITH VICTORY: “Honor the LORD for the glory due His name. Worship the LORD in the splendor of His holiness.” (Psalm 29:2) There is so much joy in the presence of the Lord. You are majestic in all Your ways. It is so amazing that You loved us when we were still sinners. “We love Him because He first loved us.” (1John 4:19) We love You, LORD. Jesus, You are lifted high above and have been given a name that is above every name and it is written: “As surely as I live, says the Lord, every knee will bow before Me; every tongue will acknowledge God.” (Romans 14:11) Therefore, do not be anxious about evil men. The Lord rules all the nations with a sovereign hand. He sees the beginning from the end. As the scripture says: “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” (Galatians 6:9) The LORD will stand against the enemy when he comes in like a flood. Vengeance belongs to the LORD. Just keep trusting, that all things are working for good. Look to Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith. If you have doubt, then it is time to trust. If you have doubt and unbelief, it’s time to pray. If you feel discouraged, it is time to shout with victory. The walls of fear, doubt, unbelief, and discouragement will fall by faith, when you shout with “the voice of victory.” Hallelujah!! By faith, in obedience to God, the Israelites marched around the walls of Jericho every day for seven days and as commanded they all shouted as they finished their seventh time around those walls and supernaturally the walls fell down at the sound of the shout. Release your faith and shout with victory! The walls are coming down.

**Psalm 16:11, 8:9, 47:8; Philippians 2:9; Proverbs 24:19; Isaiah 26:10, 59:19; Romans 12:19, 8:28; Hebrews 12:2**

**Monday, November 29th:** We recently learned more in depth about the fruit of the Spirit, and it's interesting how the evidences are interdependent. For example, think of the correlation of peace often with patience, kindness, self-control, and faithfulness. We desperately need His fruit in our lives. When it's present and evident it makes us healthier looking trees to those around us, but it also makes us stronger for every season, and some of the fruit that will be especially sustaining for us will be joy and love. One of the harder tests of the physical condition of our fruit is how we deal with authority. We all love authority when we're in charge, but what about those inevitable times when we may find ourselves under someone else's authority and they're shall less than, we say, equipped. Or maybe we have a position of authority under someone else, and we've been asked to use it with subordinates who are rebellious and unappreciative. Moses definitely would fit that description, and he is an example of God's chosen to deliver His people. Yet when they continued to grumble and complain he became frustrated, and in an impatient burst of anger we read that he spoke rashly with his lips, and as a result it says it went hard with Moses. In reality, due to his lack of patience with others and subsequent lack of submission to His authority, he lost the privilege of being the one to lead them in the final phase of taking possession of the promise. In fact, only two from the entourage got to experience that victory march because of their stiff-necked attitudes. I believe part of the reason Moses' punishment was so harsh was because of his position of authority in relationship to God's leadership. People are always watching. The takeaway is that the more we seek to be filled daily with His Spirit and develop the fruit that grows from that relationship, the more those character traits will be exhibited in our lives and the greater love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control we will experience personally and model to others. For sure it's a process, but it's one we should all desire to embrace. Thank You, Lord, for the gift of Your Spirit.

**Psalm 106:32-33; Galatians 5:22-25; Hebrews 6:11-12**

**Tuesday, November 30th:** On an out-of-town trip we visited a church that was different from what we are accustomed to. The woman co-pastor delivered a message about wrestling with God, and although I did not agree with all of her theology, I was challenged by what she shared. She talked about how she had grown up in the church and had assimilated the beliefs of her parents, but they were not necessarily her own. She struggled because she didn't fit the cookie cutter image of what she was told she should be. She was large boned, vocal, and had definite leadership tendencies; but she was told that those were not admirable traits. This prompted her to question what she believed and why she believed it. She wrestled with God. Unfortunately, my perspective on her quest is that she allowed culture and her own wants to shape what she felt she was hearing as an answer. She relied more on secular or quasi-theological sources to influence her conclusions. What encouraged me was that she was honest about her questioning, and she still looked to the Bible for answers, albeit her interpretations don't agree with my own. And as the pastor in my hometown church used to say, if you never ask God questions about what He means in some passages, you really aren't taking your faith seriously. We must be humble enough to be open to listening to how others interpret God's word because none of us has a handle on all truth. We know in part, and it's just possible that someone else may know some things better than we do. Iron sharpens iron, and like the Bereans we should listen openly and then go home and weigh what we have heard with the Word. New revelations can't have an impact on closed minds and being challenged by ideas that are counter to what we have always believed will either reveal a new truth to us or will cause us to seek a more informed and grounded assurance in what we do believe. In either case it has directed us to examine intentionally His word revealed to us and it has given value to the other person and possibly opened a door for further conversation that may give them a better understanding of God and what He desires to see developed in their life.

**Psalm 119:18; Proverbs 1:2-5, 32-33; Proverbs 3:5-6, 13-18; Acts 17:11**