**52 Days of Building a Second Wall with the Word and Wisdom**

Day 1 – May 14, 2013

**Studying His Word**

Today, on the first day of our 52 Days of building a second wall, we are celebrating **Pentecost.** This is one of the 3 times of year the Lord asks His people to gather together.

***Deuteronomy 16:16*** *"Three times in a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses, at the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Passover) and at the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) and at the Feast of Booths, and they shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed.*

This feast is an observance of the giving of the Torah by God, and it is also an observance of the giving of the Holy Spirit to all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. (Acts 2:1-4). It is a time to reawaken and strengthen our personal relationship with God by **rededication to the obedience and study of the Word of God.** It is celebrated with a lengthy study session of the Word of God

These next 52 Days we will be sending out daily Bible Studies, and we encourage you use what we send to launch you into a deeper study on your own. In preparation for that, we will start with a study on the tools available to study in this way.

There are **many study tools available** to us today, but the **Bible is our ultimate research tool**. It is best to use NKJV, NASB, or NIV (most Biblical reference books are based on these versions; and these versions are translated more word for word which aids in doing word studies). Paraphrased versions are good to have on hand because they are written as a narrative form that makes it easier to picture what is happening.

The Bible is God’s inerrant truth and there is no reference book that will give you more insight and truth than the Word of God. As you read a passage of Scripture, it is good to look up other verses that are related to it, these are called **Cross-references.** These often times give us more insight on the passage we have just read. God has consistent messages interwoven all throughout His Word, and He delights in showing them to us. There are several ways to look up cross-references:

* Most study Bibles have **cross-references listed in the margin** referencing verses that are related to the one you are reading.
* Most study Bibles also have a **Concordance in the back.** These list several key words of topics and a few verses that have these words.
* **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance** is a book that has **every word from the Bible**, so you can look up all verses that use the word you are studying.

The Bible was written mainly in Hebrew (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament). When the Bible was translated into the language you are reading, sometimes the richness of the meaning of some words or phrases gets diluted; this is because Hebrew and Greek are often more precise languages. I have found that doing **Word Studies** adds great depth to my research and teaching. There are many handy reference materials to help you look up the meanings of the exact Hebrew of Greek word used in the passage of the Bible you are reading, without being a Hebrew or Greek Scholar.

All words (or phrases) used in the Bible have been assigned a number to correspond to the original Hebrew or Greek word. These numbers come from the **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance**. You can use a **Complete Word Study Book of Old or New Testament.**  These books have the entire Bible with the Strong’s numbers written over every word, and then in the back of the book, you can look up that number and get the Hebrew or Greek word and its definition. Often, a related word is given, and it is good to look these up to get more clarification.

It is good to have a **Webster’s dictionary** to get more understanding on the meanings of English words from your Bible or from the definitions you get from the Greek or Hebrew. If you study in a language different than English, it is good to have a dictionary in your language.

**Bible dictionaries** are a good tool to gain more understanding on words, places, people, history, and customs from Biblical times.

I like to see all the facts when I am reading a passage of scripture, so I like to look up **Maps** from Biblical times, and read **books on the history and culture** of the people living in that time. These help me visualize what I am reading, and to get a better understanding of passage.

I have left one study tool to the end, and that is **commentaries**. These are studies that other men have written on various books of the Bible. In my opinion these are used too heavily today. Please use these sparingly, and only after you have researched the topic for yourself. Use them only as confirmation of what you have already studied for yourself. The Holy Spirit wants to impart God’s truth directly into your mind and heart.

There are many good references books available for study, but over the last few years, I have used **Bible software** the most. You can get access to all of these references, often for free. They make the process of study easier and faster, so I can study more. My favorite is **E-Sword**, but there are many out there, like **Blue Letter Bible** and **Logos**.

**How to Study**

**Start with Prayer for the Holy Spirit to guide you.** He will lead you into what you need to study for the season of life that you are in. Don’t look around and see what others are doing, let the Holy Spirit lead your time of study preciously for you. We might all be reading the same scriptures these 52 days, but let Him tailor make your personal study just for you!

This week we will be studying Psalm 19: 7-14, and then we will spend the remaining weeks studying Psalm 119. **Select one or two key scriptures** that grab your attention, or tug at your heart.

Look up the meanings of the Hebrew words, and then look in a dictionary for their **definitions** to truly enhance your understanding. Look up **key words**; do not get bogged down looking up every word, unless the Holy Spirit leads you to.

Look for **lists** or **repeated words or phrases**. These are good indications that this has a lot of weight (importance) to God. When He repeats Himself, He is trying to get our attention. It is good to look for lists, because they all have something in common and we can study all the facets of the items on the list.

**Look up cross references and select the ones that stand out to you.** You will not use every verse you look up. When I teach I have to discipline myself to have the right balance between enough Scriptures so it is obvious I am teaching a Bible study, but not too many that it seems like you are just reading the Bible out loud.

**Think back in your life when you see the truths in what you are studying**. It is good to look at your victories and struggles and relate them to the Word of God.

Think of **other places in the Bible when the men and women had similar struggles** and how they reacted. Don’t just read the passage, but think about what they were going through physically, spiritually, and emotionally.

It is very good to constantly **ask questions** about what you are reading. Sometimes you will answer them with added research, with a word from the Lord, through words of confirmation spoken by others, or through living the passage out, especially through trials and testings.

**Let’s try some of this**

Over the next 8 weeks we will be reading and studying through Psalm 19 and Psalm 119. **Let’s read Psalm 19: 7-14, and Psalm 119:1-8.**

We love verses when we see God wants to bless us. The word ***bless*** used here (*esher*) means to be happy, and we love to be happy. Did you notice that there were conditions to this happiness, things we needed to do? Did you notice the list of things we are to walk in, words used in both passages? ***Law of the Lord, Testimony of the Lord, His way, His precepts, His statutes, His command, and His judgments.*** In my mind, these words seem to have the same meaning. But I had to stop and ask, “Was He trying to get our attention by repeating himself over and over, or are there shades of difference in these words?” Let’s look closer at these verses in Psalm 19:7-14

**Psalm 19:7a The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul;**

Let’s look at the definitions of the key words in this scripture:

**Law:** *torah -* a precept or statue, especially the Pentateuc (the 1st 5 books of Bible) and the Decalogue (the 10 Commandments), comes from the word *yarah* - to flow as water (rain), to shoot an arrow, to teach, to point out.

**perfect:** *tamiym*- entire (all we need), truth

**restoring**: *shub* - to turn back, to return to the starting point (the creation of our soul)

*The truths written in God’s laws point out the way we are to live our lives so we can flow in the river with him, they are the truths to light our way.*

**Joshua 1:8** "This **book of the law** shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

**What does the law of the Lord do for us**? It restores our soul

**Jeremiah 1:5** "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations."

*God knew us when He first created us, before we were formed in our mother’s womb. He had great plans for our lives, but those plans got side-tracked because of our sins. When we repented and gave our lives to Christ, and followed the lead of the Lord, He is now turning us back to His original plans and purposes.*

**Psalm 19:7b The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.**

**testimony**: *eduth -* witness, testimony (a solemn declaration or affirmation made for the purpose of establishing or proving some fact)

**sure**: *aman* - to build up or support, to foster as a parent, faithful, trustworthy

*The promises God has spoken to us are to build us up in Him, and we can have faith that He will do all that He has spoken.*

**Romans 15:4** For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

**What does testimony of the LORD do for us?** It makes wise the simple

**Testimony:** *A few years ago, God told me He wanted to partner with me. I didn’t understand who I was so I rejected His Words to me for a while. It was fine working for Him, but I didn’t consider myself worthy to work that closely with Almighty God. Over the next few months, He led me to many scriptures about partnering with Him and He spent time affirming who I am in Him. Now I have understanding of what partnership with Him means: He has His part and I have mine; He is in charge and I follow His lead. Now we flow great together. I try to do nothing without His lead. That is wisdom!*

**We encourage you to follow this example for Psalm 19:8-10. Look up the words used here and compare and contrast God’s *Law, Testimony, Precepts, Commands, and Judgments***.

God is serious about us walking in all He has commanded. How can we know what He has commanded? **We must be students of His Word.**

**2 Timothy 2:15** Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

**We are assigning a memory verse every week**. This week’s verse is **Psalm 19:7**. Please be diligent to hide God’s Word in your heart!

**Let our prayer during these 52 days be from Psalm 19:14**

*Let the words of my mouth*

*and the meditation of my heart*

*be acceptable in Your sight,*

*O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer.*