

GROW IN GRACE

NEWSLETTER

Volume 39, No.1, January 1, 2013 / Southside Baptist Church & Christian School / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / **"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."** (2 Peter 3:18) (Note: I do not know how or when the 'Volume #' began to be in error. In reality, volume 38 should begin 5/7/13. Be that as it may, we will continue the volume numbering, sequential from last year— thus, **Volume 39, No. 1, January 1, 2013**)

Foundational Strategy for Saints in 2013!

"...Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 15:58)

There are signs and reports of deepening trouble all over the world— and not just the normal troubles that we have always lived within a fallen world. There are social, political, economic and spiritual upheavals taking place in our time that threaten to radically change and/or destroy life as we have known it in our life time. Even on a physical level, more and more Americans are seeking to 'stock up', to be prepared for suspected coming hard times.

Spiritually we are already in a most deadly warzone! Many are falling away into loving this present world. Many are falling away into deepening addictions to gross and enslaving sins. Many are falling away from the true Christian faith which exalts Jesus and His Word.

THUS, in 2013 it is critical that the saints of God in Christ ***"... be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."*** (1 Cor. 15:58)

I. Don't be Caught off Guard, Anxious or Paralyzed by Fear!

Let your heart be settled in and guided by God's Word in Matthew 24-28; Mark 13-16; Luke 21-24; John 17-21; all the New Testament Epistles; and especially the Revelation. Be regularly reading through one of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles! **Obviously, not all at the same time— we are simply encouraging a definite focus on Jesus and His assignment for us.**

The afore mentioned Gospel sections unveil the death, resurrection, ascension and second coming of Jesus Christ; as well as the believer's Great Commission assignment!

Another Suggestion: **Read straight through the FOUR GOSPELS**, (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), where we are privileged by the Holy Spirit to behold the LAMB OF GOD, to sit at His feet, hear His voice, marvel at Him and experience the Holy Spirit calling us to faith/obedience. ***Should we not often read and meditate upon the Gospels?***

2. READ: The ACTS of the Apostles and all the various letters by the Apostles unveil how the Holy Spirit wants us to **'be the church' and 'do church'** before a watching world. ***Should we not often read and meditate upon these God ordained patterns and instructions for Christians?***

3. The EPISTLES reveal glorious revelation as to our **position of being 'in Christ'** and give detailed revelation as to spiritual warfare and abundant revelation as to how to live so as to not bring shame to the name of Jesus and glorious, practical ways to adorn the gospel by Christ-like living and powerful warnings against FALSE PROPHETS and clear calls to gladly suffer for righteousness sake. ***Surely these are abundant reasons to often read and meditate upon the New Testament Epistles!***

4. The REVELATION is the glorious unveiling of Jesus Christ, the Sovereign Lamb of God. The Revelation 'unveils' what Jesus Christ **is doing** at this present time; what He **will be doing** in days ahead and the reality of His ultimate intentions. ***Don't we need to be grounded and settled in the truth of His sufficiency, supremacy and sovereignty?***

READ THE REVELATION BEHOLDING THE SOVEREIGN LAMB OF GOD!

1. REVELATION, chapters 1-3 — The Sovereign Lamb is in Heaven working through His blood bought redeemed saints on earth.

2. REVELATION, chapters 4-19 — The Sovereign Lamb from heaven is ruling and over ruling present and coming events on earth, including Kings and Kingdoms, Presidents, Dictators and secret rulers even of this present hour. ***JESUS is moving them ALL toward that great and glorious day when He, the Lord Jesus Christ, will come back to this earth as King of Kings and Lord of Lords!***

NOTICE that in the midst of all these events those redeemed by the blood of the Lamb often suffer the wrath of men and satan but never the wrath of God!

3. REVELATION, chapters 20-22— The Sovereign Lamb is eternally enthroned and His holy Bride (The Bride will be composed of the redeemed of all ages— Revelation 21:9-27) **will be with Him in the New Earth and the New Heavens.**

4. LET US LIVE THIS DAY FORWARD IN THIS REALITY: The supreme and ultimate goal of all history is a **REDEEMED BRIDE** for Jesus, comprised of all those saved by God's amazing grace during all time periods of history from Genesis through the days of the Revelation. (Rev. 21:9-27 clearly reveals the eternal oneness of ALL the redeemed as being the Bride of the Lamb!) **QUESTION: *Should we not often read and meditate upon the Revelation, THE UNVEILING of Jesus Christ as He is today?***

READ THE REVELATION LOOKING FOR THOSE REDEEMED BY CHRIST!

1. REVELATION, chapters 1-20— ALL through the Revelation, **those redeemed by the blood of the LAMB** [They are called: God's elect, God's called out ones, those who follow the Lamb, those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ] **are seen on earth**, moving through tribulations and martyrdom; **and they are seen IN HEAVEN**. **While on earth**, the redeemed are often the subject of man and satan's HATRED AND WRATH. They are often PRESENT when God pours out some expression of his wrath, even as was Noah during the flood and even as was Israel on the night of Passover.

But although affected, they were never the subjects or objects of the wrath of God — not then, not now, not ever! The Revelation has ESPECIALLY been given to encourage the true SAINTS OF GOD IN CHRIST who have always BEEN and WHO ALWAYS will be persecuted. Jesus said, ***"In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."*** (John 16:33) The Revelation could well be called **Jesus' commentary on John 16:33**.

The Revelation is a GRAND reminder **that joy is not the absence of suffering but the presence of God and confidence in God** in the midst of the most trying of circumstances. **AGAIN**, the Christians who first read the Revelation were in a time of severe persecution with thousands being MARTYRED. And so it has been for 2000+ years of church history!

NOTE: The freedoms and liberties enjoyed by many Christians in the USA and the whole 'western' world are **an exception**. Today and for most Christians over the last 2000 years— suffering, privation and persecution has been their lot. And yet, they were and are loved by Jesus just as much as those who are or have been blessed with freedom, wealth and the gospel! The Revelation SHOUTS, ***"Be thou faithful unto death; and I will give thee the crown of life!"***

2. REVELATION, chapters 21-22— ULTIMATELY, OUR LORD'S REDEEMED ON EARTH become the complete BRIDE of the LAMB triumphant in Heaven, the Bride adorned for Her Heavenly Husband, the Lord Jesus Christ. **The Revelation gives needed re-assurance that Jesus is SUPREME, SOVERIGN AND SUFFICIENT.**

AS 2013 begins, couldn't we use some of that same reassurance?

II. WHAT IS YOUR BIBLE READING/STUDY/MEDITATION PLAN?

If you don't have a Scripture reading/study/meditation plan— GET ONE IMMEDIATELY!

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS: For whatever else one may be reading from God's

Word, I would encourage you to set aside some months and additionally read the following:

Read 5 PSALMS and one Chapter of the PROVERBS each day. Some of you will likely receive this Newsletter on 1/1/13; others on or around 1/2or3/13) Example, if you receive it on 1/1/13:

Example: **On January 1—** read Psalm 1, 31, 61, 91, 121 and read Proverbs, chapter 1. In other words, whatever the day is, start with that Psalm and then add 30 each time... **as on January 3:** Read 3, 33, 63, 93, 123 and Proverbs 3. You can make slight adaptations on months with different amounts of days.

Why this system? The Proverbs are filled with practical wisdom on many of life's daily issues, temptations, etc. **The Psalms** empower prayer and praise to God. **The persecuted New Testament church, as they prayed, set portions of Psalm 2 before the LORD: Acts 4:23-33!**

III. WHY HAVE A BIBLE READING/STUDY/MEDITATION PLAN?

To 'get more out' we have to 'put more in!' It starts with having a vision and hunger for God! Without question, Jesus calls us to Christ-likeness, to discipleship and He calls us to HELP EACH other in that process.

In other words we are all called to be Disciples and Disciple-makers.

Helping each other to GROW as Disciples is a Work Achievable ONLY by the Word of God, quickened to us by the Holy Spirit. Growth in Christ-likeness happens as,

- (1) God's Word more and more saturates the lives of Christians who are;
- (2) Joining themselves together in intercessory prayer for each other and who are;
- (3) Yielding to and encouraging **accountability** so as to help each other to win spiritual battles and grow in the grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.
- 4) **The FRUIT will be that more and more— we, our families and church will ADORN the gospel and not BLASPHEME the gospel before a watching world! Moreover, such growing in grace saints will also boldly proclaim the gospel!**

As you read the following, be asking:

How can I - or How can we - ADAPT this (1) to a Sunday School class; (2) to family and/or personal Bible Study; (3) and/or to a small discipleship group setting? As you will see, having at least one person to be 'accountable with' is helpful... even needful!

1. **PRAYERFULLY** choose a **Book of the Bible**.
2. ***Focus on one chapter each week***— reading, studying, meditating. **Prayerfully read** as many times as possible each week.
3. **COME PREPARED** to the Sunday School Class; **or to** the Family Devotion time; **or to** a small Fellowship Meeting or Discipleship group— **Ready to Answer Five Questions:**

1. **What one thing did I learn/see and/or discover from reading the ONE FOCUS CHAPTER this week that can make a real difference in my life?**
2. **How has my life this week demonstrated that Christ lives in me?**
3. **Is there any temptation or sin I have battled this week about which I would like for us to pray?**
4. **What lost person in my sphere of influence can we pray for this week and how can I be salt and light to them?**
5. **What personal praises/personal prayer needs can we pray for?**

EMBRACE this reality: If you are a Christian, then, you are a BELIVER PRIEST. You have within you the MASTER TEACHER, the Holy Spirit. Therefore, wholly embrace the need and call to be a WORKMAN: *“Study, give diligence, aim at winning God’s approval, a WORKMAN with no reason to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. [Accurate in delivering the Message of the Truth; Correctly analyzing, delivering the Message of the Truth.]”*

MOREOVER, let us EMBRACE SOUND Preparation for good Bible Study!

1. Every time we open our Bibles to study and meditate upon the Word of God — WE MUST COME WITH PROPER HEART ATTITUDES! Let us Pray and proceed with Reverence, Expectancy, Dependency, Alertness and a willingness to OBEY what God reveals!
2. **OBTAIN a notebook, something like a simple spiral notebook... and have it and a pen with you WHEN you are reading a chapter from the Bible and/or WHEN YOU COME to the Sunday School Class, THE MEN’S FELLOWSHIP, the Ladies Bible Study and/or some other discipleship setting.**
3. **Before reading the Bible Chapter of the week—** Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17 over and again. **WHY? So we will be reminded to submit to the very purpose for which God has given us each chapter of the Word of God! The Word of God is for,**
 - a. **DOCTRINE/TEACHING—** teaching us the Faith, teaching us the truth of both doctrines to believe and the true paths on which we are to walk.
 - b. **REPROOF/refuting error—** showing us where we got off the Straight and Narrow Way.

- c. CORRECTION/resetting**— showing us how to get back on the right path.
- d. INSTRUCTION IN RIGHTEOUSNESS**— showing us how to stay on the right path.
- e. ALL FOR THE GOAL that we** be completely prepared and equipped for all good work, to the glory of God! (2 Timothy 3:15-17)
- f. ABOVE ALL: The Word of God has been given to us that we might KNOW and KNOW more intimately the GOD of the WORD! (Luke 24:44-48; Col. 3:16; Luke 16:29-31; John 14:21-25**

BOTTOM LINE: When we open our Bibles to read a chapter from God's Word, the above points reveal, foundationally, what God will be up to in our lives!

Therefore: (1) We must not merely read... (2) We must also prayerfully STUDY and search for accurate UNDERSTANDING of what the Bible is actually saying and/or teaching... (3) We must be LISTENING for the Holy Spirit to QUICKEN personal applications of the Word of God to our lives.

DON'T GET BOGGED DOWN ON WHAT YOU MAY NOT UNDERSTAND! I deeply suspect that **in most EVERY chapter in the Word of God that there will be** at least SOMETHING that each and every one of us will SEE and UNDERSTAND CORRECTLY— **major on and apply those truths. We will understand more later!**

Here are Some Excellent Questions to Keep in Mind as We Read Scripture:

1. Are there SINS I need to confess?
2. Are there PROMISES I need to claim?
3. Are there ATTITUDES I need to change?
4. Are there COMMANDS I need to obey?
5. Are there EXAMPLES I need to follow?
6. Are there PRAYERS I need to pray?
7. Are there ERRORS I need to avoid?
8. Are there TRUTHS I need to believe?
9. Are there PRAISES and THANKS to God I need to give?

The point being that as I read the Word of God— it is very likely that I will find teaching about Godly attitudes or commands or errors, etc. Moreover, as I read a chapter over, day after day— **the Holy Spirit will see to it that the Chapter births PRAYERS of confession, repentance, petitions, praise and worship!**

With this sort of prayerful and careful study of the Word of God— we will be gaining **INSIGHT**, we will be gaining **UNDERSTANDING**, we will be gaining **REVELATION** as to the will of God in various situations. THEREFORE, it is important to have pen and paper... OR pen and notebook to jot down notes, insights, questions, applications and etc! Such will serve as handy reminders as we seek to further apply what God has revealed!

REMEMBER:

1. **Our goal is not only right interpretation.**

2. Our goal is also application and
3. Life transformation **MORE** and more into Christ-likeness!
4. So, jot down things you discover, etc.

**OBJECTION: This is all too involved, too serious.
This will require too much time!**

THE DEEPER REALITY:

1. The hour in which we are living is so late!
2. The spiritual warzone is so deadly!
3. **MANY MEN, WOMEN and YOUTH** are already **FALLING** by the **WAYSIDE** throughout the land!
4. The stakes are so high— that only a great fool would
NOT approach personal Bible Study;
and Bible Study with fellow saints
in the coming year
in a much more serious way than has
EVER been our custom!

Grace to one and all! James Bell
SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES!

1. Ladies Bible Study— **'LORD, HEAL MY HURTS!'**— Starting January 8 on Tuesdays @ 10:30AM! Call the church to reserve your book—615-452-5951
2. **WEDNESDAYS: PRAYER SERVICE** at 7:00PM! **YOUTH:** Wednesdays, 6-8pm @ Adam and Bethany's home.
3. **Thursdays @ 6:30pm:** OUTREACH VISITATION
4. **EVERY SATURDAY @ 8:00am:** Men's Fellowship and Bible Study

Sunday Schedule for December 30, 2012

1. **9:30am-** Sunday School
2. **10:45am-** Morning Worship / Children's Church
3. **Noon Fellowship 'Covered Dish' Meal**

4. 1:00pm- Early Afternoon Service**Sunday Schedule for January 6, 2013**

1. **9:30am-** Sunday School
2. **10:45am-** Morning Worship / Children's Church
3. **Noon Fellowship 'Covered Dish' Meal**
4. **1:00pm- Early Afternoon Service**

Sunday Schedule for January 13, 2013

1. **9:30am-** Sunday School
2. **10:45am-** Morning Worship / Children's Church
3. **Noon Fellowship 'Covered Dish' Meal**
4. **1:00pm- Early Afternoon Service**

Sunday Schedule for January 20, 2013

1. **9:30am-** Sunday School
2. **10:45am-** Morning Worship / Children's Church
3. **Noon Fellowship 'Covered Dish' Meal**
4. **1:00pm- Early Afternoon Service {LORD'S SUPPER SERVICE, 1:00PM}**

Sunday Schedule for January 27, 2013

1. **9:30am-** Sunday School
2. **10:45am-** Morning Worship / Children's Church
3. **Noon Fellowship 'Covered Dish' Meal**
4. **1:00pm- Early Afternoon Service**