

## A Bad Gift

Several years ago a couple who lived in New York City received through the mail two tickets to a smash Broadway hit. Oddly, the gift arrived without a note. Obviously the couple wanted to attend the play, but they also wanted to thank the anonymous donor. They went to the play hoping some one would reveal themselves as the giver of the special gift. They enjoyed themselves immensely, but still had no idea who gave them the gift. Returning to their apartment, they discovered that their home had been ransacked. Valuable furs and jewelry were missing. As they went into their bedroom to see the damage done there, they noticed a simple note on the pillow that read; "Now you know."

In a very similar fashion, we are plagued in our world today with "nameless thieves." The difference however is very dramatic, because these thieves are wanting to rob us of our souls. They are the false teachers who know what people want and appeal to their desires (II Peter 2:2). They do not wear a lapel pin to warn of their lies, but they come disguised as a representative of the truth. Their claim is very appealing, for they claim to be able to enrich lives. Unfortunately, those who follow them often learn at a high cost that they have been deceived.

Who can you trust to teach the right paths, the way we should journey through this life? There is only one way and that way is Jesus. He and He alone is the one we can trust completely. He offers us the gift of eternal life because He truly loves us. Accepting His gift of salvation is the first step in protecting ourselves from the deceptive gifts that false teachers offer.

Even believers can be deceived by false teaching. That's why God's Word becomes increasingly important to us. His word exhorts us to study the Scriptures, to test what we hear and the need to grow in the faith. By doing these things we want suddenly discover that our spiritual life is in total disarray.

Since savage wolves, consumed with greed,  
Seek simple sheep on which to feed,  
Wise are those wary lambs who graze  
Close by their Shepherd's watchful gaze.

Peter said "There will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord." Let each of us resolve to follow the scriptures ever more closely.



*Bible Reading for May and June*

*Enjoy the climb in 2009*

*Onward and Upward*

*"From the ends of the earth I call to you, I  
call as my heart grows faint; lead me to  
the rock that is higher than I."*

*Psalm 61:2*

## A Change of Heart

One day an older gentleman walked into a car dealership wanting the dealer to sell his old run down car for him. The dealer looked at the car frowned and asked the older man how many miles are on the car. "It has 230,000 miles on it." The salesman smiled and said "It'll never sell unless you turn back the mileage." The old man shrugged his shoulders and left. A couple of weeks pass and out of curiosity the salesman calls the old man and ask about the car. "I thought you were going to sell that old car." The older man replied, "I don't have to any-more. It only has 77,000 miles on it now. Why would I want to sell it?"

If the truth be known, that may describe too many people today. We go around only fooling ourselves. We do this by thinking that we are pleasing God by just changing our external behavior. Maybe someone hasn't been attending worship for some time. The elders might call, Wayne may pay a visit, someone might send a card, and all of a sudden one might feel the need to be "seen at worship." Is that really the answer? Worship is essential to please God, but if one only comes to be "seen" or to fulfill an "obligation" has there been any real change. In reality what is needed is a new heart. A heart that says I trust in the Lord, I believe the words of the Bible and I will have a true change of heart.

The old car still had a sick engine, bad rings and a transmission that slipped. Turning back its odometer had not changed that! In the same way, people who try to please God by living a good life, who worship only out of a sense of "obligation" have made no real change. They may be like the Pharisees that Jesus would often talk about. "*Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisees! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.*" (Matthew 23:25-26) Good works done simple to fulfill an obligation or to be seen can't change your heart. Only a deep abiding personal faith in Christ brings cleansing inside and out. It is then and only then that our good works and righteous life will be a pleasing to God. It is important for us to remember that in the end we are going to be saved by God's good work, not by our good works.

Friday May 1, 2009

**Bible Reading:** II Samuel 5-9

**Thought for the Day:** There is no security on this earth; there is only opportunity.

Saturday May 2, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Psalm 51-53

**Thought for the Day:** Of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these: "It might have been!"

Sunday May 3, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Job 35-36

**Thought for the Day:** Those who keep speaking about the sun while walking under a cloudy sky are messengers of hope, the true saints of our day.

### Questions

1. What was significant about the lesson taught yesterday?  
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2. Did I attend worship last night? If no why?  
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3. Who will I be praying for during the coming week and why?  
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Monday May 4, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Jeremiah 27-31

**Thought for the day:** No Christian can be a pessimist, for Christianity is a system of radical optimism.

Tuesday May 5, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Mark 15-16

**Thought for the Day:** The modern church rejects the outcasts of society where as these very outcasts were the very ones who were drawn to Jesus.

Thoughts

- 1. In my own words the months of May and June of 2009 were:

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- 2. What am I looking forward to accomplishing in the next two months of 2009:

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- 3. What am I going to be able to do to help grow the kingdom here at Maple Hill in the next two months?

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- 4. Am I pleased with my relationship with the Lord in 2009? Explain

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Wednesday May 6, 2009

**Bible Reading:** II Corinthians 6

Thought for the Day: Christianity is not a theory or speculation, but a life; not a philosophy of life, but a living presence.

Thursday May 7, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Exodus 21-24

Thought for the Day: Christian spirituality does not begin with us talking about our experience; it begins with listening to God call us, heal us, forgive us.

Friday May 8, 2009

**Bible Reading:** II Samuel 10-14

Thought for the Day: What is more pleasing than a psalm? A psalm is a blessing on the lips of the people, praise of God, the assembly's homage, a general acclamation, a word that speaks for all, the voice of the Church, a confession of faith in song."

Saturday May 9, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Psalm 54-56

Thought for the Day: Fall seven times, stand up eight.

Sunday May 10, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Job 37-38

Thought for the Day: Wherever riches have increased, the essence of religion has decreased in the same proportion.

Questions

- 1. What goal can I set for the month of May that will help me in my climb of 2009?

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- 2. Who am I going to pray for this week? Be specific!

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- 3. Name one blessing of the past week.

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## Questions

1. Name one way you were blessed by being at worship on the Lord's Day. Be Specific

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2. What will I change about my week because of my worship to the Lord Sunday?

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3. What one work at Maple Hill will I pray for this week?

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Monday June 29, 2009

Bible Reading: Ezekiel 13-18

Thought for the Day: If you doubt you can accomplish something, then you can't accomplish it. You have to have confidence in your ability and then be tough enough to follow through.

Tuesday June 30, 2009

Bible Reading: Luke 15-16

Thought for the Day: There is no chance, no destiny, no fate, that can hinder or control the firm resolve of a determined soul.

Monday May 11, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Jeremiah 32-36

**Thought for the Day:** Few rich men own their own property. The property owns them.

Tuesday May 12, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Luke 1-2

**Thought for the Day:** Perhaps the transformation of the disciples of Jesus is the greatest evidence of all for the resurrection.

Wednesday May 13, 2009

**Bible Reading:** II Corinthians 6-8

**Thought for the Day:** There are two essential requirements: first: Has any one cheated death and proved it? Second: Is it available to me? Here is the complete record: Confucius' tomb-occupied; Buddha's tomb occupied; Mohammed's tomb-occupied; Jesus' tomb EMPTY!

Thursday May 14, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Exodus 25-28

**Thought for the Day:** The cross symbolizes a cosmic as well as historic truth. Love conquers the world, but its victory is not an easy one.

Friday May 15, 2009

**Bible Reading:** II Samuel 15-19

**Thought for the Day:** Christ, having sacrificed himself once, is to eternity a certain and valid sacrifice for the sins of all faithful.

Saturday May 16, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Psalm 57-59

**Thought for the Day:** When I survey the wondrous cross,  
On which the Prince of Glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss,  
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Monday June 22, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Ezekiel 13-18

**Thought for the Day:** In order to discover new lands; one must be willing to lose sight of the shore for a very long time.

Tuesday June 23, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Luke 13-14

**Thought for the Day:** He who is not courageous enough to take risks will accomplish nothing in life.

Wednesday June 24, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Ephesians 4-6

**Thought for the Day:** You can't take courage cautiously

Thursday June 25, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Leviticus 7-9

**Thought for the Day:** I'd rather give my life than be afraid to give it.

Friday June 26, 2009

**Bible Reading:** I Kings 19-22

**Thought for the Day:** I learned that if you want to make it bad enough, no matter how bad it is, you can make it.

Saturday June 27, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Psalm 75-77

**Thought for the Day:** Determination gives you the resolve to keep going in spite of the roadblocks that lay before you.

Sunday June 28, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Proverbs 7

**Thought for the Day:** The surest way not to fail is to determine to succeed.

Sunday May 17, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Job 39-40

**Thought for the Day:** We never move on from the cross of Christ, only into a more profound understanding of the cross.

Questions:

1. How was I blessed this week? Be specific!

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2. Did I help anyone this past week? Be specific!

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3. What one thing really stands out in my mind about what I read the past week.

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Monday May 18, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Jeremiah 37-41

**Thought for the Day:** The more we meditate on the cross, the deeper our companionship and knowledge gets of Christ the Lord.

Tuesday May 19, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Luke 3-4

**Thought for the Day:** Through a tree we were made debtors to God; so through a tree we have our debt canceled.

Wednesday May 20, 2009

**Bible Reading:** II Corinthians 9-10

**Thought for the Day:** Faith makes it possible, not easy

Thursday May 21, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Exodus 29-32

**Thought for the Day:** To love another person is to help them love God.

Wednesday June 17, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Ephesians 1-3

**Thought for the Day:** Courage is grace under pressure

Thursday June 18, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Leviticus 4-6

**Thought for the Day;** Courage is the first of human qualities, because it is the quality which guarantees all others.

Friday June 19, 2009

**Bible Reading:** I Kings 14-18

**Thought for the Day:** Courage is resistance to fear; mastery of fear-not absence of fear

Saturday June 20, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Psalm 72-74

**Thought for the Day:** Courage is almost a contradiction in terms. It means a strong desire to live taking the form of a readiness to die.

Sunday June 21, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Proverbs 5-6

**Thought for the Day:** We gain strength and courage, and confidence by each experience in which we really stop to look fear in the face...we must do that which we think we cannot.

Questions

1. Look at the thought for the day on June 21. What will I do that shows courage and faith?

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2. How was I helped to be a better person by coming and worshipping yesterday?

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3. What can I do that shows the Lord I truly Love him?

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Friday May 22, 2009

**Bible Reading:** II Samuel 20-24

**Thought for the Day:** We are all healers who can reach out and offer health, and we are all patients in constant need of help.

Saturday May 23, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Psalm 60-62

**Thought for the Day:** Sincerity carries the soul in all simplicity to open its heart to God.

Sunday May 24, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Job 41-42

**Thought for the Day:** God's gifts put man's best dreams to shame.

Questions

1. Who will I pray for in a very specific way this week?

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2. Did I turn down any opportunities to serve this past week?

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3. Do I have the heart of a servant? If yes, how will I serve?

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Monday May 25, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Jeremiah 42-46

**Thought for the Day:** Jesus is the yes to every promise of God

Tuesday May 26, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Luke 5-6

**Thought for the day:** Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power

Saturday June 13, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Psalm 69-71

**Thought for the Day:** I think there is something more important than believing: Action! The world is full of dreamers, there aren't enough who will move ahead and begin to take concrete steps to actualize their vision.

Sunday June 14, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Proverbs 4

**Thought for the Day:** The stories of past courage...can offer hope, they can provide inspiration. But they cannot supply courage itself. For this each man must look into his own soul.

Questions:

1. What can I do to make my community a better community to live in? Be specific—put it into action

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2. Take one of the verses from Proverbs 4 and ask what is that saying to me personally.

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3. What would I do if blessed with the wisdom of Solomon?

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Monday June 15, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Ezekiel 1-6

**Thought for the Day:** All of our dreams can come true-if we have the courage to pursue them.

Tuesday June 16, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Luke 11-12

**Thought for the Day:** A man full of courage is also full of faith.

Wednesday May 27, 2009

**Bible Reading:** II Corinthians 11-13

**Thought for the Day:** Wherever there is a human being, there is an opportunity for kindness.

Thursday May 28, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Exodus 33-36

**Thought for the Day:** This is all the inheritance I can give to my dear family. The religion of Christ can give them one which will make them rich indeed."

Friday May 29, 2009

**Bible Reading:** I Kings 1-4

**Thought for the Day:** The national anthem of hell is, "I did it my Way"

Saturday May 30, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Psalm 63-65

**Thought for the Day:** God examines both rich and poor, not according to their lands and houses, but according to the riches of their hearts.

Sunday May 31, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Proverbs 1

**Thought for the Day:** Talk happiness. The world is sad enough without your woe. No path is wholly rough.

Questions:

1. As the month of May comes to an end, what can I look back on and say, "well done."

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2. What would I want people to pray for if they prayed for me?

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3. Did I do anything to make Maple Hill a better place this week? Be specific!

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## Questions

1. Name one person who has lost a job and ask how can I be of help.

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2. Name one person who is sick and ask how can I help?

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3. What will I do about questions one and two?

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## Monday June 8, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Lamentations

**Thought for the Day:** Fate knows where you are going, but it is up to you to drive there.

## Tuesday June 9, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Luke 9-10

**Thought for the Day:** Nothing happens until I make it happen

## Wednesday June 10, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Galatians 4-6

**Thought for the Day:** You can't build your reputation on what you are going to do.

## Thursday June 11, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Leviticus 1-3

**Thought for the Day:** I think one's feelings waste themselves in words; they ought all to be distilled into actions which bring results.

## Friday June 12, 2009

**Bible Reading** I Kings 10-13

**Thought for the day:** Ideas without action are worthless

## Monday June 1, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Jeremiah 47-52

**Thought for the Day:** Have thy tools ready, God will provide thee work.

## Tuesday June 2, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Luke 7-8

**Thought for the day:** What fools are they who, for a drop of pleasure, drink a sea of wrath.

## Wednesday June 3, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Galatians 1-3

**Thought for the Day:** The difference between perseverance and obstinacy is that one often comes from a strong will, and the other from a strong won't.

## Thursday June 4, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Exodus 37-40

**Thought for the Day:** If a man is not made for God, why is he happy only in God

## Friday June 5, 2009

**Bible Reading:** I Kings 5-9

**Thought for the Day:** All human sin seems so much worse in its consequences than in its intentions.

## Saturday June 6, 2009

**Bible Reading** Psalm 66-68

**Thought for the Day:** When you attack the roots of sin, fix your thought more on the God you desire than on the sin you abhor.

## Sunday June 7, 2009

**Bible Reading:** Proverbs 2-3

**Thought for the Day;** We cannot bear sin-when it is near us, we feel like a wretch chained to a rotting carcass; we groan to be free of the hateful thing.