

*Jesus transforms us so that we can  
help change the world!*



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# *Stewardship for Life*

*A Devotional for  
This Season of Giving*

## *A Season of Giving*

We don't pay much attention to the changing seasons here in Southern California. Autumn leaves are not a big part of our lives in October. If we lived in New England or the Midwest we would be more aware of the autumn leaves at this time of year. By Thanksgiving Day we would be seeing bare trees that have given their fruit and sacrificed their leaves for another year. Thanksgiving in such areas is more than merely a holiday in November. It is an entire season of thankfulness for the harvest. No wonder churches tend to emphasize thankfulness and generosity each Fall.

Let me use the annual life cycle of a fruit tree to remind us of God's invitation to grow in generosity. The spring each year is the season when trees are absorbing resources and growing new leaves in preparation for summer fruitfulness. Like growing trees in the springtime, as children and adolescents we need lots of resources so we can grow. The parents watch their teenaged son absorb amazing quantities of calories and reflect, "He is a growing boy!" This is normal for this stage of growth. We need the resources that someone else gives. Early in life we are all takers and receivers, more than givers.

By late spring, however, we emerge into maturity in order to become fruitful. Just as a tree grows fruit and gives it away as a blessing, so we learn to become givers. As students, we participate in mission trips and service projects that help others. We begin to appreciate the blessings we've received in contrast to those less fortunate. We discover that we can invest our lives to help change the world.

Summer is when we, like trees, are at full potential for giving and fruitfulness. God grants us 30 to 40 years in the working world so that we can discover what it means to give not only our time and talents, but significant financial resources to help others. We learn to join our financial resources with fellow church members in order to accomplish things we could not do by ourselves. We enjoy seeing the benefits people get from our church since we realize we are more than a lone tree, we are part of an orchard.

Finally, as we begin to give up the last of our fruit and lose our leaves, we join the celebration of knowing that even our winter leaves provide fresh nutrients for the next generation. We begin thinking about how to leave some of our financial resources to the church at our death. We want the gospel of God's love to keep reaching future generations. We see our entire lives as opportunities to sacrifice ourselves in order to bless others.

Where are you this Autumn in your own life cycle of giving? May these devotional thoughts grow your generosity.

***Bruce Humphrey***

## *Prayer*

"Prayer does not fit us for a greater work; prayer is the greater work."  
– ***Oswald Chambers***

"There is no way that Christians in a private capacity can do so much to promote the kingdom of Christ as by prayer."  
– ***Jonathan Edwards***

"Do not pray for easy lives. Pray to be stronger men. Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers, pray for powers equal to your task."  
– ***Phillip Brooks***

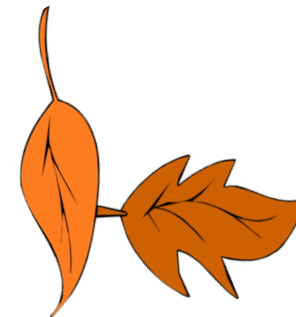
"The greatest gift we can give to others is our prayers."  
– ***unknown***

"Every great movement of God can be traced to a kneeling figure."  
– ***D.L. Moody***

"A day without prayer is a day without blessing, a life without prayer is a life without power."  
– ***Edwin Harvey***

"I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had absolutely no other place to go."  
– ***Abraham Lincoln***

"Work as if you were to live a hundred years, pray as if you were to die tomorrow."  
– ***Benjamin Franklin***



## *29 Days of Prayer*

### *A Preparation for a Season of Giving*

The purpose of this devotional guide is to help you grow into a relationship with God, whereby you realize all things belong to Him and your entire life is about being a good steward of the blessings He has provide you and your family.

#### *Suggestions on how to use this devotional:*

- Make this Prayer Devotional a part of your daily routine
- Choose a place away from distractions
- Select a specific time of day that fits your schedule
- Use your Bible to help illuminate your readings
- Consider using this as a family devotional
- Pray together

*Your commitment will make it possible for many to come to Christ!*

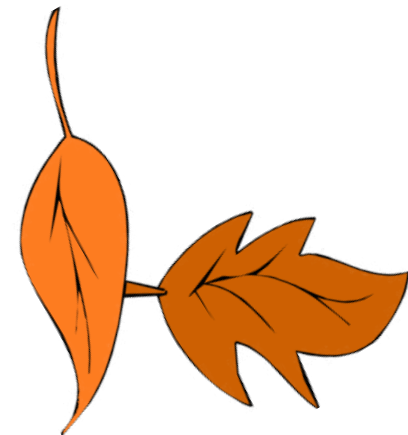


## *The First Days*

*Day 1 – October 24*

**Read: James 1:17** - *“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of heavenly lights.”*

- **Reflection:** Do you realize everything you have comes from God? Share and give generously to others. Spread His joy and love.
- **Pray:** Thank you God for all the many blessings that you have bestowed upon me and my family. Make me more sensitive to Your miraculous presence in our lives so we maybe more generous with all you have provided us. Amen.
- **Application in my life:** Guide me, Lord, to be more giving and aware of the needs of others.

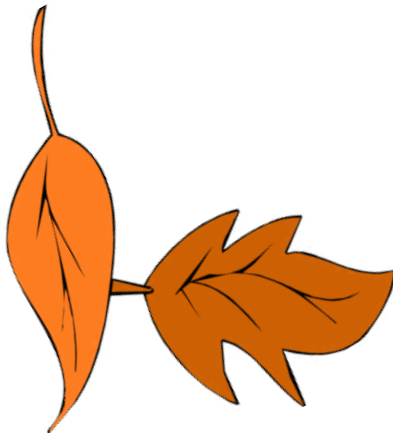


## *The First Days*

*Day 2 – October 25*

**Read: Matthew 6: 19-2** - *“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for your selves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

- Reflection:** Look at your bank statement. You will see where your heart is. We each stand convicted of spending more on ourselves than others. Why is it so hard to give and be generous? Is it our trust in God that is lacking, or are we not obedient? Maybe we are human and flawed just as the Bible teaches us.
- Pray:** Thank you God for all the many blessings that You have bestowed upon me and my family. Make me more sensitive to Your miraculous presence in our lives so we maybe more generous with all You have provided us. Amen.
- Application in my life:** Lord forgive me for looking to satisfy my wants and desires before I think of others. Help me Lord to look outward before I look inward.



## *The First Days*

*Day 3 – October 26*

**Read: Romans 12: 3-8** - *“We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.”*

- Reflection:** God has blessed us with so many different abilities. Each one of us has different blessings. No matter how God has gifted us, let us do the very best with our gifts.
- Pray:** Lord, I pray that You will help me realize how You have gifted me and show me ways that I may use Your gifts to bless others as You have blessed me. Let me reflect Your character in all that I do so the world sees You and not me. Amen.
- Application in my Life:** God let me be more generous, and giving, knowing You have taught me that I cannot “out-give” You. Teach me that You will pour out so much blessing that I will not have room enough for it.



## *The First Days*

*Day 4 – October 27*

**Read Malachi 3:10** - “*Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house. Test me in this’, says the LORD Almighty, ‘and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it’.*”

- **Reflection:** Tithing seems like such a difficult task, we are burdened with so many bills, but we should cast our burdens upon the Lord and be obedient. If we are faithful God will keep his promise to us.
- **Pray:** God you have blessed me greatly, take away this unreasonable fear that I hold onto, loosen my grip on my finances and possessions, open my eyes to ways to free up my time and treasure to return it to You. Amen.
- **Application in my life:** Lord forgive me for my lack of obedience; lead me to new ways to trust You. Help me to set Your gifts aside first and teach me to live more graciously in regards to others. Show me a path of faithful living putting You first.



## *My “Sleepless San Diego” Sleep Out Experience*

*by Robin Colberg*

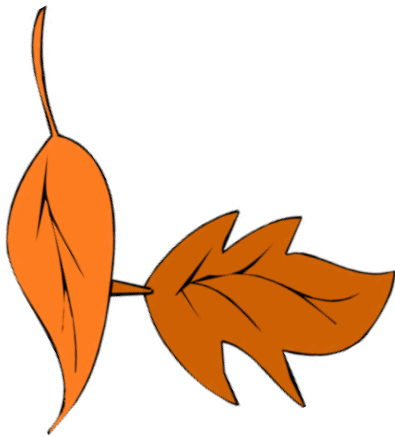
Sleepless San Diego! What a great idea, help the homeless, super... For three years now I've been able to avoid participating in the event by using the typical excuses: My husband has a bad back so we couldn't sleep out; I'll support you financially; and, we already have other plans for that evening. This year was different: I now work with The San Diego Rescue Mission, the founder of the Sleepless San Diego sleep out experience to benefit the homeless. Then I started to plan. What shall I wear? One of the first thoughts most of us have when attending a function, but this outfit was different. This outfit had to be versatile. This outfit required layering and comfort. After all, this one outfit had to get me through 24 hours of my weekend. It may sound vain, but deciding what to do about my contacts was the most difficult decision. Perhaps because, that one decision got me thinking about other people and about what they face long term. This simple thought caused me to do what I truly needed to do, look at this through someone else's eyes. I needed to look at this differently, really differently. I can't see well enough to go without my contacts and my glasses give me a headache if I have to wear them for long periods. If I sleep in my contacts I won't be able to see in the morning, but at least I'll be able to see if I have to get up in the middle of the night. Then it hit me, what if this was the status quo? Like most that sleep outdoors, we awoke before dawn, quietly collected our things and stumbled off to face a new day. We counted the hours. We had slept fairly well for all of about four hours. We were exhausted. Yes, this really opened my eyes to the real plight of the homeless, the invisible who we look past. It helped me to think about others first, and to actually do something more, care about others and ask “What can I do to make a difference?”

## *As We Grow*

*Day 5 – October 28*

**Read: Proverbs 22:9** - *“A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor.”*

- **Reflection:** He who shares his blessings will be truly blessed.
- **Pray:** Lord help me to develop a generous heart so that I might share the many blessings given to me. Amen.
- **Application in my life:** My good fortune is to be shared, not hoarded. Much good can come from generosity and sharing.



## *As We Grow*

*Day 6 – October 29*

**Read: 2 Corinthians 9:11** - *“You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.”*

- **Reflection:** With riches, be they monetary or spiritual, comes a call to share and be generous.
- **Pray:** Lord let me always be reminded that all riches come from You and that I am called to share the gifts I have been given through Your grace. Amen.
- **Application in my life:** Let me see where my riches (gifts) can be used for the greatest good and for the glory of God.



## *As We Grow*

*Day 7 – October 30*

**Read: 1 Timothy 6:18** - *“Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.”*

- **Reflection:** A unifying and consistent biblical theme is that our gifts are to be shared and that we are enriched by doing good for others.
- **Pray:** Lord Your word is a constant reminder that I have been richly blessed and am to share those blessings. Help me to heed and focus on that reminder. Amen.
- **Application in my life:** Help me to heed the command and be generous in word and deed.



## *As We Grow*

*Day 8 – October 31*

**Read: 1 John 3:16-18** - *“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.”*

- **Reflection:** Jesus went to the Cross for us. God asks that we show our love for others through action. That’s not a lot to ask.
- **Pray:** Lord let me look to the sacrifice of Jesus and to these words from 1 John and remember how much I have been given and how little You have asked for in return. Help me to show my love for others through action in Your name. Amen.
- **Application in my life:** The words of 1 John 3:16-18 clearly show both the actions I am asked to take and how insignificant they are in comparison to what Jesus did for me. I pray to catch myself before feeling that too much is being asked of me.

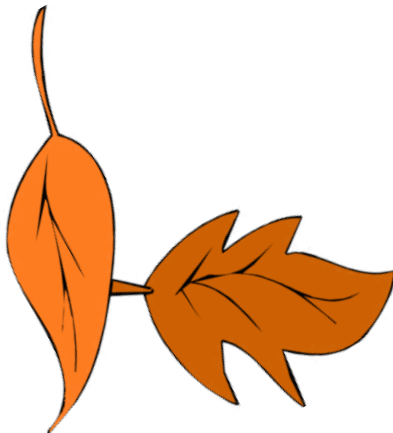


## *As We Grow*

*Day 9 – November 1*

**Read Luke 3: 10-11** - *“‘What should we do then?’ the crowd asked. John answered. ‘The man with two tunics should share with him who has none, and the one who has food should do the same’.”*

- **Reflection:** A simple statement from John to the assembled crowd telling them what they should do. God’s blessings are not to be kept to oneself.
- **Pray:** Lord keep me mindful that Your words are often simple and that You are at my side as I strive to put them into practice. Amen.
- **Application in my life:** Simple words can present difficult challenges in my faith walk. But I must remember that I am not walking alone.



## *As We Grow*

*Day 10 – November 2*

**Read James 1:27** - *“Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.”*

- **Reflection:** Once again a simple verse that is sometimes difficult for me to put into practice in my life.
- **Pray:** Lord I come to You again asking for strength to turn Your words into practice. Let me be a blessing to those less fortunate. Amen.
- **Application in my life:** At times I may make the journey difficult by pausing at the words rather than moving on to the deeds. There’s a time for study and a time for action.



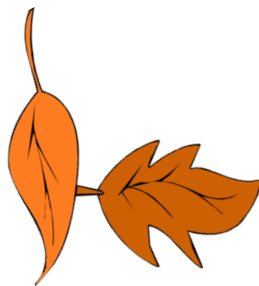
## *Procrastination*

*by Bob Hill*

I find myself writing this as the deadline approaches and wondering why I waited so long to start. There was no need or reason to wait so long. My procrastination brought me back to reflecting on my faith journey. As a child and on through my high school years I attended church with my parents and was an active participant in the youth group. Then came college and a drifting away from the church. It was a time for questioning beliefs but not one for truly examining them, a time to drift.

The drifting regarding matters of God and faith continued for almost 10 years after college, into my early 30's. Looking back, the spark that stopped the drifting and turned me back toward faith was my wedding day, a simple service in an Episcopal Church in the heart of Tokyo, thousands of miles from the Methodist Church of my youth. I can't point to any words from the priest as a spark (I don't really remember them) but I do remember looking at my wife after the ceremony and thinking how beautiful she was and that she had pushed for the "church wedding" when I was content with the civil ceremony we'd already had. It was important to her to be married in the church because there was something empty about a ceremony of signatures on documents without mention of God or faith. I realized that it had been important to me too and that it was time to head back toward the path I had almost abandoned.

As we read in Matthew 7:7 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you." The journey to asking and seeking was delayed for me. How fortunate it is that God welcomes "drifters" back.



## *As We Learn*

*Day 11 – November 3*

**Read: 1 Corinthians 12:4-7** - *"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."*

- **Reflection:** God didn't design the Christian life with the idea of us living like the Lone Ranger. Rather, we are to be more like a baseball team. Even the most skillful pitcher can't carry a game alone; someone needs to be behind the plate and behind the pitcher, to field the balls. Everyone plays his/her part, each one of us in the Christian body is necessary, and we each need to do our part.
- **Pray:** I give thanks to You for the gifts and relationships You have given me - my life, my family, my friends - time, talents, and material possessions. All that I have comes from You. Help me to remember this and rejoice in Your goodness. Amen.
- **Application to my life:** I have varieties of choices that I make everyday...sometimes I am stumped with ambiguity. Then I pray. When I pray the Spirit helps me understand the choices leading to the simple answer that is God's choice for me. He has given freely, so I must give freely to be one with the Spirit.



## As We Learn

Day 12 – November 4

**Read: Matthew 22:19** - “Show me the money.” The text really says in the NKJV, “Show me the tax money”, or in the NASB, “Show me the coin.”

- **Reflection:** On my way to church on Sunday I was struck by one woman’s choice of bumper stickers. Driving a 20 year old Thunderbird, two of her four stickers said, “God is my co-pilot,” and “My Mercedes is in the shop today.” I found the combination of the two confusing. One has a spiritual connotation and the other has a worldly connotation. It was sort of like a yin/yang approach to life. Christians and money are an interesting combination. One Christian speaker who is popular said, “It is not possible for a Christian to drive a BMW.” His point being that Christians should wait for our reward in heaven, but his manner of making the point is senseless as I am sure I could drive a BMW or any other car.
- **Pray:** Lord, as we are able, allow us to enjoy those gifts You have graced us with; and, in kind, give to the poor and help our church reach those in need. Amen.
- **Application to my life:** I know there are Biblical principles that are very helpful, like giving 10%, but they are not commands. Some are fortunate enough to make lots of money, 10% might not be enough for us to give. Others struggle to put food on the table, 10% might be too much. In giving to the work of the Lord we should be as generous as we are able.

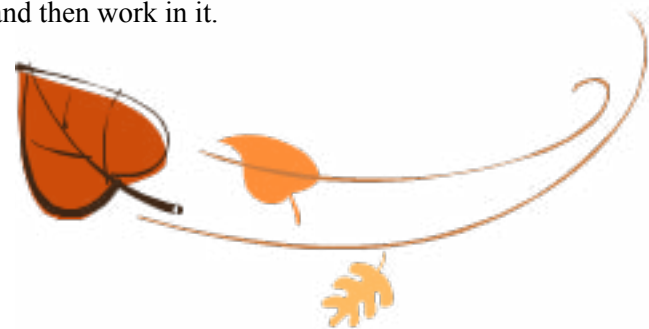


## As We Learn

Day 13 – November 5

**Read: Proverbs 31:16** - “She considereth a field and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planted a vineyard.”

- **Reflection:** When I read this, a number of thoughts go through my head, and those thoughts have changed over the years as I read more and more. My first argument used to be for the working woman. It is obvious that this woman has some money. She buys a field! However, in looking at everything up to this point, it’s clear why she has the wherewithal to be able to purchase this field. She trusts God. She has her priorities straight. She takes care of her family. She finds the best quality for the best price. When all of these are added up, she has some money to invest for the future. “She considereth a field and buyeth it...” I looked up the word “consider”...think, ponder, heed, regard, judge, believe.
- **Pray:** Our Heavenly Father, guide me to consider all things that I may do in good works for You. Amen.
- **Application to my life:** Considering before buying isn’t a rash decision. The woman thinks about it, she looks at all of the angles of why this is a good field. She questions whether it would be a good investment. She spends time praying to the Lord. After careful study, she knows in her heart that this is a good field to plant the fruit of her hands; a good field to invest time in. The harvest will be great. Maybe the field that God has in store for me isn’t acreage. It could be that He is asking me to plant seeds in the mission field. It could be in Helping Hands. Maybe my field is giving more time to discipleship. I will consider my field, purchase it and then work in it.



## As We Learn

Day 14 – November 6

**Read: Leviticus 27:30** - *“A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord.”*

•**Reflection:** “Holy to the Lord” means something belongs to God, not to us. Though all things belong to the Lord, the tithe belongs to him especially. What happens if we as God’s people refuse to give God what belongs to him? Does he have a collection agency? In fact, he does. God deals with his people based on covenant. When we keep his covenant, we are blessed; but when we refuse to obey, we are cursed. If we obey the Lord’s command to tithe, he will bless us. In Malachi 3:10 God promises he will “pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.” We find the same idea in Luke 6:38: “Give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap.”

•**Pray:** Lord, Your power and Your grace provide for all who believe in You and follow Your lead. You have blessed our lives with riches in many forms and it is humbling to realize that we hesitate to give back to You that which has always and is Yours. Forgive us and guide as we continue to learn Your ways and walk by Your light. Amen.

•**Application to my life:** Help me to gain those things that are of benefit through the talents You gave me and opportunities that You present to me. When there is time for change and those things I have gained still have value, allow me to share with those that are without.



## As We Learn

Day 15 – November 7

**Read: 2 Corinthians 9:8** - *“And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.”*

•**Reflection:** This was written to encourage the Corinthian believers to give to the poor in Jerusalem. When I give, I should give in the confidence that God will provide for me and those I am responsible for. When I consider the fact that we are living in a very affluent society regardless of the economic times, it’s amazing that I can always come up with excuses for not giving to the poor. While it’s true that I as an individual cannot solve all the needs in this world, that doesn’t mean I can’t make a difference to someone. If I see 100 children drowning in a lake, I might not be able to save all of them (that doesn’t mean I won’t try), but if I’m able to save even a single life then I’ve made a difference. Instead of worrying that I can’t move mountains, I should start by focusing on those obstacles that I can move. I will begin with small steps and over time I will have traveled far.

•**Pray:** Lord, You desire that we all might have life and have it abundantly. I now understand that the abundant life is not a material one, but a life of trust in your providence. Guide me to the light of trust. Send the poor to my doorstep that I might learn from them. Bless all those that have less than I do and stir within me the spirit of sharing. Let gratitude and giving be my banners and let all the glory be Yours. May justice and mercy have places of honor within my being and may my hands work to relieve suffering wherever I find it. Amen.

•**Application to my life:** Living with and abiding by these simple tenants will guide my way. If someone is in need, give to them. We earn heavenly rewards for even simple acts of kindness and generosity. Giving leads to treasure in heaven and is a part of following Jesus. Giving back to those in need not only helps others, but it is as if we did it for the Lord. Jesus Christ is the ultimate example of service and giving. He gave His very life for us! There is a level of personal responsibility involved in giving back to God. When we give generously, God will give us even more to give back.

## *Heart of a Saint*

by George Colberg

I hired a Christian Post Doc out of a local PhD program, who, during her studies, had been making about 19,000 dollars per year. She was coming to work in a Biomedical recruiting firm where the bulk of her compensation would be paid in commission. Upon closing her first deal, she was so excited that she could make a meaningful contribution to her local church, which was just getting started with a wonderful Charismatic preacher, who had blessed her life. Her first check was a lump sum of around five thousand dollars. I expected her to tell me about her faithful tithing the following Monday at work. She truly surprised me, she said God had put on her heart that she should give the entire check to the Church, and that there would be more blessing for her to come, she gave the entire \$5,000. She went nine months without another deal closing, she lived on a minimum wage draw, but her faith never wavered. She held steadfast in the Lord, she encouraged me, and shared tapes from her preacher with me. We became good friends and created a more Christian atmosphere in our office. After her tough times she grew in her skills, she deepened in her faith, continued to give and serve. She was active at the local missions, handed out phone cards for Mother's Day so the homeless could call their families. This landed her a sock on the jaw from an emotionally unstable woman who really didn't want to call her mother. Barbara's faith in God never wavered, she took in strangers, she saved souls and served God like a saint. Today she has her own recruiting firm and serves faithfully in God's kingdom. You see, she knew that all things are in God's time and not ours. She never lost sight of that fact and she believed in a good work in the kingdom was its own reward. How many of us give sacrificially? How many of us open our homes to the homeless, or needy? How many of us serve when called at our churches? I am not sure I want to know the answer. Yet I am sure each one of us has no trouble calling out to God for our needs. When will we become the ones showing our love to God, by serving others first, and asking for ourselves second, like my friend Barbara?

## *As We Explore*

Day 16 – November 8

**Read: 2 Corinthians 8:9** - *“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.”*

- Reflection:** Almost anyone can “love” people in the abstract but when it comes time to express that love – by lending a helping hand or writing a check – we can quickly determine the sincerity of a person's love for others.
- Pray:** Father, You give to me with a lavish hand, You do not withhold from me of Your great grace and mercy. Let me live and serve You also with a generous heart. In the name of Your Son, who gave his all. Amen.
- Application to my life:** God show me ways to be more generous and giving.

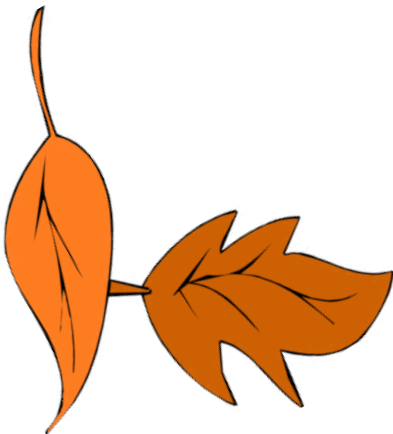


## *As We Explore*

Day 17 – November 9

**Read: Mark 12:41-44** - *“Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, ‘I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.’”*

- **Reflection:** The widow’s contribution would have been nothing but spare change to the rich who preceded her. Giving her two mites to God meant that she could not use it to buy bread for the next day and yet her gift showed that she was giving herself entirely to God and trusting in Him to meet her needs.
- **Pray:** Father, help me give myself entirely to You. I know that You will meet my needs and guide me on the path to true blessings, peace and truth. Amen.
- **Application to my life:** Help me remember that You will provide for me all that I need and that You know what my needs are.



## *As We Explore*

Day 18 – November 10

**Read: Luke 18:9-14** - *“To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: ‘Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ ‘But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ ‘I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.’”*

- **Reflection:** How do you establish your identity? Are you always comparing yourself to others? Do you try to build up your self-esteem by looking down on others less fortunate or gifted than you? Sooner or later someone is bound to come along who is better than you in some way. It is better to look to God in order to see yourself properly. Doing so exposes your sin but it will also bring about God’s forgiveness and restoration.
- **Pray:** God, I will look to only You in order to see myself properly. I will keep my focus on You and I will not compare myself to others. Forgive me for my past transgressions of comparing myself to others less fortunate so that I will feel better about who I am. Amen.
- **Application to my life:** Lord, I want to really care about others and become involved in their lives and understand their needs so I can be more like You.

## *As We Explore*

Day 19 – November 11

**Read: Matthew 6:25-34** - *“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”*

•**Reflection:** God provides for us in many ways – most commonly through our everyday work. Of course, sometimes our normal means of providing fail due to circumstances beyond our control such as ill health, divorce, loss of a job, etc. It is the fear of these possibilities that tempt us to worry and forget about trusting God.

•**Pray:** God, this week I ask You to begin to simplify my life beginning with my desires and appetites – You know what they are Lord! New golf clubs, a new wardrobe, a new car.... Lord please take Your rightful place in my heart so that I can see my way among the conflicting claims of the society in which we live in. Amen.

•**Application to my life:** By simplifying my life, I can become closer to God and have more to share with others who are less fortunate than I. You have been so kind and generous to me God, help me find ways to share my wealth with others.

## *As We Explore*

Day 20 – November 12

**Read: Deuteronomy 16:17** - *“Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the LORD your God has blessed you.”*

•**Reflection:** We are all blessed differently by God. The world could not function if we were all blessed with the same gift(s)! We are asked to give “in proportion” to how we have been blessed. Look around (and inside) you and take stock of all the areas of your life that have been blessed. Have you given proportionately to how you have received?

•**Pray:** Heavenly Father, my life has been so blessed and I thank You. I pray that my gift comes from my heart and not for self appreciation but to glorify You and all that You have given me. Amen.

•**Application to my life:** What is my heart thinking as my hand writes a check to the church? Am I seeking praise from my fellow members and quietly congratulating myself or am I only seeking the approval of our Father?

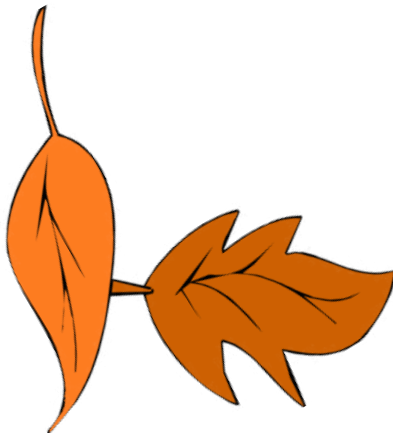


## *As We Mature*

*Day 21 – November 13*

**Read: Psalms 24:1** - *“The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.”*

- Reflection:** Everything I have is from God; my family, home, all possessions, status in life, friends, etc. Because all things belong to God, we are merely caretakers or stewards.
- Prayer:** Father, remind me daily that all I have is because of Your mercy and grace. Forgive my pride in believing that it was of my doing. Amen.
- Application in my life:** Lord all that I have is not really mine. It belongs to You. Teach me how I can become a responsible steward with all the gifts You have entrusted to me by sharing with others.



## *As We Mature*

*Day 22 – November 14*

**Read: Romans 12:13** - *“When God’s people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.”*

- Reflection:** From God’s perspective, hospitality is not about the host and how well he entertains, but focuses on the needs of the guest.
- Prayer:** Father, give me a sincere and generous spirit, eager to provide where there is need. Amen.
- Application in my Life:** Father, give me an increasing understanding of Christian hospitality; to receive those in need as guests, not as strangers.

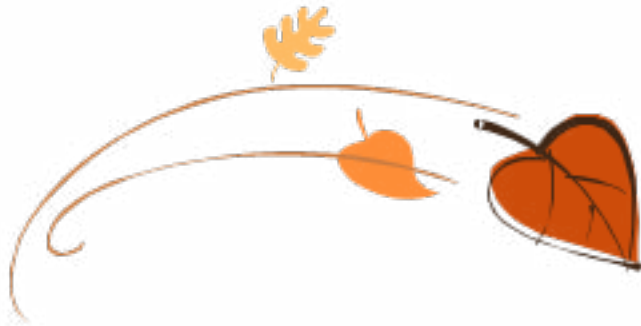


## *As We Mature*

*Day 23 – November 15*

**Read: 1 Timothy 6:6-7** - *“But Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it.”*

- Reflections:** Be generous in your giving, content with what you have and realize that when you die, you can't take your wealth with you.
- Prayer:** Lord, teach me to be a better steward by placing the importance of Your work above my own interests. Amen.
- Application in my Life:** Lord, forgive me for being materialistic and open my eyes to the needs of others.

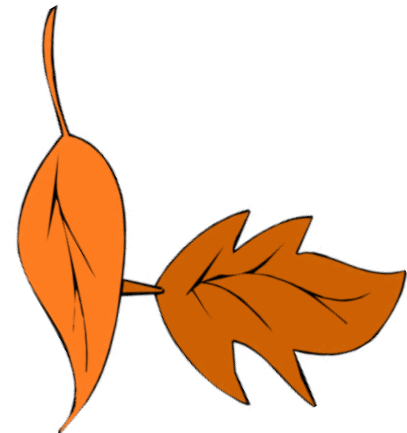


## *As We Mature*

*Day 24 – November 16*

**Read: Acts 4:32** - *“All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.”*

- Reflection:** Everything I have is from God, and does not really belong to me. If I always remember this, it will be easier for me to share all I have.
- Prayer:** Lord, thank You for generously providing for all my needs each and every day. Instill in me a generous and giving heart as I seek Your will in providing for others who are in need. Amen.
- Application in my Life:** Remind me daily Lord, that all I have is from You. As You have been faithful in Your provision for me, I also must be faithful in providing for others.



## *As We Mature*

*Day 25 – November 17*

**Read: Luke 6:38** - *“Give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”*

- **Reflection:** Our blessings will be based upon our willingness to bless others.
- **Prayer:** Lord, open my heart to share Your generosity. Use me as a conduit of Your blessings and grace. Amen.
- **Application in my Life:** Help me to remember that the way I give to others is the way You will give to me, pressed down, shaken together and running over.



## *As We Mature*

*Day 26 – November 18*

**Read: Proverbs 3:9-10** - *“Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the best part of everything you produce. Then He will fill your barns with grain and your vats will overflow with good wine.”*

- **Reflection:** By first giving to God, of our time and treasure, we are showing Him that a) His desires are more meaningful than our possessions, and b) We trust His word that He will generously provide for all our needs.
- **Prayer:** Lord, provide in me a growing awareness that it is in the sharing and giving of the gifts You continuously bestow on me, that I demonstrate my love for You and my love for my neighbor. Amen.
- **Application in my Life:** Lord, it is through my faithful giving that I am helping to spread Your word and provide for the needs of Your people.



## Josephine

by Harry and Sue Benter

In 2002, my wife and I noticed that my mother-in-law, Josephine, was beginning to demonstrate dementia. We had noticed signs of it earlier but we dismissed it as just forgetfulness or momentary confusion. She had always been a gregarious, energetic, and intelligent woman and we had thought that she would remain independent well into her senior years. The dementia however, continued to progress until we were no longer comfortable with her living alone.

At this time, we had to make the decision to bring Jo into our home or consider a retirement home for her. We both jointly decided that due to her progressive dementia, no one could give her better care than her family. We were aware of the commitment and how our lives would change and I was also concerned about Sue. She and her mother had always shared a very close relationship. We decided to trust God and take one step at a time.

Josephine lived with us for five years. Our time together was very special and we did everything as a threesome. Although her dementia continued to progress, she was always a delight. It was comforting for us to know that she was receiving good nutrition and she was safe and comfortable. All the issues that children have for their aging parents were not a concern.

In the last few months of the fifth year, we knew that the Lord was calling Josephine home. On July 19th, 2007, she celebrated her birth into eternity. As Sue and I look back on those five years, we are so glad that we had the opportunity to share that time with Jo.

Paul tells us in Acts 20:35 that it is more blessed to give than to receive. There are so many elderly who are forgotten and left alone. By giving a little time and affection to a lonely senior, you will be surely blessed.

## As We Serve

Day 27 – November 19

**Read: 1 Timothy 6:17-19** - *“Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.”*

- Reflection:** Our hope needs to be with God, not with our wealth. Nothing brings this point closer to home than the economic crisis over the past year. Lives were devastated and changed forever when retirement money was lost in the market crash.
- Pray:** God we thank You for all things. My grateful spirit is not always readily found and I ask You to cultivate it in me. I will remember that every good thing comes from You, Father. Amen.
- Application to my life:** Lord, my wealth is deposited with You and gets the best return available.



## *Out Of His Heart Will Flow*

*By Polly Purcifull*

When Mary of Bethany broke the flask of very expensive oil and poured it over Jesus' head others criticized her and told her that this was very expensive oil and should be saved for special occasions. Many thought it was waste, but not Jesus. Jesus praised Mary for her extravagant donation and held it always as a memorial to her. Jesus is filled with Joy when he sees any of us doing what Mary did. Not being bound by rules but totally surrendering to Him.

In no way do I think this compares with Mary's expensive gift but I am going to share it anyway. When I was a very young girl in Philadelphia my parents gave me 25 cents each week as an allowance. Every Saturday I would go to the movies. There was always a double feature, a cartoon, and a news program called Time Marches On. On the way to the movie my friends and I walked by a man each week whom I have always called "the man with no legs" He held a hat in his lap and was begging for money. He gave away pencils (I never took a pencil). Every week I put a nickel in his hat. The movie cost a dime and with the rest I bought either candy or a donut at the dime store. There would often be a nickel left and I would give the man another nickel during the week. My mother used to compare me with my friend Gail Harris who saved all her money and wanted me to save more money. Gail never went to the Saturday movies or gave money to the man with no legs. She used to save all her allowances. My dad would tell me that there was probably a limo waiting for this man at the end of the day around the corner to take him home. However, I continued to give him nickels week after week until I moved away when I was twelve years old. I often wonder who he was and what he thought when he saw this chubby little girl with pink cheeks and big brown eyes usually smiling walking towards him on Chelton Avenue each week. I wonder if he wondered where I was after I moved to New York and did not come with my nickels any more. I wonder what my friend Gail Harris did with all the money she saved. We were life long friends and Gail died three years ago so I can't ask her. As for me, I don't care if a limo picked him up at the end of the day. And I will never know what Gail did with her saved money.

In Matthew 5:3 Jesus says He who believes out of his heart will flow rivers of living water ... the nickels were my water.

## *As We Walk*

*Day 28 – November 20*

**Read: Deuteronomy 8:17-18** - *"Do not say to yourself, 'My power and the might of my own hand have gotten me this wealth'. But remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms His covenant, which He swore to your forefathers, as it is today."*

- **Reflection:** So do we pridefully flaunt our wealth or do we humbly share what God has given to us with our fellow man?
- **Pray:** Dear Lord, even though I feel that I am giving all I can afford, please help me to be more generous and have faith that You will increase my abundance according to what I share with my fellow man. Amen.
- **Application in my life:** Have faith in the word of the Lord.



## *As We Walk*

Day 29 – November 21

**Read: Genesis 8:20-21 Genesis 9:1** - “Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and, taking some clean birds he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. (God’s Response) The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma, and said in His heart: ‘Never again will I curse the ground because of man, and never again will I destroy all living creatures.’ Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth.’”

- **Reflection:** Immediately after the flood, Noah built the altar demonstrating his thankfulness and reverence to God. God’s response was the Rainbow covenant. The key part of these verses is God’s response: He was pleased with Noah for giving God thanks through his offering. This is an example to us of how we ought to be not only thankful, but reverent to our loving God.
- **Pray:** God, who created all things, and has blessed us with life abundant. Thank You, for Your love, Your gifts, and Your son Jesus Christ. May we share our blessings, so that others may also experience Your love, Your gifts, and Your son Jesus. May our gifts, and our sharing be pleasing to You. May they be as sweet as the aroma of Noah’s burnt offering and bring You joy. Amen.
- **Application to my Life:** We need to be reminded not only of God’s constant love, but also of His constant desire to have communion with us through our remembrances, sacrifices, and giving. Noah is a great example of offering Thanksgiving and a total commitment to God.



## *As We Walk*

In your walk with Christ through this devotional hopefully you and your family have prayed and discussed what your personal and combined pledge should be this year to support the works of RBCPC.

If you are already giving electronically you can follow this link to affirm your gift or increase it:

[www.rbcpc.org/giving](http://www.rbcpc.org/giving)

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No matter what your gifts are, or what you pledge, know that God loves, and will be with you always, and if we at the church can be of any service to you or your family, please contact us at (858) 487-0811 or:

[www.rbcpc.org/stewardship](http://www.rbcpc.org/stewardship)

“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.” Mark 10:45.

We are here to serve,

*The Stewardship Committee*