

Read through the Bible in 2016!

(Submitted by Mike McKnight)

Suggested chapters to read so that we might read through the entire Bible during 2016! **This week's "schedule":**

- **Day 102** - 1 Samuel 15-17 Monday
- **Day 103** - 1 Samuel 18-20; Psalm 11, 59 Tuesday
- **Day 104** - 1 Samuel 21-24 Wednesday
- **Day 105** - Psalm 7, 27, 31, 34, 52 Thursday
- **Day 106** - Psalm 56, 120, 140-142 Friday
- **Day 107** - 1 Samuel 25-27 Saturday
- **Day 108** - Psalm 17, 35, 54, 63 Sunday

April Birthdays

1 Daniel McKnight 11 Dolly Cashion 23 Shannon Hudson
3 Amanda Hoffman 16 Alana Hudson 26 Stori Rose Hoffman
6 Susan Hudson 17 Belva Meanor

April Anniversaries

9 Bill & Kena Brown

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.
Sunday.....10:45 a.m.
Sunday.....6:00 p.m.
Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

Preacher:
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Looking for a Short-Cut?

By Joe Chesser

When James A. Garfield was president of Hiram College, a father brought his son to enroll him in higher education pursuits. After reviewing what would be required, and wishing for a shorter course of study for the boy, the father said to Mr. Garfield, "The boy can never take all that in. He wants to get through quicker. Can you arrange it for him?" Garfield was quick to respond, "Oh yes. He can take a short course. It all depends upon what you want to make of him. When God wants to make an oak, He takes a hundred years, but He only takes two months to make a squash."

Many often dream of and sometimes even expect to grow to spiritual maturity in a very short time. However, there are no short-cuts when it comes to spiritual development and maturity. Moses spent 40 years in the wilderness of Midian preparing to be the one to lead God's people out of Egypt. Jesus spent 30 years preparing for his 3-year ministry. It takes 20 years to be considered an adult, and many more years to actually become a mature adult. Why then are we surprised that it takes a considerable amount of time to reach spiritual maturity?

Yet even time itself does not ensure maturity. The writer of Hebrews pointed out that there were some Christians who ought to be mature enough to be teaching others, but were, in fact, still needing to be bottle-fed themselves on milk (the "elementary principles of God's word" – Heb. 5:12-14). Some of these baby Christians had been Christians close to 30 years. Can you imagine? 30 years and still not mature enough to feed on "meat"; they still needed "milk." Sad, isn't it?!

Spiritual growth requires a steady diet of God's word. Peter, addressing this same subject, wrote, "*like new born babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation*" (1 Peter 2:2). Paul adds that by "speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him ..." (Eph. 4:15).

Learning takes place in consistent, regular, small doses. Many years ago, a friend of mine, Dan Lightfoot, said that he doesn't remember what he learned on any given day during his school days, but he knows each day a little progress was made. That's why regular Bible study is so important. That's also why God wants parents to teach their children His ways as they go about their daily activities (Deut. 6:6-9). Just 15 minutes of focused Bible study each day will pay rich rewards.

There are no short-cuts. Do I want to mature to be an oak ... or a squash?

Be Afraid of the Dark

By David R. Ferguson

"Daddy, please don't turn out the light! I'm afraid of the dark!" What father has not heard these words and has had his heart touched as he was tucking his little child in bed for the night? I know I have.

I do not know about you, but I do not believe I have ever met a little child who was not afraid of the dark. It seems to me as if there is something instinctual in our very human DNA makeup that tells us to be wary of the dark. And if you think about it, it really does make sense, for darkness is the absence of light. When we are in the dark we cannot see the dangers that confront us. With light, those dangers are revealed, they are illumined, and we can see how to steer clear and avoid them.

It is unfortunate that mankind has chosen to walk in the pathway of darkness, rather than to walk in the Light of God's Word. David wrote thousands of years ago in Psalm 119:105, "*Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a Light unto my path.*"

When we walk in the darkness of sin we are no longer walking in the Light of God and that is something in which we all should hold great fear. Maybe this is yet another reason why Jesus tells us, "*Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven*" (Matthew 18:3 [NASB]). A little child is humble, and he or she has the humility to admit his or her fear of the dark. But as we grow older we learn to no longer fear

the darkness. We embrace the darkness, that which we used to dread, and even to love it. Jesus warns, "*This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil*" (John 3:19 [NASB]).

That love of darkness and of evil is the driving force behind why there is so much danger and strife in the world today. The Apostle Paul reminds us, "*For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places*" (Ephesians 6:12 [NASB]). Paul also explained that the mission given to him by Christ was to go to both Jews and Gentiles alike "*to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to Light and from the dominion of Satan to God*" (Acts 2:18a [NASB]).

Fearing the dark is really not such a bad idea after all. We all need to become as little children, and learn to fear and reject the darkness, wherein lies our defeat and death, and turn to the Light and victory of Jesus Christ, wherein lies our hope of salvation from our sins and eternal life in Him!

Selling Out

By Lance Cordle

There was a song several years ago that had this line in it: "When you come close to selling out, consider." The Christian life is not always one of happiness. We face many difficulties in our effort to be faithful to God.

One can look at the life of Joseph to see that a godly life will at times put us in trying circumstances. But through all of Joseph's trials (family members against him, slavery, false charges by Potiphar's wife, being imprisoned) he always seemed to stay focused on what was the most important thing in life—obedience to God.

As Christians facing the evil and temptations of this world, we can be presumed to look for an easy way out. It is during these times we need to reconsider and remember God's help is always present; we are not alone (Revelation 2:10), and a reward awaits the faithful that nothing on this earth can match (Psalm 16:11).