

### Please Note...

- **Business meeting** today, June 12 at 4:30 p.m.; note **change in start time, 4:30 p.m.**
- **Ladies' Bible class:** today, June 12 at 4:00 p.m.

### 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 158** - Proverbs 13-15 Monday
- **Day 159** - Proverbs 16-18 Tuesday
- **Day 160** - Proverbs 19-21 Wednesday
- **Day 161** - Proverbs 22-24 Thursday
- **Day 162** - 1 Kings 5-6; 2 Chronicles 2-3 Friday
- **Day 163** - 1 Kings 7; 2 Chronicles 4 Saturday
- **Day 164** - 1 Kings 8; 2 Chronicles 5 Sunday

### June Birthdays

9 Debbie Pescador 20 Mike Bruni  
12 Celina Perales 23 Agripina Carrillo

### June Anniversaries

5 Kurt & Debbie Hoffman 11 Marcos & Celina Perales

#### Regular Meeting Times

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

**Preacher:**  
Mike McKnight

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# Indio Informer

Vol. 27 No. 24

June 12, 2016

## Self-Reliance is Faithless

By Joe Chesser

No one would have mistaken the ancient Babylonian soldiers for gentle-men. They were ruthless. They were vicious. They were resilient. Have you ever seen a video where a crocodile attacks its prey? If so you get the picture of how the Babylonian army was. There was no Geneva Convention. There were no humane rules of engagement. There was only a ravenous thirst for victory. God described them in Habakkuk 1 as "*ruthless and impetuous,*" "*feared and dreaded,*" and "*a law to themselves and promote their own honor.*" The chapter ends by describing their pride in their own destructive power as men "*whose own strength is their god.*"

I don't think God was complimenting the Babylonian army. Instead, we can learn from Habakkuk that all who are a god to themselves, all who rely on their own strength will eventually face the wrath and vengeance of God! Self-reliance is not something God appreciates or blesses. What God does appreciate and bless is when "*the righteous will live by his faith*" (Hab. 2.4).

Early in the history of the Israelite nation the Midianite army (another very powerful army) was threatening them. God chose Gideon to lead the battle against the Midianites, but didn't want self-reliance to infect Gideon's army (Judges 7.2). So, God instructed Gideon to tell everyone who was fearful of the looming battle to go home. 22,000 of the 32,000 headed home! After narrowing the remaining 10,000 down to a mere 300, Gideon's army was ready to confront their powerful enemy. 300 against an army described "*as thick as locusts*" (Judges 7.12). Why did God reduce Gideon's army from 32,000 to 300? The answer is to prevent Israel from boasting about how by their own strength they saved Israel (Judges 7.2).

It's pretty clear from these, and many other passages, that God is not looking for people filled with self-reliance. Instead, God is looking for people filled with faith and trust in Him and His power. God knows it's easy for us to put our confidence in ourselves and what we can do with our numbers, our money, our plans and our strengths.

Though we are nothing like the Babylonians or the Midianites, we are still sometimes tempted to trust in the strength of our budgets, our experience, our talents, our knowledge, organizational skills, our goals, etc.

My point is not that we do nothing and let God do it all. No, but we need to put all of our trust and reliance in what God chooses to do through us. *"The righteous will live by faith."* Self-reliance is faithless!

***"The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and I am helped; therefore my heart exults, and with my song I shall thank Him."*** Psalm 28:7

### **The Longest Way**

J. Randal Matheny  
(modified to personalize)

The shortcut we think may save us time and grief may never get us to our destination. It may seem the quickest way. It promises to reroute us, past the hard incline, around the boulders, and over bogs. But it may well end in the thick of the forest, where it throws us into a tangle of briars and limbs and crevices from which we cannot extricate ourselves.

The shortcut led Absalom to hang by his proud locks of hair from a low branch, dying with his kingly ambitions in shame.

Instead of giving us an advantage, the shortcut may render us helpless.

The longest way may actually be the best. The longer journey strengthens, matures, purifies. And, *"after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace who called you to His eternal glory in Christ will Himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you."* 1 Peter 5:10 NET

The verse from 1 Peter reminds us to look at the larger picture, larger than today, tomorrow, and the next day. Many suffer an entire lifetime, but 70 or 80 years pales in comparison to an eternity. All of life is but *"a little while."* Whatever happens here is *"momentary"* 2 Corinthians 4:17. To be called into *"eternal glory"* means to share the unspeakable joys with God, unmixed with pain, death, loss, and sorrow.

God does not cause suffering, but He uses it for His purpose to bring us to the point of eternal freedom. He demonstrated this purpose fully in Christ.

Eternity, then, reveals the secret to avoiding the shortcut. All the pep talk and motivational thoughts in the world cannot replace the eternal perspective which provides ground for endurance and persistence over the long haul. Eternity also furnishes true joy for the present time, so no one needs to manufacture a happiness hard to sustain.

Throughout one's troubled walk through this life, the redeeming factor is the "God of all grace." His supplies are more than sufficient for the need. His purpose enlarges life far beyond our smallish concerns. His project of salvation draws us into a lasting work, greater than any human endeavor. His revelation illuminates the whole of existence and infuses meaning into every work, thought, and act.

When the God of all grace occupies the forefront of our thoughts, the shortcut loses its appeal.

The "you" in the verse above is plural. The longest way is not traveled alone. While the decision is individual, and faithfulness is exercised in each one's heart, the journey is made together with the community of the called. In the numbers of the family of God is strength. United effort brings the special presence of Christ. In the fellowship of the mission the Lord leads and equips for the task.

The suffering for the faith, regardless of the worldly address, occurs *"in Christ."* Here the saints breathe a special air. More than a mental state, far beyond a physical condition, this spiritual reality surrounds the people of God and supplies them with the life-giving grace and stamina of Christ. He makes every step an adventure. He imbues each pain with meaning. His light draws out the rainbow of colors in the landscape along the way.

A key word in the verse is *"after."* We think of the now. We want relief immediately. But life does not give immediate gratification. Such a pursuit quickly runs aground.

Hang on to the *"after"*. For it is the *"after"* that makes the now worth it. Reject, therefore, the shortcut, and take the longest way. It leads where we really want to go.