

LOVE GOD'S WORD & PRAYER

New Testament Challenge 2020

At Faith Baptist Fellowship, we *Love God's Word and Prayer*. Hearing a sermon at church on Sunday mornings alone is not enough to be considered a healthy diet of God's word and prayer. We strongly believe that every growing disciple of Jesus needs to be regularly hearing from God through his word and personally speaking back to God through prayer.

We are challenging everyone to read through the entire New Testament in 2020 – one chapter per day, five days per week. If regular Bible reading is not yet a habit of yours, this is a great way to get started! As always, we will provide devotional thoughts and helpful prayer points on the passages. The weekend material will prepare you for the upcoming Sunday sermon as well as provide some discussion help for Faith Groups.

We recommend you set aside at least 15-20 minutes a day for this plan and prayer. If you fall behind, just start on the current day. Try to develop the habit of reading at the same time and place. We suggest having a journal and pen for answering questions and recording your thoughts and insights. Happy Bible Reading!

Monday, September 7

Read 1 Peter 3:1-22

THINK: How does a believing wife with an unbelieving husband seek to win him to Christ? What type of conduct points others to Jesus as your Savior? How are husbands to live with their wives? How do you show 'honor'? Ponder Peter's list of things that make Christians unique and godly. What stands out to you from these characteristics? Do they describe you? What should we be always ready to do? Note that suffering is almost assumed to be part of the Christian's life. Reflect on all Christ suffered for you, and all that your baptism represents.

PRAY: As a wife or husband or single person, ask God to help you honor Him in the way you relate to your family members. Pray through the many Christian character traits found in this chapter and ask God to help you live in this Christ-honoring way, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Pray for the marriages within our church family. Thank God for the amazing gift of grace in Christ Jesus, and for all Christ suffered for you. Thank God for changing your heart, a transformation depicted in your baptism.

Tuesday, September 8

Read 1 Peter 4:1-19

THINK: Do you live “for the will of God” as v. 2 says? Do you live with the knowledge that some day Christ will judge *the living and the dead*? Contrast the fleshly life with the spirit-filled life. What is your spiritual gift (or gifts)? What is the goal of using our gifts? How can Christians rejoice in their sufferings? What does judgement look like for the household of God? Do you find it hard to *entrust your soul to your faithful Creator while doing good*?

PRAY: Pray a prayer of submission to God, entrusting your will, your ways, and your future to his sovereign authority and will. Express confidence that God’s will is best for you and will bring you the highest and best joys, even in sorrow. Ask God to help you live a spirit-filled life, making wise choices that please Him. Thank God for your spiritual gift(s) and tell Him you want them to be used for His honor and glory.

Wednesday, September 9

Read 1 Peter 5:1-14

THINK: Thoughtfully reflect on the role of an elder in the church (vv. 2-3). What reward lies ahead for those who shepherd well? Do you find it challenging to submit to the elders? How does humility make a difference? What causes you to be anxious? Have you been ‘watchful’ lately? What have you seen? How do you go about resisting the devil? How does the God of all grace help those going through difficult things as they trust in him?

PRAY: Pray for our FBF Elder Council. Pray for *humility* in your attitude (and for our elders the same). Given our current social and political climate, there is much to be anxious about. Take time right now to cast all your anxieties upon the Lord in prayer. Ask God for grace to be sober-minded and watchful, wisely resisting the devil. Pray for your brothers and sisters suffering for the faith around the world. Praise God, and thank Him for His grace to restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. Continue to pray earnestly for our nation, for God’s Spirit to work in His church and in our government and society.

Thursday, September 10

Read 2 Peter 1:1-21

THINK: How do we attain a faith of equal standing with the Apostle Peter's? Where do we get all we need as believers? Verses 3-4 are a very unique description of the gospel; ponder these vivid details. What kinds of pursuits help us live out our faith, to "confirm our calling and election" (vv. 5-12)? What is virtue? How can Peter help the believers recall these important truths after his death (v. 15)? Review Matthew 17:1-8; how does Peter know his faith is not just based on myths, but on facts and God-given prophecy?

PRAY: Rejoice in the wonder of your deliverance from corruption through the gospel of Christ. Thank God. Ask Him to help you supplement your faith with virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, and love. Thank God for His written word, through which we have received the teachings of men like Peter, Paul, and John. Praise God that our faith is not based in fiction but fact: the glorious, risen, ascended, coming Jesus Christ.

Friday, September 11

Read 2 Peter 2:1-3:18

THINK: Peter warns about false teachers; what characterizes their false teaching? (You will develop quite a list.) Peter was writing to suffering believers; what hope does he offer them? Do you think many people fear the judgment of God today? Are there scoffers today? Are their taunts similar to the one found in v. 4? How does Peter answer this taunt? Why doesn't God the Father just send Jesus back to earth right now, and end this world of sorrow and sin? What is he waiting for? Why then should believers live holy lives? Can we hasten the coming day of God? Beware of Scripture twisters!

PRAY: Rejoice that God "knows how to rescue the godly from trials." Take heart also that God knows how to apply righteous judgment to those who pursue evil. Ask Him to help you wisely sort out false teaching from that which is true. Confess your sin to God; delight that He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin. Ask God to fill you with His Spirit and wisdom and faith to live a holy life, pleasing to God. "Come, Lord Jesus, at just the right time!" *Continue to pray for our nation; ask God to pour out his Holy Spirit upon us.*

Weekend, September 12-13

Read Genesis 37:1-11

If you have fallen behind this week, consider using these extra days to catch up. You can also prepare your heart and mind for this Sunday's worship service. Read the planned sermon text above and the thoughts below in advance of Sunday morning's message. If you are in a Faith Group, consider discussing the questions below together.

THINK: Who was Joseph? What two things caused his brothers to hate him? What symbolized Joseph's unique relationship with his father and furthered the resentment of his brothers? Describe the two dreams that Joseph shared with his brothers. (Since many of us know the story of Joseph, ponder the remarkable way these dreams will be fulfilled as we read on.) The brothers' plotting against Joseph took some providential twists and turns; what were these? Selling out Joseph for silver pieces—what does that remind you of in the NT? What cruel deception did the brothers commit against their father?

PRAY: Pray for Pastors Dana and Jayson as they begin this fourth and final series in our journey through Genesis: *Meant for Good*. Ask God to help you trust in his divine providence through the current COVID-19 and social upheaval crises; God has designs for good no matter what the circumstances! Pray with the father who in NT who cried out to Jesus, "I believe! Help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24) *Pray through the 5 Loves, applying them to yourself and your loved ones: Love God, Love God's Word and Prayer, Love One Another, Love Our Neighbors (locally and globally), Love the Gospel.*

FAITH GROUP: Have you seen or experienced family dysfunction such as is described in this chapter? Talk about how we as believers trust God when something seems unfair or out of balance. What perspective helps us process the twists and turns of the Joseph narrative? Are you able to bring that perspective to your own life and family?

Pray for one another in this challenge.