

LOVE GOD'S WORD & PRAYER

Daily Bible Reading

At Faith Baptist Fellowship, we *Love 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. If regular Bible reading is not yet a habit of yours, this is a great way to get started!

We are encouraging everyone to continue our Daily Bible Readings. 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 encourage you to set aside at least 15-20 minutes a day for reading 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. Have a journal and pen for answering questions and recording your thoughts and insights. For additional Bible reading plans, check out faithsf.com. Enjoy your time in God's Word and Prayer!

Monday, September 19

Read Romans 6:1-14

THINK: Does God's amazing gift of grace mean we can sin without repercussion? Explain Paul's phrase, "died to sin." Do you see how our practice of immersion baptism pictures the truth of v. 4? Explain what Paul means by "dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus." Reflect on v. 14, "not under law but under grace." Do you understand what Paul means by that? How does that insight help us in the daily fight of faith?

PRAY: Rejoice in prayer that you are no longer a slave to sin. Thank God for giving you the gift of righteousness through his Son, Jesus Christ. Ask God to help you in the daily walk of putting sin to death (called by the Puritans *mortification*) and living in the freedom of the gospel. Celebrate grace, God's power to set us free and keep us living in freedom from sin. Yet, thank God also that if we do sin, we have an Advocate before the Father, Jesus Christ! *Ask God's blessing today on the worship and ministry of our West Campus.*

Tuesday, September 20

Read Romans 6:15-23

THINK: If we go on living in sin, as if it doesn't matter, enslaved to it, what will the outcome be? On the other hand, if we walk in obedience, it is evidence that our heart has been changed by God, and we are "slaves of righteousness." The outcome of living this way: Sanctification. What is the end of sanctification? V. 23 is often memorized to aid in sharing the gospel—do you know it by heart? Which path are you on: the road to sanctification by God's grace leading to eternal life with God; or enslavement to sin leading to death and separation from God? *It's the all-important question!*

PRAY: Undoubtedly you know people who are enslaved to sin and on the road to eternal death apart from Christ. Pray for their salvation! Pray that they come to understand that "the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life." Ask God to help you by his Holy Spirit to walk in the obedience of faith, moving forward in sanctification toward your eternal home with Jesus. "Father, since I am no longer under the law, but under grace, by grace enable me to live a righteous life, pleasing to you and impacting others to the glory of God." *Pray for our kingdom impact at South Campus.*

Wednesday, September 21

Read Romans 7:1-12

THINK: Paul uses the marriage bond as an illustration: what is he illustrating? Reflect for a while on the two ways to live: trying hard to obey the written code of the law, on the one hand, and being free from the law by Jesus to live by the Spirit of God on the other. Are you "trying harder" or "walking by the Spirit?" Do you think most people grasp this vital distinction? Yet the law is strategically important—why? What is the role of the law in God's plan?

PRAY: Inferred from Paul's illustration is that the marriage bond is lifelong and permanent. If married, pray for your marriage. If not married, pray for others to be faithful and true in their marriages. Thank God for giving us the law, so that we are confronted with the reality of our sin and our need for a Savior. Thank God also for giving us freedom to walk by the Holy Spirit. More tomorrow! *Pray for our children and youth at both campuses. They need Jesus!*

Thursday, September 22

Read Romans 7:13-25

THINK: This “wretched man that I am” portion of Paul’s letter to the Romans is one of the most discussed and debated in the entire Bible. The issue is whether Paul is here discussing the struggle of *believers* or *unbelievers*. A good study Bible (such as the ESVSB) could help you think through the alternatives. Do you personally resonate with the struggle described in these verses (such as in v. 15)? Do you think Paul is here describing our fight with indwelling sin, or is he describing the pre-Christian’s helplessness in the spiritual battle with sin? Either way, the GOOD NEWS is the gospel of Jesus Christ—see v. 25. Thanks be to God for Jesus!

PRAY: Acknowledge to God your personal struggle with sin. Thank him for freedom through Christ—rejoice in the good news of the gospel! Preach the gospel to yourself today. *Pray for our ministry teams at both campuses as they enhance our kingdom impact.*

Friday, September 23

Read Romans 8:1-17

THINK: The chapter opens with a marvelous truth statement. Why is there no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus? (Hint: that’s what this section explains. You might want to make two columns—one of “the flesh” and one of “the Spirit” to see the contrast between the two.) Who are the children of God? How are we adopted into God’s family through Christ? You are God’s heir! Meditate on that great promise for a while. What hope!

PRAY: There is so much to be thankful for in this portion of Scripture! Pray through the verses, praising and thanking God for each spiritual benefit. No condemnation! Adopted into God’s family! God’s own heir! “Father, I turn my back on life in the flesh, and through faith in Jesus Christ, rejoice that as a child of God I can live my life in the Holy Spirit! Thank you for this life-altering good news. Hallelujah! Amen.” *We are now in year Two of Anticipating Change. Much lies ahead! Pray for our Elder Council as they lead us.*

Weekend, September 24-25

Read I Corinthians 1:18-31

If you've 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: Oh the power of the proclamation of the cross! For the source of the quote in v.19, see Isaiah 29:14. What does *folly* mean? Ponder the logic Paul uses in vv.22-25. It is better to align with God's plan than the faulty thinking of unbelieving people.

The world wants to impress with its wisdom and power, but God's divine plan is different. He chooses what is lowly and despised (to the world) so that we cannot boast. Far far better to boast in the Lord because we are "in Christ." Thanks be to God for the cross. Jesus saves.

PRAY: Pray for our pastors as they preach on this powerful section of I Corinthians 1, magnifying the plan of God to save sinners through the cross and not man's wisdom or strength. Pray as a child of God whose only boast is Christ, the crucified and risen Savior. Pray as a recipient of grace, as one "in Christ."

Pray for all of our cross-centered ministries, that our desire in all things would be to magnify the name of Jesus and point men and women, boys and girls to the cross and such a great salvation.

FAITH GROUP: What are some of the ways the world tries to impress us with its wisdom and strength? Discuss how these ultimately fail to bring about heart transformation. When did the truth of the cross truly break through into your heart and mind? Share about that breakthrough with your group.

Then pray together for those who need that heart transplant surgery!