

# 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](http://faithsf.com). Enjoy your time in God's Word and Prayer!*

## Monday, January 2, 2023

Read Genesis 1-2

**THINK:** In v. 2, created matter is “without form and void.” Then God proceeds to make the created world ready for people, who are created on Day 6. Read and ponder each day's creative work by God. God did not “rest” because he was tired, but because his creative work was complete, and to set the Sabbath standard for us. Ch. 2 then is like a “zoom lens” view of the creation of man and woman (day 6). God's design for marriage is made clear. What a design! What a Designer!

**PRAY:** Ponder the fact that God created you! Give him thanksgiving and praise for creation, as “the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows his handiwork.” Thank God for his Sabbath design for our rest and worship, for creating male and female, and for his marriage design. Pray for the marriages of those you love, and for your own if you are married. *It is 2023! Pray for this vital year of transition in our church life. God is faithful!*

## Tuesday, January 3

Read Genesis 3-4

**THINK:** The tree of the knowledge of good and evil, introduced in ch. 2, now becomes an important focal point. What was the essence of the temptation the serpent placed before Eve? How is this desire to be “like God” at the heart of our own struggle with sin? How is the gospel pictured in the curses found in ch. 3? How does the Father show grace to Adam and Eve in v. 21? Ponder “sin is crouching at the door.” What lessons can we learn from Cain and Abel?

**PRAY:** Sin. It’s as old as mankind. Yet God is gracious and has a plan to bruise the serpent’s head. Thank God for the good news of Jesus Christ. If the Spirit of God brings sin to mind that you have not confessed, confess it to him now, and rejoice in the cleansing of Christ’s blood. Ask God for grace to flee temptation and take his divine escape routes (I Corinthians 10:13). *Ask God to give our West Campus a year of great fruitfulness and growth by His Spirit.*

## Wednesday, January 4

Read Genesis 5-8

**THINK:** What do you make of the extremely long lives described in ch. 5? What do we learn about God’s judgment in the story of Noah and the Ark? ...about the covenant? Who shut the door of the Ark when the rains came? Do you find comfort in the phrase “But God remembered Noah...” in 8:1? After Noah builds an altar and offers sacrifice, what promise does God make? How does that promise impact our own thoughts about the future today?

**PRAY:** Reflect for a while on the Noah narrative of Genesis. Thank God for protecting human life from his divine judgment. Thank God for his promise to never completely destroy human life again. Rejoice in hope of eternal salvation! *Ask our Heavenly Father to pour out a spirit of generosity and cheerful giving at Faith! Thank him for his provision for the just completed year, as well as his kind provision for what we will need in 2023. Ask God to give guidance to our Finance Team, comprised of West & South members.*

## Thursday, January 5

Read Genesis 9-11

**THINK:** As we saw with Genesis 2 as a “zoom lens” view of Day 6, so now ch. 9 is a “zoom lens” look at the covenant promise God gave to Noah and his family. Why does God establish strict laws concerning lifeblood? How does the rainbow confirm God’s promise? [Note: the ESV Study Bible has a helpful comment on the curse of Canaan; worth reading!] How is Babel an example of the sinful pride of wanting to be “like God”? What judgment fell as a result of that pride? Consider in what ways you struggle with pride.

**PRAY:** The laws concerning the blood remind us of the precious blood of Jesus shed on the cross. Oh what love the Father has shown us! Praise and thank him for Jesus and for the cross. Thank him as well for the rainbow as a sign of the promise. “Father, forgive my pride. I know pride is a root of all kinds of sin. I humble myself before you and acknowledge that my only hope is in trusting you completely!” *Pray for lost people you care about who need Jesus.*

## Friday, January 6

Read Genesis 12-14

**THINK:** How old was Abram when God first revealed Himself to him and called him to move to a new location? What prompted Abram to build an altar by the oaks of Mamre? Why did Abram and Lot have to separate? Why did Abram have to go into battle? Who was king Melchizedek and what do we know about him? (Read more in Hebrews 7). What does the name Melchizedek mean?

**PRAY:** Note the change in Abram from his fear of the Egyptians, when he lied about his wife, to his boldness in battle when rescuing his nephew, Lot. Abram was learning to trust in God. Pray for God to help you grow in this area as well. *Pray for our troubled nation. Pray for God’s Holy Spirit to move in a mighty way to bring a spiritual renewal to our country and a time of global harvest around the world. Our world needs Jesus! Call upon the Lord to move!*

## Weekend, January 7-8

Read 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

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:** "Puff up" or "build up" – that's worth thinking about. It's best to know God and love him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength! Dr. Warren Wiersbe: "There were two sources of meat in the ancient world: the regular market (where prices were higher) and the local temples (where meat from the sacrifices was always available). The strong members of the church realized that idols could not contaminate food, so they saved money by purchasing the cheaper meat available from the temples. Furthermore, if unconverted friends invited them to a feast at which sacrificed meat was served, the strong Christians attended it...All of this offended the weaker Christians." (*Be Wise*, p.87)

Paul was careful not to wound the consciences of weaker Christians, so he exercised caution: LOVE exercised knowledgeably for the sake of the body of Christ.

**PRAY:** Ask God to give you wisdom and love as you exercise your freedom in Christ. Pray for our pastors preaching on this important passage of Scripture. Pray for our church family to be one where love, knowledge, wisdom, discernment, and kindness are all exercised prayerfully and helpfully for the building up of others. Ask God to keep his church from pride and arrogance.

**FAITH GROUP:** What are some "weaker brother" issues of today where loving Christians exercise caution for the sake of others? Issues where they may well be freedom of conscience yet love tells us to be careful about our public actions?

Discuss these, and then pray for one another about the exercise of both love and wisdom in the church family.