

# 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 30

Read Genesis 44-45

**THINK:** Joseph did not really practice divination; he was carrying out an elaborate scheme in order to protect his family, bring his father to Goshen to see him, and live near his family. What was God doing in bringing Jacob's family to Egypt, in his grand plan? Why did Joseph have such a special affection for Benjamin? How does the text emphasize Joseph's faith and confidence in God's sovereignty again and again? How does Joseph's story in Genesis inspire greater faith in your daily walk with God?

**PRAY** Often we do not discern the intricacies of God's plan and his working. It is for us to BELIEVE God, to trust in his promises, and to act wisely in accord with his will. Tell God how much you love him, and how much you desire to grow in your faith. Express again your trust in God's plan for your life, and willingness to walk with him no matter what. *Yesterday we celebrated God's goodness and grace as the body of Christ at Faith. Thank God once again!*

## Tuesday, January 31

Read Genesis 46

**THINK:** In the ultimate design of God, Israel is moved from Canaan to Egypt. Events still in the future of God's people are set in motion with this move. Consider the entire sweep of salvation history (the plagues, the Red Sea, the wilderness wandering years, the Promised Land, even the coming of Christ) and ponder the significance of this chapter in that light. What details here are of special interest to you? Consider how God used Joseph - amazing. Have you considered that God's plan is to use you (your gifts, your testimony, your time and willingness) to make a kingdom impact?

**PRAY:** Praise God as the Master Designer, not just of creation, but of all history as well. Praise him for his extraordinary salvation plan. Praise him for sending Joseph ahead to Egypt to deliver his people, a foreshadowing of Jesus, your Savior and Deliverer. Thank God for his marvelous working in your life. Ask God to guide and direct you in making a kingdom impact for his glory. *Pray the same for our church family, both West (soon Risen Hope) and South.*

## Wednesday, February 1

Read Genesis 47

**THINK:** "God moves in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform" (Wm Cowper). How did God move through Joseph to bring Pharaoh extraordinary wealth and power? Yet how also did Joseph's wise leadership provide for the people and preserve them? What happened to Jacob's family in Goshen? What was Jacob's end of life request? What life lessons has this saga taught you?

**PRAY:** Review God's hand of grace and provision in your life. How has God provided for you? Then thank him. How has God shown you his faithfulness and grace in ways that you did not expect? How has God so led you that you have deeply impacted others, leading them to faith in Christ or building them up in the faith. *Tonight, children and youth are meeting at South. Pray for God's Spirit to move in the hearts of these young people to bring them to Christ.*

## Thursday, February 2

Read Genesis 48

**THINK:** El Shaddai – God Almighty – appeared to Jacob and reaffirmed the covenant first made with Abram. Now it is passed to Joseph and his sons. As so often in Scripture, God works in surprising ways through brothers! Here he does so again, with Jacob blessing Joseph’s younger son in an unexpected way. Why should this not be a surprise? Can you think of other times when God worked in an unusual way through brothers in the Bible? Joseph and his sons receive Jacob’s blessing. And that blessing has passed all the way to YOU, through Jesus Christ. Hallelujah!

**PRAY:** Praise God for the blessing that has passed all the way from Genesis to Revelation, from Abraham to you! Praise God for his divine working to bless all nations through his Son, Jesus. Express your trust in the Lord as he works in surprising ways to fulfill his will. *Pray for our global workers bringing the gospel to the nations!*

## Friday, February 3

Read Genesis 49

**THINK:** After blessing Joseph’s two sons and essentially adopting them and elevating them to an equal status as his own sons in chapter 48, Jacob turns his attention to his remaining sons. Notice that these blessings are more than mere wishes but seem to contain an element of prophecy in them. What observations do you make in this chapter? Does any “blessing” stand out? What does it mean that ‘the scepter shall not depart from Judah’?

**PRAY:** Judah receives a long and positive blessing from his father. The ‘scepter’ referred to here is a prophetic reference to the kingdom of David. Jacob not only predicts the great empire of David but also the greater kingdom of Christ, the second David. (See Romans 1:1-6.) Do you see the sovereign hand of God on display in these blessings? Praise God that He is in control and has a plan, a global plan for the nations and a personal plan for you! *Pray for our PrimeTime ministry (55+) led by Greg and Tami Hannestad.*

## Weekend, February 4-5

Read 1 Corinthians 11:2-16

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:** Recently, pop singer and actor Harry Styles posed wearing a skirt. The photo was widely distributed. The effect of the photo was to say, "Gender is non-binary. There are women who prefer to be men and men who prefer to be women and they are free to dress however they wish." At least, that's what I (Pastor Dana) think he was communicating.

This rebellion against God's master design of male and female is having a massive, destructive effect on our society and culture. Men and women are more confused than they have ever been (maybe, though ancient Rome lost its global influence soon after adopting similar practices and philosophy). We are reminded of the poem, "*Invictus*" by Henley, with its famous line, "I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul."

Today's reading is challenging as we seek to decipher what is cultural (for a time) and what is permanent (divine principle). Ponder that question. But let us remember that God created male and female for our good and for the good of humanity, and that to reject his divine design is to invite judgement and even extinction.

**PRAY:** Pray for God's Spirit to move mightily in our confused culture. Ask God to rescue those who are adrift in the sea of rebellion and confusion, as the hymn says, "Rescue the perishing." Pray for our pastors as they preach on this passage. Pray for anyone in your sphere of life who has been touched by this current confusion.

**FAITH GROUP:** How has the present-day cultural confusion over gender touched your life? How do you seek to bring clarity about male and female to your own children? Encourage one another in this and pray for wisdom and discernment.