

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, January 9, 2023

Read Genesis 15-17

THINK: God appears to Abram again, to re-emphasize the promise of blessing. How does Abram respond in Gen. 15:6 and why is this significant? (See also Romans 4) What idea did Sarai come up with to fulfill the promise of children? How did that turn out? God appears to Abram again to re-state His promise of blessing. How old is Abram now? God gives Abram the requirement of circumcision. What does this represent? Did circumcision save Abram? *How easy it is to become impatient with God's plan and his timing and try to do (whatever) our own way. It doesn't turn out well, does it?*

PRAY: It's now been 24 years since God first promised Abram offspring that could not be numbered. Abram is still waiting but also still believing God. Remember that God's timing is not our timing. Are you waiting on God to answer a prayer? Keep praying! Praise God and thank Him, for He indeed is our Jehovah Jireh, God our Provider! Ask God for greater patience to wait for him. *Pray for all those who serve as teachers and Faith Group leaders at West.*

Tuesday, January 10

Read Genesis 18-20

THINK: In what form does the Lord appear to Abraham? What does Sarah overhear that causes her to chuckle? Why? What do we learn about intercession from the 2nd half of ch. 18? The next two chapters are jammed with amazing, sometimes troubling detail. How is God merciful to Lot? How does God protect Sarah from Abraham's foolishness? In these two chapters, what do we learn about God's character and judgment?

PRAY: What did you learn about intercessory prayer from ch. 18? Apply that now! Intercede for others in your family and sphere of influence. Express the wise fear of the Lord for his holiness, judgment and power. Ask God to protect you from foolish decisions and to give you grace and wisdom for a life of faith, hope, and love. *Pray for the South Campus Management Team led by Jeff Braak. This faithful group, with help from Pastor Dave Vilhauer, manages day-to-day care of our South property.*

Wednesday, January 11

Read Genesis 21-23

THINK: The fulfillment of God's promise - Isaac is born. What does his name mean? How is Abraham's family divided? How does God show his providential care to Hagar and her son? Note the emphasis on prayer in v. 33. Ch. 22 is an extraordinary, prophetic foreshadowing of the cross and the gospel. How are we introduced to substitutionary atonement? Notice the missionary implications of v. 18! We are given a fascinating view of a different culture and its negotiations as Abraham buries Sarah his wife in ch. 23.

PRAY: Praise God as the Promise-fulfiller and as Jehovah Jireh, "The God who provides" in these chapters. Praise and thank him for his gracious kindness toward you and your family in fulfilling his promises and providing for you. Praise him especially for providing his Son Jesus as your Substitute, the Lamb of God, to pay for your sins. Ask God to move in the lives of your Sacred 7 (people you are praying for to come to faith in Christ), that they might trust in Jehovah Jireh. *Ask God to bring our children and youth to faith.*

Thursday, January 12

Read Genesis 24

THINK: Another fascinating glimpse of another time and culture! Notice that a vow is made by placing the hand under the thigh. Reflect on the amazing prayer of Abraham's servant (vv. 12-14). Notice who gets the glory for answered prayer. This is a superb example of God's providential leading in the fulfillment of his promises and his will. What can we learn from this chapter that applies to our own life journey? Note the prominence of prayer. How prominent is prayer in your own faith walk?

PRAY: Rejoice in prayer at the providence of God! He is able to do even more than we ask or imagine. Tell God about an area of your own life where you need his leading and guiding. Ask him to lead our church in 2023. *Ask our Heavenly Father to give us boldness in sharing our faith with others. "Father, give us fruit as we speak the gospel and declare what Jesus Christ has done for us." Pray for loved ones and friends who need Jesus (your Sacred 7 prayer list).*

Friday, January 13

Read Genesis 25-26

THINK: Aren't these fascinating chapters? What was the prophecy concerning the twins born to Isaac and Rebekah? How was that word from God fulfilled? What parallel do we observe between Isaac and his father? Ponder the amazing role of Abimelech in this book. How did God bless Isaac? Note: today people quarrel over water rights also! Amid all the blessing ch. 26 ends on a bitter note. What observations can we make about families from this book? Take a few moments to ponder God's guidance and grace in your family.

PRAY: Express to God your amazement and thanks for the detailed way he preserved the story of Abraham and his offspring for us. Thank God also that this story will ultimately culminate in the birth of Jesus as the Messiah and Savior! Pray for your family, in all its complexity. Ask God to work powerfully in each family member's life, especially that each would come to faith in Christ as Savior and Lord. *Pray for our Faith Elder Council planning our annual Celebration on January 29th, 4 pm at South Campus. We have much to be thankful for, and much guidance to ask of God in 2023.*

Weekend, January 14-15

Read 1 Corinthians 9:1-27

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: "This is my defense to those who would examine me." Clearly, Paul is responding to some who are critical of him. What does he say to these critics? What is his greatest and most important priority? What is he willing to do to make sure he does not fall short of this calling? Reflect on your willingness to "go the extra mile" to share that gospel with lost people in your sphere of influence. Is your greater priority your "rights and freedoms" or is it the spread of the gospel of Christ? That is worthy of some deep reflection and prayer! Help us, O God.

PRAY: Ask God to give us much grace to prioritize the gospel as of first importance in *our* lives, both individually and as a church. Pray for wisdom in how best to share Christ with those on your Sacred 7 list. Pray for them, name by name. Ask God to work by his Spirit in their lives.

Pray for our pastors preaching on this challenging and provocative passage of Scripture!

FAITH GROUP: What do you think "becoming all things to all men" implies for our lives today? Are there limits? What does that look like day by day? Discuss this as a group. Give examples from your own sphere of relationships. Pray for one another.