

As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another. Proverbs 27:17



In this Issue

- Women Empowering Women.....pg. 1
- Words to Grow By.....pg. 1
- David Part 4.....pg. 2 - 3
- In Unexpected Ways.....pg. 4
- God News for Everyone.....pg. 5
- Word Search..... pg. 6
- Closing Words.....pg. 7
- Write Us.....pg. 7
- What Must I Do to Be Saved?.....pg. 8

Women Empowering Women

Always remember that God is faithful
and He will not let you be tested beyond your
strength,

but with the testing,

He will provide the way out so that you may be
able to endure it.

1 Corinthians 10:12-14

The pain that you've been feeling can't compare
to the joy that is coming! **Romans 8:18**

TRUST, BELIEVE and hang on in there! The best is
yet to come!

"Words to Grow By"

LINDA LEWIS

The Indescribable Gift

GOD'S INDESCRIBABLE GIFT is Jesus Christ.

All that our **hearts** have ever desired,

Every **need** we face,

Every **truth** we seek,

And every **blessing** we long for is found in
Jesus Christ.

IN HIM we see all that God wants to reveal
to us,

we **walk** in all God has prepared for us,

we **experience** all God has planned for us,

and we **receive** all God wants to be in us.

HE IS the **Fountain** that quenches our thirst,

The **Bread** that nourishes our souls,

The **Light** that dispels our darkness,

The **Physician** that heals our wounds,

The **Shepherd** that guides our steps,

The **Counselor** that gives us wisdom,

The **Word** that establishes us in truth,

The **Faithful One** that gives us security,

The **Door** that gives us access to the Father,

And the **Way** that leads us home.

WHAT a **love!**

WHAT a **Savior!**

WHAT a **gift! Hallelujah!**

Our Christmas Prayer for you:

May God bless you as we celebrate the
birth of Jesus and may you have

PEACE to bless each day,

HOPE for each tomorrow,

And **JOY** in every season.

David – Part 4 BY PASTOR MIKE HERNANDEZ, CHURCH OF THE HARVEST

Last month we discussed David's great sin of adultery and murder. As a reminder, David committed adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite. Consequently, Bathsheba got pregnant and after David's cover up failed, he had Uriah killed then took Bathsheba as his wife.

“And when her (Bathsheba) mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.” 2 Samuel 11:27

David thought he got away with his sin. Unfortunately, that is a feeling we all may feel at some point in time. When we don't have immediate consequences for our sin, we can tend to think that our sin has no effect on us. This feeling may actually lead us into a place of carelessness and recklessness where we keep on sinning. However, we need to remember the principle of “sowing and reaping”.

“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap”. – Galatians 6:7

This means that our actions will always have consequences. If we plant bad seed, we will receive bad fruit. On the flip side, if we plant good seed, we will receive good fruit. But one important piece to remember, whenever you plant seed, it takes time to harvest. That is why sometimes we do not have immediate consequences for our action. A farmer plants seed in the spring time but doesn't receive the harvest till fall. That delay can happen with whatever seed we plant.

Back to David. After the child was born, David received a visit from a prophet of God whose name was Nathan. Nathan told David a story of injustice where a rich man took advantage of a poor man. During this story, David's wrath was aroused against this rich man and even said this man should die for this injustice (2 Samuel 12:1-6).

“Then Nathan said to David, ‘You are the man!’” – 2 Samuel 12:7a

Nathan then calls David out for the murder of Uriah the Hittite and the adulterous relationship with Uriah's wife. Then Nathan pronounces upon David the consequences of his sin (2 Samuel 12:7-12).

David – Part 4 Cont.

“So David said to Nathan, ‘I have sinned against the Lord.’ And Nathan said to David, ‘The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die. However, because by this deed you have given great occasion

to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also who is born to you shall surely die.’ “ – 2 Samuel 12:13-14

I believe David's response to the confrontation by the prophet is the key to our ability to repent. David realized and said that his sin was against the Lord. Our sin is always first and foremost against the Lord. Yes, we sin against man as well, but our sin is first against the Lord. David realized that he was a murderer and adulterer but instead of running to Bathsheba (the person whose David's sin impacted the most), David ran to God. When we are convicted of our sin, our first step is to repent to God.

After David's conversation with Nathan, David's son became sick. David pleaded with the Lord for the life of his child, but the child still died.

“Then David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in to her and lay with her. So she bore a son, and he called his name Solomon. Now the Lord loved him.” – 2 Samuel 12:24

The word “comforted” is the Hebrew word “Nacham”. One translation for Nacham is “comfort”, but the primary translation is “repent”. I believe David repented to his wife before he had sex with her. I believe David confessed all he did, that he had Uriah murdered, that he took advantage of Bathsheba and I believe David asked her to forgive him. I believe this because God blessed the new union and even loved David and Bathsheba's offspring. The Lord would not bless the continued sin of David; He would only bless David after he repented.

So, the good news here is that if we will repent, God can bless the rest of our lives. David was called a “man after God's own heart” even though he was a murderer and an adulterer. It doesn't matter the sin you have committed in your life; God is able to forgive you if you truly repent. Your sin was first against God then against others. After asking God to forgive you, you may have to take the next step that David did – confess and repent to the person whom your sin was against. They may or may not forgive you, you can't control their side. You can only control what you can do. But if you will confess and repent, God can forgive you and you can be in right standing with God.

Despite David's great sin, he is still regarded as Israel's greatest king and a man after God's own heart! I take great encouragement from this because it means that God can use any of us, despite what we have done in the past. I hope this encourages you as well!

In Unexpected Ways BY BEVERLY BROWN, GMI VOLUNTEER/WRITER



Several years ago I felt led to quit my job as a first line manager at a large telecommunications company. This was a leap of faith for me because, at the time, I was bringing home almost half the family income.

It was quite an adjustment. But I knew the Lord had directed me to resign. Even so, money was tight.

Shortly thereafter I started traveling with a well-known ministry. Even though I was gone two weekends a month, I was very thankful for the additional income.

One time, as I was sitting on the plane headed to one of the meetings, I was thinking about our finances. Our needs were met but it was very tight.

My husband and I have always been givers. We've tithed since the first year we were married. We have also given in other ways. As I was meditating on our financial status, I was also thinking about how we had always been obedient to give.

I know the Bible and what it teaches about tithing and giving. Malachi 3:10 states "'Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this.' Says the Lord of hosts, 'If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it'" (NKJV).

In meditating on that scripture, I said to the Lord, "Lord, I know Your word is true, and it says You will pour out such a blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it. But I gotta tell you, Lord. I don't see it."

I was thinking of our bank account and how much we did or rather did not have in it. And in looking at our bank accounts, there was plenty of enough room to receive.

Not long after this, I was talking to my friend about having to get rid of some of my clothes. My closet was full, my drawers were full, there were clothes draped everywhere.

"I tell you, I have got to get rid of some of my clothes. I don't have room for all of them."

As soon as I said that, the Lord spoke to my spirit and said, "In clothes, I have given you so many there's not room enough to receive." I got quiet and listened.

As I was getting some food from my pantry I realized some of the expiration dates were drawing near. I knew there was no way I could eat it all before those dates. I thought, "I've got to give some of this away."

The Lord, once again, spoke to my spirit, "In food, I've given you so much there is not room enough to receive."

Through all this I learned the Lord doesn't always and, in fact, seldom does move in the way we think He will. When He says "Blessing," He doesn't always mean just money.

We have preconceived ideas of how He will answer prayer or fulfill His word. We have it all figured out. We have the way and the time He should and will move.

He doesn't follow our timetable or our way of doing things. His thoughts are far above our thoughts and His ways far above our ways.

Be open to how He decides to move. Do not put Him in a box. Look for ways He might have already answered that prayer you've been praying for a while. Ask Him to show you ways He has kept His word.

Be open to the ways the Lord would move in your life.

The Good News of Jesus' Birth is for Everyone! **By Mike Hernandez**

"Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.'" – Luke 2:8-11

The night that Jesus was born, God wanted to share the good news! However, He did not choose a king or his court to share the news. He did not choose the priests and Levites to share the news. He did not choose the dignitaries or rich to share the news. He did not choose the scribes or educators to share the news. He chose to share the good news with shepherds.

Shepherds were common people who worked hard out in the field. They were dirty and were not considered of high esteem. They were not necessarily involved with the social circles of a village as they spent their days and nights outside the city. Yet God chose to share the good news of the birth of His Son with shepherds.

I would think that if you wanted good news to spread, you would choose the rich, famous or powerful. Or maybe you would choose those who have influence, like the priests or scribes. Remember, this was before the internet so the main way of communication was word of mouth. This was the best news ever and God chose to share the news of Jesus being born with lowly shepherds.

I believe the Lord chose shepherds for several reasons. First, shepherds were lowly and humble so right from the beginning of Jesus ministry on earth, God made it evident that the good news was for everyone. Second, the shepherds were taking care of sheep, several of which would become sacrificial lambs at Passover so God was setting in motion the idea of Jesus being the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world (John 1:29). Finally, God knew that the shepherds would receive the news with joy and share it with others.

"So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord had made known to us.' And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the Babe lying in a manger. Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child." – Luke 2:15-17

Notice how the shepherds responded to the news from the angels. First, they received the news with joy! Second, they made haste to celebrate and visit the Newborn King. Finally, they shared the news with everyone they came across.

My prayer and hope for you this Christmas is that you will be like the shepherds, that you will receive the good news of Jesus birth with great joy, that you would make haste to have a relationship with Him and finally, that you would share with others the good news of what you have experienced.

Remember, the good news of Jesus' birth is for everyone!

Winter Holidays Word Search



avalanche
blanket
blizzard
chimney
Christmas
coat
cold
December
earmuffs
February
fireplace
freeze
freezing rain
frigid

gloves
hail
Hanukkah
heater
hibernate
hockey
holidays
hot chocolate
ice fishing
ice skates
icicles
igloo
Jack Frost
jacket

January
Kwanzaa
lunar new year
melt
migrate
mittens
New Year's Day
quilt
scarf
shovel
skiing
sled
sleet
sleigh

slippery
slush
snowball
snowboard
snowdrift
snowflake
snowman
snowmobile
snowplow
snowstorm
sweater
vacation
Valentine's Day

Closing Words LONNIE JOHNSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GROWTH MINISTRIES INC

God Hears Your Cries!

There was a time in my life when things were not what they are now. I had no real peace. I was separated from God because I chose to walk in sin. I fed my flesh and paid for it constantly. During this time, I had many moments of emotional and spiritual pain and anguish. One day I was at my lowest. I couldn't take anymore. I decided to give up and give it to the Lord. This wasn't something that happened easily. As I said, I was in a bad place so I literally cried out to God to take it away. I told God I didn't care if I never had a good job, a nice place to stay or anything else that most people care about. All I wanted was peace and deliverance from my current lifestyle. I asked Him to take charge of my life and be my Lord. Again, this was all through the tears of my despair. I was serious and I believed that He could do it. At that moment I could feel the peace starting to take over. Things did not change 100% at that moment, but the change had started. Each new thing that happened gave me stronger faith to believe God for even more. I got a great job, I got married, I moved into a nice home, I began to minister and witness about the goodness of God to others that were lost.

Psalms 40:1-3 says ...

**¹ I waited patiently for the LORD;
he turned to me and heard my cry.**
**² He lifted me out of the slimy pit,
out of the mud and mire;
he set my feet on a rock
and gave me a firm place to stand.**
**³ He put a new song in my mouth,
a hymn of praise to our God.
Many will see and fear the LORD
and put their trust in him.**

God allowed this testimony from David to be canonized and added to the bible because he wanted us to know that he hears **everyone's cries**. He is not a respecter of person. "I waited patiently for the Lord" is a declaration of the confidence and faith David had that God would respond to his situation.

Cry out to God. Trust that He hears you. And patiently wait for him to go to work on your situation.



Write Us

We would love to hear from you. If you have a testimony, a prayer request or a question about your walk with the Lord, send us a letter. We would love to pray or rejoice with you. Maybe you are a writer and you have a spiritual word of encouragement for the readers of our newsletter. We would love to review your article to see if we can use it in our newsletter. We also like to share poems from you more artistic sisters and brothers.

Growth Ministries, Inc., Attn: Executive Secretary, P.O. Box 4375, Olathe, KS 66063

What must I do to be saved?

If you have never accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior, or if you have turned away from Him living a life of unrighteousness and wish to be connected to Him, then take a moment and say this prayer:

“Lord, I confess that I am a sinner and ask for your forgiveness. I believe that your son Jesus died on the cross for my sins and was resurrected with all power. I invite Jesus to be the Lord of my life and your Holy Spirit to come into my heart to guide me for the rest of my days. Amen.”



Romans 10:9 says that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

If this is you, please write Growth Ministries and we will gladly help you start your new life in Christ.

Growth Ministries, Inc., Attn: Executive Secretary, P.O. Box 4375, Olathe, KS 66063