

W @ K L J P r a J @ r J O U r n a l

**DAILY BIBLE STUDIES**

*“Taking the Church Seriously”*

*Selected Scripture*

*January 11 – January 17, 2009*

Praise & Prayer	ADORATION Hallowed be Your name. (6:9)	AUTHORITY Your Kingdom come... (6:10)	APPEAL Give us this day... (6:11)	AQUITTAL Forgive us our debts... (6:12)	ASSISTANCE Deliver us from evil. (6:13a)	ADMIRATION For Yours is the Kingdom... (6:13)	Lord's Day	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat

**THE LORD'S DAY** –This week, we begin a small series of studies which I pray will be used by the Lord to stir the hearts of His people here at FBCS. Each family will receive today a gift; a copy of Joshua Harris’ book entitled “Stop Dating The Church –Fall In Love With The Family Of God”. Back in 2006 we did a Bible study adapted from this book and you will also find the study notes for that study on the web site in the “Document Library” section under “Bible Studies”. I highly recommend that resource as you read the book (our daily studies will come from this material). The next several weeks we will basically preach the some of the themes and subjects addressed there. Remember, it is not “books” that change the human heart but “The Book”, The Word of God empowered by The Holy Spirit. My prayer is that God would convict His people of our sin and stir up our love for Him and the person of The Lord Jesus Christ and it would be manifest in and through our local church. Read **Ecclesiastes 12:12-14, John 6:63**.

*What truth(s) did I learn from God’s Word today?*

*Suggestion for prayer: Ask God to teach you from His Word this week.*

**MONDAY** – In a day where the local Church is looked at with such disdain, as an inconvenience to **MY** schedule, the message of this book is so essential and so needed. People look into coming to a local church as they would look into the movie page of the paper to see what movie they would attend. What will best suit **MY** needs, what will entertain **ME**, and what am **I** in the mood for. Very few “Christians” (or probably better said “churchgoers”), seem to be interested in what they can give to a local church body or how they can serve (and be a servant), but rather they look for what they can get out of it for themselves. The church deserves far more than that and Christ Jesus demands far more than this half-hearted, uncommitted, apathetic and sometimes plainly unfaithful attention the church receives. We **are not** into **commitment** today—we only want to **DATE** the church. This isn’t what God wants for His people. True believers are the “*Bride of Christ*”, and it is about time that professing Christians took the church seriously, and displayed the passion that shows they have fallen in love with the family of God. Read **John 13:31-35, John 15:9-17**.

*What truth(s) did I learn from God’s Word today?*

*Suggestion for prayer: Father, help me get the point that I am to display pure, genuine love to my “family” of brothers and sisters. May others see our real love.*

M a t t h @ W 6: 9-13

**TUESDAY – WHERE IS THE PASSION?** (**Ephesians 1:1-14**) This “idea” of “The Church” is not man’s idea. It is God’s plan and program. He has purposed to “call out” (ekklesia- the name used in the New Testament for the church which means “a calling out”) a people for Himself. He has purposed to set His love on us, to grant us the gift of faith to believe, to make possible peace with Him and to forgive us of all our sins, all through the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ in our place on the cross. It is “**IN Him**” (**vs7**) we have redemption. It is not by ANY merit or good works of our own (**Ephesians 2:8-9, Titus 3:5**). A true understanding of this truth on the part of one who has truly experienced God’s saving grace will manifest itself in the life of that individual. There will be a passion for God, and a desire to please Him in those who are truly His children.

*What truth(s) did I learn from God’s Word today?*

*Suggestion for prayer: Father, thank You for Your grace & mercy to me in Christ.*

**WEDNESDAY** – Continued...This is not to say that we as His children will always be perfect and that we can’t have our passion negatively affected through yielding to sin, disobedience, and the pursuit of our own selfish, sinful desires. But every true child of God will be chastened by the Lord (**Hebrews 12:5-11**) because we are all imperfect and need training and discipline. God has saved us to ultimately glorify Him (**Ephesians 1:6,12,14**) and all true born again people are now new creations in Christ Jesus (**2 Corinthians 5:17**), and we will desire to bring God that glory that is due Him. This passion for God will be seen in our lives in various ways, but it will be evident.

*What truth(s) did I learn from God’s Word today?*

*Suggestion for prayer: Father God, help me be strong in the power of Your might in mortifying sin in my life. Give me a pure passion for You.*

**THURSDAY – WHERE IS THE LOVE OF WHAT HE LOVES?** (**Ephesians 5:22-32**) This thought is continued throughout the **book of Ephesians** and the picture of a passion and love for the church is illustrated in **chapter 5** where we find the church called the “*Bride of Christ*”. We are given a look at how Jesus Christ feels about the church, HIS church. In this passage we find The Apostle Paul even refers back and quotes **Genesis 2**. He then says in **verse 32** that this is a great mystery and it is about Christ and His church. God did not get His inspiration for loving the church from marriage, rather one reason He created marriage was to illustrate His love for the church. In the lives of a man and woman in love, pursuing romance, commitment, and faithfulness in the bond of marriage, we catch a faint glimmer of the undying love Christ has for those He died to save—His Church.

*What truth(s) did I learn from God’s Word today?*

*Suggestion for prayer: Father, help me understand how much You love me and may I love You fervently in return Jesus, and not myself and my own selfish desires..*

**FRIDAY** – Continued...We can obviously see that this passage is referring to the church with a capital “**C**”. This is the universal Church, all of those who are truly born again by faith in Jesus Christ and His work on the cross alone for their justification before God. We understand that Christ loves His church with a love that is not fickle and flighty. As He hung on the cross His love for His Bride was evident. His passion and love for His Bride has not dimmed through the years. He still calls us His Bride. What about you? Do you love what He loves? God does not call you to love what He, Himself doesn’t love. He loved sinful people, lost in sin (**Romans 5:8**). So, you have no excuse for not loving the church, even though it “isn’t quite as perfect as you think it should be.” We must admit that we are not the most beautiful of “Brides”, yet while we were sinners, Christ died for us. In **Ephesians 3:9-11** we read that the angels look down upon God’s work through the church with amazement. As the power of the gospel is worked out in the lives of real people, it transforms them and they are reconciled to God. They are then reconciled to each other in the church, and this is a mystery that was hidden for ages past but is now being displayed, manifesting the wisdom of God, which brings Him glory.

*What truth(s) did I learn from God’s Word today?*

*Suggestion for prayer: Father, thank You for the grace You give to us through our Savior, The Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you for including me in Your church.*

**SATURDAY** – The **book of Ephesians** also gives us another amazing picture of Christ’s perspective of His Church. We read in **1:22-23** that the church is called the “Body” of Christ. This is how close the church is to the heart of God. We are called His Body. The true church is the physical manifestation of Jesus Christ on the earth. The church is also seen as a magnificent temple, unlike any other structure throughout history. It is not made with hands, or with bricks and stones but is comprised of “living stone”. **Ephesians 2:21-22.** As believers, we are joined with all the saints of God into this awesome spiritual structure. God call us to be imitators of Him (**Ephesians 5:1**). As believers, we are being conformed into the image of His Son (**Romans 8:29**). We know that this process will one day be perfect and complete by God’s sovereign power and plan (**Philippians 1:6**). So, if Jesus loves the church, you and I as professing believers should too. Christ continues to love us despite the fact we are not yet perfect. If anyone ever had any right to give up on His bride, or to be disillusioned and give up on His marriage it would be Christ. But He never has, and He never will. As a matter of fact, according to **Ephesians 5:26-27**, Christ is at work every day making us as His bride more and more beautiful in anticipation of that final day when we will be presented to Him. Does your life look like a bride that is being made ready? Are you passionate for the things that God is passionate for? Do you love what Jesus loves? Namely—The Church?

*What truth(s) did I learn from God’s Word today?*

*Suggestion for prayer: Father, help me be a faithful Bride. I eagerly await the day when You will complete the work You started in me and present me “faultless”.*