

Sunday, January 2, 2022

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 1:3-14

*Tomorrow is the first blank page of a 365-page book.
Write a good one! —Brad Paisley*

It's day 2 of 2022. A new year is before us, a year like every year. It's a year through which we're going to travel whether we like it or not. But, we're optimistic, aren't we?

But, we better check our *compasses* to ensure we get to where we want to go. There are four points of the compass — north, east, south and west. These are called the *cardinal* points. The Bible reading above from Ephesians is a compass with four cardinal points, which should guide us as we navigate through life.

North: We are *chosen*, verse 4. Note that we were chosen “in Christ before the foundation of the world.” So this is where we stand at the beginning of this year. Where? We face an unknown future as people who were chosen in the mind of God and according to the will of God before continents were formed, oceans came into being and stars were thrown into the dark tapestry of the heavens.

South: We are *children of God*. This is personal. We are not children by *nature*, but by *adoption*, the apostle says. This dovetails with the concept of being chosen. All children are special, but an adopted child is even more special because he or she was chosen. Look out over the unknown terrain of 2022. Now remember that you are a child of God. Why is this important? Do children with loving parents worry about their future? Do they wonder how they will survive? Do they even bother themselves with these types of adult concerns? No! They have complete and utter confidence that their earthly parents will provide for their needs.

Now to what might be called the *east-west* cardinal points. These are *east-west* compass points, based on what the psalmist says in Psalm 103: “As far as the east is from the west, so far he removes our transgressions from us” (v. 12).

West: We are *redeemed*. This is possible only because of the grace of God that has been freely bestowed on us in Christ Jesus (vv. 6-8; see also 2:8-10).

East: We are *forgiven*. Everything ugly and unsightly has been blotted out. Our offenses against a holy God have been removed and dis-remembered.

To review: The four cardinal points of the Ephesian compass are the north-south vectors of our status as *chosen / children* of God. The east-west points of *redemption* and *forgiveness* locate us squarely within God's vast plan of extravagant grace and salvation. Everything we are and hope to be falls within these four vectors, which in themselves encompass God's eternal plan for us.

—Timothy Merrill

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for giving me the assurance that you will not only chart my course, but be my Navigator as well. Amen.

Week of January 2, 2022

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday: Genesis 1-5
Monday: Genesis 6-12
Tuesday: Genesis 13-18
Wednesday: Genesis 19-23
Thursday: Genesis 24-28
Friday: Genesis 29-32
Saturday: Genesis 33-36

READ
THROUGH
THE BIBLE
IN ONE
YEAR!

Each week, *HomeTouch* will provide daily readings from the Bible that will take you through the Bible in one year. Sometimes, we will suggest a **Verse to Remember**. Many *HomeTouch* readers try to memorize these verses; memorization stimulates both the mind and the heart!

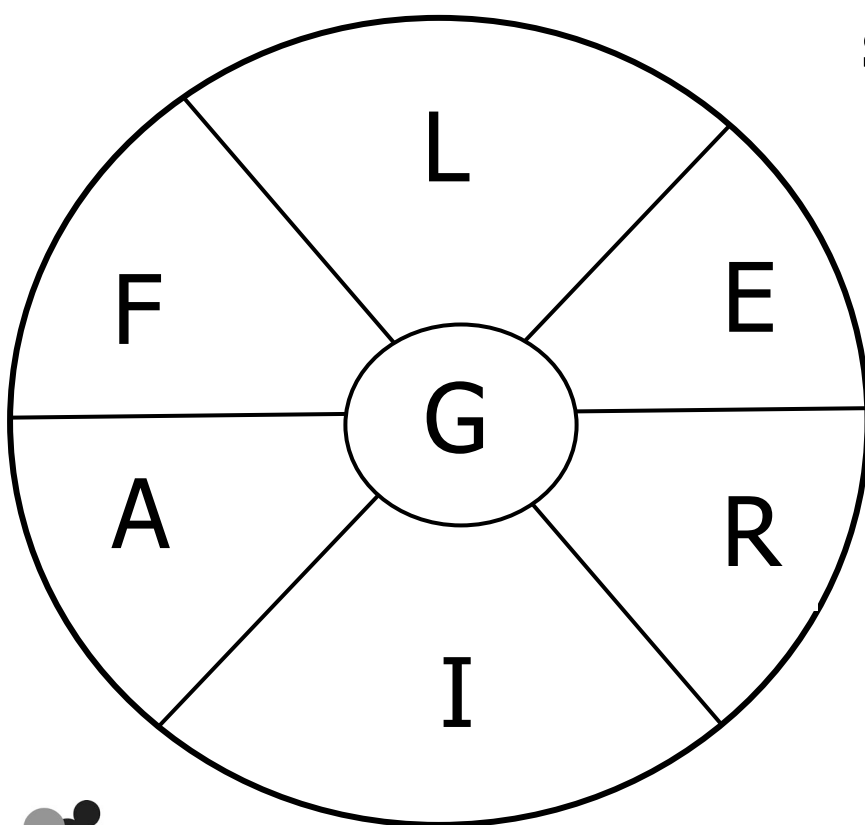
SPELLING WHEEL

DIRECTIONS: How many common words of three or more letters can you form using the letters in the wheel to the left?

EACH WORD MUST CONTAIN THE LETTER G.

Can you find the word that has seven letters in it? Suggested answers are below.

10 words = Good
 14 words = Excellent
 17+ words = Genius!



VERSE TO REMEMBER

I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.

—Genesis 12:2 (NIV)

ANSWERS: glare, lager, agile, grail, large, regal, grief, girl, rage, gale, flag, gear, fig, age, gal, rag, leg, lag. The seven-letter word is: fragile.

January 2022						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Sunday, January 9, 2022

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 43:1-7

***Direction is more important than speed.
Many are going nowhere fast. —Anon.***

Last week, we wrote about the importance of remembering the four cardinal points of our biblical compass. Today, let's go over some important reminders concerning your compass. *Always trust the compass, which is the Word of God.* The compass will not lie to you. Trust it, even when your instincts or preferences are suggesting a different path. You have a compass for a reason. If you do not trust the compass, it's just taking up space. Your compass is a guidance device that ensures you have the correct heading and that you arrive safely at your destination. Trust the compass.

Consult it frequently. This is a crazy, upside-down, topsy-turvy, goofy and dangerous world, and boundaries, fault lines, mileposts and road conditions are always changing. Consult your moral and biblical compass frequently to make certain you are where you think you are.

Be aware of variations and deviations. Even though you trust your compass and consult it frequently, do not forget the principle of *deviation*. The magnetic north of a compass is not true north. Professional navigators have the means and knowledge to adjust for this difference. We must remember that it is easy to think we're on the right path when, truth is, we're not even headed on a magnetic north heading, let alone true north heading. We have fooled ourselves. We have put false idols, false images and attractive destinations ahead of the righteous path on which we should be traveling. The prophet Jeremiah addresses this: "The heart is devious above all else; it is perverse — who can understand it?" (17:9). The answer comes immediately: "I the LORD test the mind and search the heart, to give to all according to their ways, according to the fruit of their doings" (17:10).

This brings us to the final note about using our compass: *Always be aware of our True North, Jesus Christ.* He is our True North — north according to the earth's axis, not magnetic north. There is nothing truer than Jesus. If we are following in the shadow of the Son, we need not worry about directional issues. He is leading us home.

—Timothy Merrill

Thank you, God, for giving me a compass, your Word, to guide me through life. Help me to trust it and faithfully turn to it in these troubled times. Amen.

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday: Genesis 37-39

Monday: Genesis 40-42

Tuesday: Genesis 43-46

Wednesday: Genesis 47-50

Thursday: Matthew 1-4

Friday: Matthew 5-7

Saturday: Psalms 1-3

Verse to Remember

Happy are those ... [whose] delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law they meditate day and night. They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. —Psalm 1:1-3

FILL IN THE BLANKS

In Matthew 5 (see the reading above) we have the "Beatitudes," a series of "blessed" statements made by Jesus. Complete the sentence by following the directions. **DIRECTIONS:** Write a word to fit each definition. Then, transfer the letters to the numbered boxes to read one of these Beatitudes.

The color of coal

1 2 8 17 21

Red flower with thorns

9 — 4 3

Woman's garment

7 23 6 5 24

Small, round, green vegetable in a pod

14 10 16

One hikes on this, also known as a trail

— 20 11 12

An electric fish

13 15 —

Very dark green gemstone

18 19 22 — — — —



Answers:

black
rose
dress
pea
path
eel
emerald
Blessed are
the peace-
makers.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
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Sunday, January 16, 2022

Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

***One of the most important things you can do on this earth is
to let people know they are not alone. —Shannon L. Alder***

*Listen my children and you shall hear, / Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,
On the 18th of April in '75; / Hardly a man is now alive
Who remembers that famous day and year.*

A teacher read this familiar verse to his class one day and some students were able to identify it as the first verse of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem, *Paul Revere's Ride*.

Then the teacher read the last four lines of the poem:

*In the hour of darkness and peril and need, / The people will waken and listen to hear
The hurrying hoof-beats of that steed, / And the midnight message of Paul Revere.*

The teacher's question this time was, "What was the name of Paul Revere's horse?" He had the students read the entire poem and no one could come up with an answer. The reason? Despite the references to the horse in the poem's 13 verses, its name is never mentioned.

The point to the teacher's exercise was that while Paul Revere got all the acclaim for spreading his message, an unknown horse made a significant contribution by taking him where he wanted to go.

When a professional racer wins the Indianapolis 500, few people can name those who designed and built the car that brought the driver to victory or the mechanics who maintained it.

So it is with us. At some point in our lives, we all have received support and encouragement from some unsung friend, conscientious teacher or loving parent. And we still do even today.

No one who achieves success does so without acknowledging the help of others. The wise and confident acknowledge this help with gratitude.

—Adapted from various internet sources

Prayer: Thank you, O God, for supporting me through life, and I give you thanks for the countless people in my past and those in my present, who have helped and assisted me through difficult times. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday: Matthew 8-11

Monday: Matthew 12-15

Tuesday: Matthew 16-19

Wednesday: Matthew 20-22

Thursday: Matthew 23-25

Friday: Matthew 26-28

Saturday: Psalms 4-6

DANIEL, A SERVANT OF GOD

In the book of Daniel, we read of a young man who was extremely gifted and also committed to serving God, no matter how difficult the challenges. Use the clues to complete the crossword puzzle.

CLUES

1. Shadrack was thrown into this, 3:20
2. A king who went mad, 4:33
3. A friend of Daniel, 1:6
4. Saw handwriting on the wall, 5:9
5. Daniel's weeks, 9:24
6. Persian king, 10:1
7. Interpreter of Daniel's vision, 8:16
8. One of three friends, 3:19
9. Capital city of Chaldea, 1:1
10. What the den was full of, 6:16
11. Daniel's menu preference, 1:12
12. Animal with horn between its eyes, 8:5
13. A chief prince, 10:13
14. One of the last kings of Judah, 1:1
15. Number of horns on the fourth beast, 7:7
16. The Mede king, 5:31
17. The king made one for the people to worship, 3:14 (NRSV)
18. A word on the wall, 5:27
19. The second of four beasts, 7:5
20. Feet of ..., 2:33
21. What was cut from the mountain, 2:45 (NRSV)

Be of
good courage
and he shall
strengthen
your heart.

Psalms 27:14

Sunday, January 23, 2022

Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

Pray as though everything depended on God.

Work as though everything depended on you. —Saint Augustine

Frances Green was an 83-year-old California lady living on Social Security. Although living at the poverty line, she had sent one dollar a year to the Republican National Committee (RNC).

Then one day Frances got an RNC fund-raising letter in the mail inviting her to the White House to meet President Reagan. She didn't noticed the little RSVP card that any response should be accompanied by a generous donation. *She thought she'd been invited because they appreciated her dollar-a-year support!*

She spent some of what little money she had to book train tickets for a cross-country ride in coach for her meeting with the president. But when she got to the White House gate, her name was not on the guest list. She was understandably heartbroken.

But a Ford Motor Company executive was nearby. He talked to the guard. He spoke with a White House presidential aide. And he said to Frances Green, "Come back here tomorrow at 9 a.m."

The next day was anything but calm at the White House. A lot was going on. But Frances Green showed up at nine o'clock, full of expectation and enthusiasm. She was met by the car company official, who gave her a wonderful tour of the White House. As they were going by the Oval Office, President Reagan glanced out and saw Frances Green. He gestured her into his office.

As she entered, he rose from his desk and called out, "Frances! Those lousy computers, they messed up again! If I'd known you were coming I would have come out there to get you myself." He then invited her to sit down, and they talked leisurely about California, her town, her life and family.

The president of the United States gave Frances Green a lot of time that day — more time than he had. He knew this woman had nothing to give him, but she needed something he could give her.

And so the Ford executive and the president took time to be kind and compassionate.

In the same manner, God of all creation — there is no higher-ranking authority — will do the same for you. God beckons you to have a meeting, a conversation, a chat — to come into his presence with rejoicing.

—Timothy Merrill, based on online reports of this story

Prayer: Loving God, thank you for inviting me into your presence and for reminding me that your door is always open. Amen.

Daily Bible Readings
Sunday: Job 1-4

Monday: Job 5-7

Tuesday: Job 8-10

Wednesday: Job 11-13

Thursday: Job 14-17

Friday: Job 18-20

Saturday: Psalms 7-9

Verse to Remember

*I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart;
I will tell of all your wonderful deeds. I will be glad and exult
in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.*

—Psalm 9:1-2

WORD BOXES

The book of Acts tells the story of some of the apostle Paul's journeys. Use the grid on the right to fill in the empty boxes on the left, which — when filled out correctly — will reveal the name of one of the cities Paul visited. Remember, only one of the letters derived from either the top or the bottom clue is the correct one. We've done one box for you.

C2	B5	B1	D3	B4	C5	E3
			I			
A2	E4	B2	E5	A1	C1	B4

	A	B	C	D	E
1	G	R	T	J	E
2	P	K	C	B	W
3	Y	X	F	I	H
4	U	N	Z	A	O
5	M	D	S	V	L

Answer: (spelled backward):
HTNIROC

Write a Personal Psalm!

In our **Daily Bible Readings**, we have just started to read the psalms. Have you ever tried to write a psalm? Sometimes, the author of the psalms wrote using an acrostic beginning with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Here's what you could do: Think of a word to use as the acrostic pattern — God, for example. Then write three statements expressing praise. Each sentence begins with one of the letters of the word "God." See the example to the right.

Now you try it. Consider using words for your acrostic pattern such as: praise, goodness, thanks, prayer, etc. Write it on a sheet of paper. Share your work with someone.

Psalm of Praise

Glory to you, O God,
because you give me
comfort in my trials;
Over all the years of my
life, you have always
been there for me.
Do again today as you
have in the past!



Sunday, January 30, 2022

Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 13

A wise physician said, “The best medicine for humans is love.” Someone asked, “What if it doesn’t work?” The doctor said, “Increase the dose!” —Anon.

The Bible reading for today is from the apostle Paul’s first letter to the church in Corinth. Chapter 13 is arguably the most well-known 13 verses in the New Testament. This chapter is often called the “Love Chapter” because the theme is love.

However, the “love” of this chapter is not the love popularized by American popular culture. *This* love is known as *agape* love, using the Greek word itself as the name for this love. As you may already know, this love is the highest, noblest and most sacrificial love of all.

13 things you may not know about agape love

1. It’s more important to have love than to have faith, v. 1.
2. It’s more important to give love than to give away all your possessions, v. 3.
3. Love is patient, that is, it is not ill-mannered toward others, vv. 4-5.
4. Love is kind, v. 4.
5. Love is not stubborn and resentful,
and certainly is not happy when others experience bad luck, vv. 4-6.
6. Love is happy when truth is out, v. 6.
7. Love can put up with a ton of stuff, v. 7.
8. Love is so trusting as to be considered naïve, v. 7.
9. Against all odds, love never loses hope, v. 7.
10. Love perseveres no matter what life throws at it, v. 7.
11. This most rare kind of love never ends, v. 8.
12. Try to think of everything most sacred, most holy, most admired $\frac{3}{4}$
love is greater, vv. 8-13.
13. Of the list of virtues — faith, hope and love, for example — love comes in first, v. 13.

—Timothy Merrill

Prayer: Lord Jesus, fill me, just an imperfect vessel, with your love. Fill me to overflowing, so that your love may wash over all those I meet today, this week and every day thereafter. In your name. Amen.

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday: Job 21-24

Monday: Job 25-27

Tuesday: Job 28-31

Wednesday: Job 32-34

Thursday: Job 35-37

Friday: Job 38-42

Saturday: Psalms 10-12

Verse to Remember

I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. —Job 42:2

MISQUOTED!

DIRECTIONS: Rearrange the words to complete the quotation from the book of Proverbs.

KEEP TONGUE OVER TROUBLE OUT
WATCH MOUTH

“ To _____ and _____
is to _____ of _____ . ”

Romeo and Juliet

Romeo and Juliet are found dead on the floor in a bedroom. When they were discovered, there were pieces of glass and some water on the floor. A shelf and a bed are the only furniture in the room. The house is in a remote location, away from everything except for the nearby railway track. What caused the deaths of Romeo and Juliet?

Solution below.

Romeo and Juliet:
Romeo and Juliet are fish. The rumble of the train knocked the tank off the shelf.
Misquoted. Proverbs 21:23, To watch over mouth and tongue is to keep out of trouble.
After Words:
1. Bar, 2. Tea, 3. Lion, 4. Pool, 5. Paper, 6. Potato, 7. Knife, 8. Track, 9. Silver, 10. Coat, 11. House, 12. Room, 13. Can, 14. Ball, 15. Radio.

Before and After Words

Directions: Add a word to the end of the word on the left and the beginning of the word on the right to form two compound words or phrases. The dashes indicate the number of letters in the linking word. For example, if the words were PEANUT _ _ _ _ _ FLY, the linking word would be BUTTER (peanut butter, butterfly).

1. SALAD _ _ _ _ _ STOOL
2. ICED _ _ _ _ _ SET
3. SEA _ _ _ _ _ TAMER
4. CAR _ _ _ _ _ PARTY
5. NEWS _ _ _ _ _ BAG
6. HOT _ _ _ _ _ CHIP
7. STEAK _ _ _ _ _ EDGE
8. BACK _ _ _ _ _ SUIT
9. QUICK _ _ _ _ _ FISH
10. RAIN _ _ _ _ _ RACK
11. TREE _ _ _ _ _ BOAT
12. BED _ _ _ _ _ MATE
13. TIN _ _ _ _ _ OPENER
14. BASKET _ _ _ _ _ TEAM
15. CAR _ _ _ _ _ STATION