

DAILY BIBLE READINGS - Week of September 30, 2018

THEME: "Special Activities" MY INDIVIDUALITY

SundayRead Psalm 139:1-17

"I will praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well." The human being, everyone of us, is a marvelous creation of God, especially those who were to become people of faith in God. The psalmist in today's Bible reading gives this personal testimony of being formed by God in his mother's womb. The prophet did the same as we read in Jeremiah 1:5: *"Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."* Yes, God uses the man and the woman as His physical instruments, but then as babies mature and develop their faith, God goes on to reveal His plan for their lives in many and various ways, but always in accordance with His Word. Now those who never place their faith in Christ as Savior miss out on this most fulfilling and dramatic life. As implied in the prophet's testimony and in such places as Romans 8:29-30, our all-wise God with His perfect foreknowledge knew who would become His followers even before the creation; and by the power of the Holy Spirit He shows believers what and when He wants them to do. We read this in the aforementioned Romans 8 teaching: *"For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first born among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified."* What a wonderful thing to be born into this world, and how much more to fulfill the plan that God has for our lives. It begins with a decision to repent of sin and receive Jesus as personal Savior. That decision makes us a part of God's family and puts us on the path of knowing the will of God. This is what Jesus called in John 10:10 the *"life abundant."*

PERSONAL CALLING

MondayRead Ephesians 1:18-23

"The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." How do we know the will of God for our lives? Many have asked the question? If the one asking the question is truly sincere, God will reveal His plan for that life! The first step in knowing the will of God is to be honest with God: to have the heart of doing God's will even if it is different from what he or she wants and perhaps dreamed of as a child or teen. The individual must be convinced that what God has in mind is far better than any personal desire. God knows whether or not we will do it. If He knows we will do what He says, He surely will show us. And he does it a step at a time, not an outline of our whole life. The psalmist clued us in on that in Psalm 37:23: *"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord."* Our prayer must be to want God to show us His will as opposed to asking God to give us what we want. He made us and He knows best for what we are suited, the thing for which He made us. If an individual believer is truly serious about knowing and doing God's will, he or she must be a diligent student of God's Word. That is the mandate in II Timothy 2:15: *"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."* God has given us the Holy Spirit to guide us in our Bible reading as Jesus promised in John 16:13, where He said this; *"And when He is come, the Spirit of truth, He will guide you into all truth."* Indeed He does!

DIVERSITY

TuesdayRead I Corinthians 12:4-12

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." People are different! It is quite amazing that the millions of people have a unique appearance, truly personal! Only God could do that! And to think each has at least one special talent. Although many of these unique people have the same talent, their personalities are different; so many with the same talent bring differences to the table in times that they must work together. All bodies of people, therefore, need and have diversity. An athletic team playing the same sport with the same goal needs athletes with diverse talents, as does a cast of characters to portray a drama, or a band to put on a concert. In the

general way, they are working together, but the whole needs different parts. A building under construction is made up of many different components to make a complete building. Diversity is essential for meeting a unified goal.

OUR CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR

Wednesday Read I Corinthians 12:13-18

"Now God hath set the members every one of them as it hath pleased Him." There are many individual local churches that make up the Church Universal; each must do the work of God in their community. Jesus is the Head of the Church and the indwelling Holy Spirit guides and empowers believers to be where God wants them and to do what He wants them to do. The Elders in a local church are entrusted to be overseers of those whom God has put in their local church. God is faithful and will provide a local church with the people necessary to have the program He wants. All individuals in an assembly are a vital part and bring a necessary talent. No one is "just there!" All are there fundamentally to join in worship as a body of believers. Jesus told us that our Heavenly Father seeks worshippers. That is basic! Some have said that "all they ever do is sit in a pew." Praise God for those sitting in a pew to worship God! If God has gifted a person with musical talent, he or she can use that talent to enhance worship. If a person has been gifted to teach, that should be used, but never in such a way that he or she totally misses out on worship. The same is true for all talents. God will see to it that all churches are manned with gifts to run the program. He expects all to use that talent! Let us pray that all will be there to use their talent together!

THE KEY TO UNITY

Thursday Read I Corinthians 13:1-8

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries, and have all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing." The thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians is a great follow up to the message of the twelfth chapter. In the twelfth chapter, God listed a number of the personal talents of believers and placed a stress on the importance of all working together as one body in unity to accomplish great things in the plan of God and for the glory of God. Each part is vital and none should be considered insignificant. As a matter of fact, it can be concluded that many of those less visible may be more essential than those who are highly visible. Having emphasized the value of every one using their personal gifts to get the job done, God in this next chapter addresses the most vital asset of all: love! No matter how valuable are the personal talents, they become useless without mutual love and respect! As a matter of fact, we are told that they are nothing! It is a repeat of the great point made by our Savior in John 13:35: *"By this shall all men know ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."*

THE ULTIMATE GOAL

Friday Read Ephesians 4:12-16

"From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by the which every part supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body with the edifying of itself in love." The church that has been assembled by God to be *"fitly joined and compacted"* should have *"all parts working."* Why? We are told it is to make increase and build up. Just what is this *"building up?"* It could mean becoming stronger or it could mean increasing in number or both. It surely means individual believers should be increasing in spiritual strength. To be spiritually stagnant is not good. It seems wonderful to see the body grow in number, maybe. Some love the idea of a smaller body in that intimacy of fellowship with the whole body is more likely. Increase in number is best for the Church Universal or sure because we are told in II Peter 3:9 that *God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."* That is a lot of people! Some believers seem to suggest that growth means numbers implying that smaller churches are not as good as larger churches, that people leaving implies a problem. If that were true, how does one explain the comment of Jesus in John 6:67: *"Will ye also go away?"* For sure, those who are together must work together, however many. Jesus said, *"Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there!"*

THE BONUS

SaturdayRead Luke 19:1-10

"I am come to seek and to save that which was lost." All churches should aspire to do that for which Jesus said He came to earth: *"to save the lost."* Evangelizing is a must! All believers should have a compassion for the lost as Jesus did. All believers should be intent to be a light in their world for the glory of God. All believers should be alert to Spirit-led opportunities to share God's truth! All believers should be in fervent prayer for those whom they know who are still outside the family of God. All believers should think enough of family, friends, colleagues that they would minimally invite others out to the worship services and activities of their local church. *"He that wins souls is wise."*