



OUTSIDE READING ASSIGNMENT

Going on with Christ

Used by Permission

Going on With Christ

Without a doubt you have experienced some of the temptations that confront new Christians, and hopefully, you have met them through God's appointed means, His Word. 1 Peter 5:8 describes Satan as a "roaring lion" and cautions Christians to be alert to his subtle attacks. God's Word has the power to alert you to his attacks and to enable you to resist temptation. The psalmist prayed, "Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:11).

The Word also has power to guide you in making decisions. God has given his Word to lead you into a daily experience of His will. "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105).

The Word has power to bring joy into your life, too. Jesus said, "These things have I spoken unto you...that your joy may be full." As you begin to look at life in the light of who God is and what He has said, the tensions and perplexities of life will start to fade. Although circumstances may remain the same, you can understand what God's purposes are and experience real inner peace and joy. "Thy words were found and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart..." (Jeremiah 15:16).

The importance of God's Word and the power it imparts to each obedient Christian cannot be over emphasized.

Living in Christ—John 15:5

"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing."

Sturdy, sprawling grapevines with lush green branches and clusters of fruit were a common sight in Palestine. Jesus used this picture to portray the abiding relationship of the believer with Himself. Just as a branch cannot bear

fruit if it has been cut off from the vine, so your potential to live a fruitful, godly life is a direct result of living in close union with Him.

It is vitally important to put Christ first in your thoughts, desires, relationships and activities. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

But how can you abide in Christ? 1 John 2:6 says, "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also to walk, even as He walked." That means daily obedience to the will of God as He reveals it in His Word. It means responding to God just as Christ did. "...for I do always those things that please Him" (John 8:29).

As you memorize John 15:5, meditate on Christ's sufficiency for growth and fulfillment to the person who fully surrenders to His will.

Living by the Word of God—Acts 20:32

"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

As the Apostle Paul said farewell to believers from Ephesus, he committed them to the care of God and His Word, reminding them of the Scriptures' ability to nurture them toward spiritual maturity and prepare them for an eternal inheritance with God. Just as you need food for physical growth, so the Word of God nourishes you in your spiritual development. "...Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

It has become common practice to plan a day's activities around three meals. Should any less attention be given to a regular intake of God's Word? Peter says Christians should "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of (God's) Word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2:2).

As you memorize Acts 20:32, meditate on the ways God's Word can build you up and look for evidence in your own life of God at work building you up through His Word.

Living by the Spirit of God—Rom. 8:14

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”

When you became a Christian, your heart became the home of the Holy Spirit. You can be sure of this. Paul exclaimed, “What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” (1 Corinthians 6:19) Not only does the Holy Spirit live in Christians, He also desires to live through them, “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit” (Galatians 5:25).

If you want to experience the Holy Spirit more fully, yield to His will, confessing and forsaking the sin that He brings to your attention. As you follow Him, He will change you into a Christ-like person and you will learn what it is to be led by the Spirit of God.

As you meditate on this verse, thank God for all that He is able to do for you through the Holy Spirit.

Living by Faith—2 Cor. 5:7

“For we walk by faith, not by sight.”

Faith is believing God and trusting His Word. Paul pointed out the relationship between faith and the Word of God, “...faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Romans 10:17).

At one time or another every Christian experiences doubt regarding some of God's promises. Perhaps this has already happened to you. You may have doubted that you will ever get victory over sin; you may have doubted that God really loves you or that your salvation is an accomplished fact. Since faith comes from the Word, hiding God's Word in your heart is one of the best things you can do to deal with doubt.

The Bible explains God's purposes and will reassure you of His power as you spend time in it. As you store it up in your heart, your faith

will grow. God's Word gives you spiritual insight—the ability to view life from His perspective. Abraham experienced this when “He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief: but was strong in the faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able to perform” (Romans 4:20,21).

As you memorize 2 Corinthians 5:7, resolve to obey God by keeping His Word at any cost.

Living a Life of Love —1 John 4:11

“Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.”

The ability to love others grows as you experience God's love for you. 1 John 4:10 says “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

God is the source of love. He also is the perfect example of what love is. His love is sacrificial. He has already demonstrated that at the cost of His own Son. “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son...” (John 3:16). Christ's death stands as an eternal reminder of God's sacrificial love.

God's love is also unconditional so you never have to worry about God's love diminishing. His love is not dependent upon the worthiness or unworthiness of the one loved. No one can earn or deserve God's love—yet He loves everyone. What a joy to be the recipients of this kind of love!

Jesus urges Christians to give the same enduring, sacrificial, unconditional love to each other that He gives, “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you; that ye also love one another” (John 13:34).

As you memorize 1 John 4:11, meditate on some ways you can demonstrate God's love toward others.

Living in Christian Fellowship—1 John 1:7

“But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the

blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

When you trusted Christ you entered into a special fellowship as a member of God’s family. The harmony of this family is the responsibility of every member. John says the secret is to “walk in the light.”

But what is walking in the light? Jesus said, “... I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12). To walk in the light means to walk in constant communion with Christ. Thus, your fellowship with Christ is the key to your fellowship with other Christians.

John goes on to say that “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:8,9).

How then do you live in fellowship with other believers? By confessing and forsaking sin. Don’t carry anger and resentment toward others around. Confess it and forsake it. God is eager to cleanse and forgive. As you learn 1 John 1:7, search your heart for any matters that need to be confessed. Ask God to forgive you and lead you into His way.

Living as a Witness—1 Peter 3:15

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.”

What would you tell someone who inquired about your faith in Christ? Would you be ready with an answer? Peter says that the first step is to “sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.” To sanctify means to “set apart or consecrate.” You sanctify God in your heart by honoring Him and consciously acknowledging His Lordship. The more you love and worship Him, the more eager you will be to tell others about Him.

The imprint of fellowship with Christ will not be unnoticed by people around you, so be ready with an answer. When Peter and John were questioned they said, “For we cannot but speak

the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20). You too have seen Christ bring peace and joy to your life. You have heard His words of love and forgiveness in the Scripture.

Let your answer be those things you have seen and heard. As you memorize 1 Peter 3:15 pause and take a fresh look at your Saviour, then be ready to share with others what you have seen.

Living a Life of Generosity—2 Cor. 9:7

“Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”

God’s inexhaustible riches are available to you. As His child you are an heir to all that He possesses, both spiritually and materially. Romans 8:17 says “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ...”. It was for this purpose that Christ left His glory in heaven and came to earth, “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9).

You can show your gratitude by generously giving your possessions to those who have needs. “Freely ye have received, freely give” is the Lord’s admonition. A wonderful blessing is in store for those who make a practice of giving to others while those who hang on selfishly to their possessions seem only to have less. “Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again” (Luke 6:38).

As you memorize 2 Corinthians 9:7 think prayerfully about giving to another what God has freely given to you.

After you have memorized these verses and learned to apply them, you will be aware of the strength and blessing that come from hiding God’s Word in your heart.