The Union Baptist Church Newsletter





January 6, 2019

<u>A DEVOTIONAL</u> FOR MEN ON THE GO

RICHER BY THE WORD

"Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father." Colossians 3:16-17 (NLT)

Let the word of Christ dwell in you. Whatever you say and do in words or deed, do it all for the glory of God. Daily living. Each day, every day. Regardless of what you are called to do as an occupation.

When I was coaching, I made a point to have regular Bible studies and chapels for our players and our staff. Tuesday was the coaches' Bible study and Friday was the team Bible study with the players. Many men met in smaller groups throughout the week to pray together. Game weekends always included a chapel service for which we would have a speaker come in and share a message from Scripture. Sometimes I would share. Sometimes another coach on our staff would share. And sometimes we would have a person we knew and trusted from outside our team and organization comes in to share with us a word of direction and encouragement.

Our hope in those settings, as should be the case with any Bible study or prayer group was to continually plant the empowering and affirming message of Christ in the listeners' hearts and then allow that message to work according to God's purposes in each of them. To let the word of Christ dwell within them.

How might that look in various settings of your life? Perhaps at home it starts with prayer in the morning with your spouse and then individual prayers with your children. Prayer and thanks at the breakfast table together. An encouraging word as your spouse heads out the door to the office or as you drop your children off at school. Perhaps it involves keeping your home free of temptations and thing that are contrary to God's Word--certain movies, magazines, music or things on the Internet. Perhaps it involves assessing your desire for the temptations of alcohol, tobacco and other things that harm your body and could harm your children's lives if they follow your example.

At work you could organize an office Bible study. But it doesn't have to be something formal. Maybe it's getting in the habit of offering an encouraging and kind word to others. Or simply not being a participant in the group gossip session at the water cooler.

Wherever you find yourself, consider ways you can let the word of Christ dwell within you and others. AMEN.

UNCOMMON KEY > Incorporate the word of Christ within you and others each day; it will empower and encourage you whatever may come. AMEN.

Uncommon Life-Daily Challenge ~~ Tony Dungy and Nathan Whitaker

<u>A MEDITATION FOR EVERY</u> <u>MARRIED COUPLE</u>

KINGDOM COUPLES PRAY FOR EACH OTHER

"God never gives us discernment in order that we may criticize, but that we may intercede."

~~Oswald Chambers, My Utmost for His Highest

THEIRS WAS A MARRIAGE with a calling right from the start. She had abandoned her dream of being a missionary in order to be a wife and mother; he had committed all of who he was to be an evangelist. Billy and Ruth Graham changed the world with the gospel, and at the same time modeled a marriage defined by both passion and prayer. While Billy was on a long evangelistic crusade in England, Ruth wrote, "In your thinking, we have grown apart due to the wide separation of our various interests, but I feel closer to you than ever. Wherever you are, I go with you in mind and heart, praying for you continually."

Make it a point to begin every single day bathing your marriage in prayer. It doesn't have to be long, but it has to be authentic. Thank God for your mate and pray for His will to be manifest in your mate's life. Pray that your spouse will grow spiritually and emotionally, and even be healthy physically. Ask the Lord to surround your mate with godly relationships and clearly reveal His purpose for him or her.

Then after you have prayed that, and more, pray for yourself, each day asking the Lord for the same things for you and that He will give you a gentle spirit toward your spouse. Ask Him to cause you both to be friends and lovers, adventurers together and prayer partners for each other. AMEN.

APPLICATION

- 1. When was the last time you specifically prayed for your marriage?
- 2. Discuss a time when you prayed for each other while you were apart.
- 3. What specific areas of your family life can you agree to pray about?

PRAYER

Father, thank You for the gift of marriage. Help us to be each other's greatest intercessors. AMEN.

Kingdom Marriage Devotional ~~ Dr. Tony Evans



DEVOTIONAL FOR SINGLES

LIFE TO THE FULLEST

"God is able to make every grace overflow to you, so that in every way, always having everything you need, you may excel in every good work." 2 Corinthians 9:8 (CSB)

Your God can be trusted.

He will grant you the full supply you need to excel at His purpose today, no matter how varied or prodigious those tasks may be. Every decision you need to make, every task you need to accomplish, every relationship you need to navigate, every element of your daily life you need to traverse, God has already perfectly matched it up with an equivalent-to-overflowing supply of His grace.

And you must believe this...because whether or not you do will directly affect your ability to function out of this overflow in your daily life. When you truly believe that you will always have everything you need, and that because of His extravagant grace you will never lack, you'll be more willing and able to give freely of yourself and your resources, certain that God will always replenish your supply.

People who operate from a position of perceived lack and deficiency are stingy with their time, selfish with their resources, and tight-fisted with their energy. They're reluctant to sow of themselves into the lives of others, afraid they don't have enough to do it with--or that if they do, they won't have enough left over for themselves--enough time, energy, talent, money, skill, patience.

But whenever we operate that way, our truly important tasks and relationships of life--the ones that promise blessing to us as well as to others--go unattended and undone. Worse, we miss out on the privilege to fully participate in them, much less "excel" in them. When we don't feel as though we have the proper amount or type of resources, we recoil into a shell of insecurity instead of busting with the power and provision of God. Therefore the "work" misses out on our touch. And we miss the many ways our "every good work" could touch *us*--the impact, the memories, the lessons, the experiences that God is knitting together to become a key part of our story.

This is why we must have confidence in His "overflowing" grace and provision and be content with what we have--because what He *has* given is what we need, and what He's sovereignly *withheld* isn't necessary to the completion of the task. Otherwise He'd have given it. Whatever He's given or not given, He's done for a specific reason-- a reason known only to Him perhaps, but a reason you can trust with full confidence, sight unseen.

When you choose to recognize this, fully trusting in His continued, abundant supply, you'll be able to engage in life in a way you never have before. You'll be living life to the fullest. AMEN.

"We pray for you always, that our God will count you worthy of your calling and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power." 2 Thessalonians 1:11 (NASB)

Awaken ~~Priscilla Shirer

TEEN'S CORNER

CHASING AFTER THE WIND

"Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless..."

"All things are wearisome; more than one can say. The eye never has enough of seeing, nor the ear its fill of hearing. What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun..."

"I have seen all the things that are done under the sun; all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind." Ecclesiastes 1:2, 8-9, 14 (NLT)



Have you ever wondered why so many people are bored today, during an age of technological wonders, of over two hundred TV channels? Science writer Winifred Gallagher believes that boredom is largely a recent problem that is absent from many other cultures. She describes a Western anthropologist who has studied the bushmen of Namibia for years and has become fluent in their language. He has attempted over the years to come up with equivalent word for "boredom" in their language, but there is a disconnect; they don't understand the concept. The closest they can come to it is *tired*. Our word boredom didn't appear in English until the Industrial Age--about the time modern entertainment began to evolve.

Wise King Solomon may not have had a word for boredom, either, but he portrayed it well with words like *meaningless* and *vanity--*"a chasing after the wind." Put this book down, go outside, and take three minutes to chase the wind. Go ahead. Are you back? How'd that go for you? What do you have to show for it?

Solomon made a relentless pursuit of pleasures and entertainment. He denied himself nothing. He enjoyed comedy and laughter, parties and projects. And at the end of it all, his conclusion was that it was all meaningless. He seems to say, **"It just wears me out."**

Christian writer A. W. Tozer observed that the more vibrant our inner lives are, the less we need from the outside--that is, the more active we are in mind and spirit, the less we need to fall back on external media and other input. The apostle Paul put it this way: "Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God--this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." (Rom. 12:1-2). We were made for God, and until he is our greatest pleasure, all the other pleasures of this life will lead to emptiness. AMEN.

DENYING TODAY

Think about these revealing questions: What are your favorite forms of entertainment? Where and when have you exhibited the most passion and excitement? What kinds of entertainment media have you found to be the most addictive? Decide now that the next time you feel bored, instead of turning on the TV or picking up your smart phone, you'll do something to renew your mind.

(Here's a hint: Worship and the Word are both good places to start.) AMEN.

Not a Fan. Daily Devotional ~~Kyle Iddleman



DEVOTIONAL FOR SENIORS

Happy New Year!

"For everything there is a season." (Ecclesiastes 3:1)

Another year is beginning. With each new beginning comes a bit of uncertainty. What will this new year bring? What new experiences will we face? What new challenges will we overcome?

Just as the seasons change due to the weather, our lives also change. At times, we welcome the changes and rejoice in them—retirement provides a time to slow down and enjoy life more, moving to a new place to live provides opportunities to meet new people. Still, other changes are not quite as pleasant—the death of a spouse brings sadness and grief, the diagnosis of a health problem opens the door for worries.

None of us knows what challenges and opportunities this new year will bring. But we are all assured of Jesus' promise to us, "I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).

Dear Heavenly Father, help me to trust in you and believe that you are always with me. Amen.

Hope-full Living Daily Devotions ~~ Celeste Cummins

Cheers to a new year and another chance for us to get it right. – Oprah Winfrey

We will open the book. Its pages are blank. We are going to put words on them ourselves. The book is called Opportunity and its first chapter is New Year's Day. – Edith Lovejoy Pierce

Your success and happiness lies in you. Resolve to keep happy, and your joy and you shall form an invincible host against difficulties. – Helen Keller

Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. – Albert Einstein

No one can go back in time to change what has happened. So, work on your present to make yourself a wonderful future. Happy New Year. – Anonymous

May your new year be blessed with peace, love and joy. Sending you heartfelt wishes with joy that never ends. Wishing you a very happy new year. – Anonymous

HUMOR

Laughter is the sun that drives winter from the human face. ~Victor Hugo

The Answer

A new pastor moved into town and went out one Saturday to visit his parishioners. All went well until he came to one house. It was obvious that someone was home, but no one came to the door even after he had knocked several times. Finally, he took out his card and wrote on the back: Revelation 3:20 and stuck it in the door.



The next day, as he was counting the offering he found his card in the collection plate. Below his message was the notation Genesis 3:10.

Revelation 3:20 reads: "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any man hears my voice, and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with me."

Genesis 3:10 reads: "And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked."

<u>The Golden Phone</u>

It seems a man in Topeka, Kansas decides to write a book about churches around the country. He starts by flying to San Francisco and working east from there.

He goes to a very large church and begins taking pictures, etc. He spots a golden telephone on a wall and is intrigued with a sign which reads "\$10,000.00 a minute." Seeking out the pastor, he asks about the phone and the sign. The pastor answers that this golden phone is, in fact, a direct line to Heaven, and if he pays the price he can talk directly to God. He thanks the pastor and continues on his way.

As he continues to visit churches in Seattle, Denver, Boise, Milwaukee, Chicago, New York, and on around the United States, he finds more phones with the same sign, and the same answer from each pastor.

Finally, he arrives in the South. Upon entering a church, lo and behold, he sees the usual golden telephone. But THIS time the sign reads "Calls: 25 cents." Fascinated, he asks to talk to the pastor.

"Reverend, I have been in cities all across the country and in each church I found this golden telephone, and I have been told it is a direct line to Heaven and that I could talk to God, but in the other churches the cost was \$10,000.00 a minute. Your sign reads 25 cents a call. Why?"

The pastor, smiling benignly, replies, "Son, you're in the South now. It's a local call."

HUMOR ... continued

<u>Unfair Trade</u>

A preacher was making his rounds to his parishioners on a bicycle, when he came upon a little boy trying to sell a lawn mower. "How much do you want for the mower?" asked the preacher.

"I just want enough money to go out and buy me a bicycle", said the little boy. After a moment of consideration, the preacher asked, "Will you take my bike in trade for it?"

The little boy asked if he could try it out first, and after riding the bike around a little while said, "Mister, you've got yourself a deal."

The preacher took the mower and began to try to crank it. He pulled on the cord a few times with no response from the mower. The preacher called the little boy over and said, "I can't get this mower to start."

The little boy said, "That's because you have to cuss at it to get it started." The preacher said, "I am a minister, and I cannot cuss. It has been so long since I have been saved that I do not even remember how to cuss."

The little boy looked at him happily and said, "Just keep pulling on that cord. It'll come back to ya!"

The Talking Frog

A pastor was crossing a road one day when a frog called out to him and said, "If you kiss me, I'll turn into a beautiful princess." He bent over, picked up the frog and put it in his pocket.

The frog spoke up again and said, "If you kiss me and turn me back into a beautiful princess, I will stay with you for one week." The pastor took the frog out of his pocket, smiled at it and returned it to the pocket.

The frog then cried out, "If you kiss me and turn me back into a princess, I'll stay with you and give you anything you want." Again the pastor took the frog out, smiled at it and put it back into his pocket.

Finally, the frog asked, "What is the matter? I've told you I'm a beautiful princess that I'll stay with you for a week and give you anything you want. Why won't you kiss me?"

The pastor said, "Look I'm a pastor. I already have a wife, but a talking frog, now that's cool!"

Wormy Sermon

A Southern Baptist minister decided that a visual demonstration would add emphasis to his Sunday sermon. Four worms were placed into four separate jars. The first worm was put into a jar of alcohol. The second worm was put into a jar of cigarette smoke. The third worm was put into a jar of chocolate syrup. The fourth worm was put into a jar of good clean soil.

At the conclusion of the Sermon, the minister reported the following results:

The first worm in alcohol - Dead.

The second worm in cigarette smoke - Dead.

Third worm in chocolate syrup - Dead.

Fourth worm in good clean soil - Alive.



HUMOR ... continued

So the Minister asked the congregation, "What can you learn from this demonstration?" A little old woman in the back quickly raised her hand and said,

"As long as you drink, smoke and eat chocolate, you won't have worms."

http://jokes.christiansunite.com/Pastors/

New Year's Resolutions

My brother's New Year's resolution is to move out of my parent's house. You'd think after 49 years he'd try another one.

-Selected

A new year's resolution is something that goes in one year and out the other.

- Anonymous

My New Year's resolution is to eat better, so from now on, I'm going to only date guys who can afford to take me somewhere other than McDonalds.

-Selected

My New Years resolution is to try to remember why I've walked into a room. (Sound familiar?) -Selected

My New Year's resolution is to take all the Christmas lights down by Easter. -Selected

May all your troubles last as long as your New Year's resolutions -Selected

https://www.funny-jokes-quotes-sayings.com/new-year-jokes.html



Practical Advice Section . . . Debt Management

SHORT-TERM DEBT

Managing your finances is like driving a car down a winding mountain road. Take your eyes off the road for just a second and you can end up upside down in a ditch. In personal finance, that ditch is a thing we call debt.

We admit that there are certain purchases and costs in life that most people would not be able to afford, if it were not for the use of debt and loans. For example, for the average person, no amount of saving would likely get you the funds you need to purchase your first



home or pay for a college education with cash. Using loans and debt to acquire either of these things can often be considered a "good debt" because it is for something that creates or increases your net worth. This is called long-term debt.

Short-term debt, on the other hand, is used to help you survive day-to day. While its use is justifiable from time to time (buying a car so you can get to work), more often than not, the purchases are avoidable.

For many people, **excessive or impulsive use of short-term debt** can create a major roadblock to achieving their long-term goals. Hence, we tend to label this kind of debt as **bad debt**.

Credit Card Debt

When it comes to debt problems, credit card debt is the granddaddy of them all. The Lexington Law Review dated June 27, 2018 reported the following statistics: "In December 2017, America owed a total of \$834 billion in credit card debt alone – a 7 percent rise from 2016. When other sources of revolving credit are included Americans owe a total of \$1.027 trillion as of March 2018. The outstanding revolving consumer credit is growing at a staggering rate and has surpassed revolving credit owed during the 2008 Great Recession." If it weren't for credit card payments, many people would be able to successfully deal with an increase in their mortgage, the addition of a car payment, or the temptation to buy that new "thing."

• The Major Credit Card Companies

Thanks to advertising, mergers, and co-branding of certain company logos, it's hard to separate the major credit card companies from the "fly by night" operations. This is a critical distinction because the larger companies generally work harder to keep their customers and investors happy; as well as stay in the good graces of regulators. While the term "American Express" really refers to just one company, the terms "Visa" and "MasterCard" are used by numerous institutions with varying policies and rules.

Do your research (check web and reviews) and then evaluate which credit cards to keep and potentially use. It'll likely be a card from one of the larger companies, without a lot of the fancy features. It'll simply be a low or no annual fee credit card that you use to do things like book airline tickets. These cards should also have a reasonable annual interest rate, but don't get too hung up on that. Your goal is to pay it off in the same month you make a necessary purchase.

• Retail Credit Cards

It's a trap few shoppers can resist. As the salesperson rings up your purchase at the local mall clothing store, he or she offers you a generous 10% to 15% discount off your purchase ... *if* you sign up for the store's credit card.

Repeat after me: "Mall and retail credit cards are not my friend."

SHORT-TERM DEBT ... continued

These credit cards, which earn you that generous discount (on your first purchase only), also charge you some of the highest interest rates. It's not so hard for stores to give you a 10% discount when the annual interest rate on their card is 30%! What's worse is the fact that people always tend to spend more the next time they shop and use that card, compared to paying cash or using a debit card.

To add insult to injury, accepting credit card offers at the mall might significantly increase your future car or mortgage payment. The fact is having too many retail credit cards can hurt your credit score because they theoretically demonstrate impulsivity on your part. In turn, this lower credit score keeps you from getting the best rates on other loans you may apply for down the road.

• Installment Purchases

While this type of credit comes without a fancy card, it is used to buy the same kind of stuff and can overwhelm your finances just as easily. The two most common appearances of this kind of debt are the advertisements we all get in the mail that offer low monthly payments for cool gadgets, and the furniture stores that let you "buy now with no payment until June!"

In essence, both of these are credit cards minus the card. They have minimum payments, high rates of interest (20-30%), and are used to buy things that go down in value over time. Many of these programs have tricky rules that hike your interest rate retroactively if your debt isn't completely paid by a certain deadline. Again, these should be some of the first pieces of short-term debt on the chopping block.

Other Types of Short-Term Debt

Virtually everyone has a smorgasbord of other types of debt. If all that most people had to tackle were a mortgage, some student loans, and a credit card or two, they'd probably still be able to handle their budget. However unfortunately, many people have other debts that they owe as well. These may include medical providers, payday loan companies, ex-spouses, and even the IRS. Here is a quick look at some of them.

• Auto Loans

Cars are a "need" for most people. Without a way to get to and from work, you have no ability to earn a wage, pay your bills, or even get out of debt. Yet many people go a little overboard when it comes to cars.

Many first-time car buyers don't understand the difference between a lease and a purchase. In essence, a lease consists of you paying the dealer to temporary (usually two to four years) use a car. When the lease is over, the car has to be returned with any damage or excessive mileage paid for. In fact, it's almost a cliché that many people borrow money to lease or purchase a car; complaining and stress out about the payments as they go along, and then get a new car and a new loan as soon as the last one is paid off. They start wanting a new car before they actually need one and then do whatever it takes to get that car they want, including using high-interest-rate loans that will take a long time to pay off.

• 401(k) and Retirement Plan Loans

As of June 30, 2018, The Investment Company Institute estimates that 401(k) plans held an estimated \$5.3 trillion in assets and represented 19 percent of the \$28.3 trillion in US retirement assets, which includes employer-sponsored retirement plans (both defined benefit (DB) and defined contribution (DC) plans with private- and public-sector employers), individual retirement accounts (IRAs), and annuities. In comparison, 401(k) assets were \$2.2 trillion and represented 16 percent of the US retirement market in 2008.

SHORT-TERM DEBT ... continued

One of the features that makes these plans so attractive for many employees is the promise that they can borrow against their account balance should they need it. While the loan provision was put into the plan to help employees survive true emergencies, 401(k) loans are increasingly being taken to finance large purchases or pay off other debt. Aside from the fact that a 401(k) loan freezes the growth on the portion of you 401(k) that you borrowed against, these loans can create a huge tax liability that forces many people further into debt. If you quit working or change employers, the loan must be paid back. If you can't repay the loan, it is considered defaulted, and you will be taxed on the outstanding balance, including an early withdrawal penalty if you are not at least age 59 ½. Of course, there are exemptions from the penalty for extreme circumstances. Search for the details.

• Payday Loans

Let's be blunt on this one. Payday loans are a ridiculously bad idea! If you've used them, or are considering using them, you're going to need to get out of that cycle right away. These loans, which can seem like a great way to make ends meet in a tight month, can often start someone down an irreversible cycle toward bankruptcy.

You cringe at the thought of a credit card that charges 25% to 35% interest, right? Yet, if you pay \$50 to borrow \$500 for 30 days, that's an annual interest rate of over 120%. In fact, some payday loans are known to charge anywhere from 500% to \$1,000% in annual interest! To make matters worse, these loans that seemingly solve a problem for you in the current month create a problem for you in the upcoming months.

• Medical Bills

Medical care is a double-edged sword for many Americans. Sadly, we often don't realize the true cost until after procedures are completed. Sometimes, a person works hard to pay off their debt, only to get a \$5,000 hospital bill from and unforeseen accident because they were uninsured or underinsured.

Follow these guidelines for routine care:

- a. Have adequate coverage
- b. Get a pre-authorization for certain procedures.
- c. Use walk-in clinics (ex. Urgent Care) for non-emergency care instead of the ER.

• Legal Bills

- Call your Employee Assistance Plan (EAP Many large employers now offer their employees this assistance. Your EAP can often help you assess what your next steps should be.
- b. Consider prepaid legal programs.
- c. Check with your insurance carrier.

Many insurance policies will actually pay for legal representation as it relates to something they cover. However, there's no way for them to know what you've spent, much less reimburse you for it, if you don't understand your coverage and report your losses.

• Child Support, Alimony, The IRS and Other Government Agencies

Like legal and medial debts, proactive negotiations can often reduce or even eliminate amounts you owe to other parties such as child support and alimony payments. Hence, if you find yourself in this situation, you need to put it at the top of your prioritized list. No other organization in America has the ability to collect on unpaid debts like the IRS and government agencies. Not only that, they're pretty unforgiving in terms of the penalties and interest they charge to people who don't pay what they owe, when they owe it. If you find yourself in this situation, it's crucial to begin communicating with the IRS about eliminating this debt as soon as possible.

The Complete IDIOT'S GUIDE to Getting Out of Debt ~~Ken Clark,

H Story to Warm Your Heart and Delight Your Soul.....

Love is all we have; the only way we can help the other. ~ Euripides



Oohoo

Debra D. Peppers

The whole town called her Oohoo. Until the day she died peacefully in her sleep at the age of ninety-nine, many never knew her real name. I was the grandchild who coined the name when I was four or five. My mother would walk me the two blocks to my grandma's house and help me climb the steep steps to the massive front door, which she always left unlocked. As mom turned the knob and opened the door she would sing out, "Ooooooohoooooooo." Almost immediately, the beautiful, stately white-haired lady with the big smile would come running down her staircase and scoop me into her arms.

I was a chubby, awkward, middle child, growing up in a small town in the 1950s where everybody knew everybody and all of their business. For some unknown reason I experienced in my youth what too many kids are still experiencing today. If it hadn't been for Oohoo and the safe haven of her loving home, I might have fallen through the cracks. By age ten I had learned to "stuff down my feelings and insecurities," and by sixteen I was one hundred pounds overweight. But at Oohoo's house I never felt judged. At school I was a well-known troublemaker who had been in and out of the principal's office and suspended many times. But Oohoo loved me unconditionally and expected only the best from me.

My sister, Donna, was my hero and role model. She was four years older and had always been everything I wanted to be: head cheerleader, prom queen, valedictorian, year-book queen, size eight. My younger brother, Duke, was just as admirable: star athlete, A+ student, Mr. Popularity. Then there was "Poor Debbie." I heard that name applied to me so often that I lost count. Eventually I began drinking and smoking and trying anything I could sniff or swallow. The label "at-risk youth" had not yet been coined, but I could have been the poster child.

Oohoo kept her door unlocked for a crying ten-year-old when she was called "Fatso," for a fifteen-year-old who wasn't chosen for the cheerleading squad, for a seventeen-year-old who

Oohoo. . . continued

wrecked the car and was afraid to tell her parents, and for a twenty-one-year old who didn't want to live anymore.

My poor parents took me to counselors and doctors and were always trying to pull me out of my abyss. Upon the advice of a child psychologist, they agreed to let me stay with Oohoo temporarily. She never mentioned my weight, never condemned me and always treated me with respect and dignity. She was tough on curfew and following house rules, but she immersed me in love and became my role model.

Every Sunday from as early as I can remember, Oohoo picked me up for Sunday School. She taught there for seventy-eight years and practiced every word of what she preached. I never heard her say an unkind word about anyone; she was a friend to people of all backgrounds, cultures and races. Oohoo taught me the meaning of selfless giving, generosity and unconditional love. It is life's tests that make us either bitter or better. Oohoo taught me to be better.

I didn't know at that time about Oohoo's own broken heart or her problems with my grandfather. Against all odds, my precious grandmother had graduated from the University of Missouri in 1919, and she inspired me to stay in school and go on to college as well. Her house was filled with poetry and literature from her own classes. Her old trunk was filled with costumes from her days in Hollywood when she boldly accepted a journalism assignment where young women then were not encouraged to go.

Oohoo had been a teacher and a journalist and I became a teacher and a journalist too. Who would even have thought I would be an English and drama teacher using some of the old books and costumes I carried from Oohoo's house?

I am so grateful that Oohoo lived long enough to see me marry my college sweetheart, lose one hundred pounds, return to my family as a prodigal daughter and become Teacher of the Year. I got to tell her that she was my hero on the celebration of my grandparents' sixth-fifth wedding anniversary. She stayed with my grandfather when she had reason to leave, but he, too, turned around later in his life, realizing what a gem he had in Oohoo.

I began my career with an advantage because Oohoo taught me unconditional love and empathetic listening skills I would never have learned elsewhere. Having served now in the field of education for over thirty years, I can honestly say I believe most "problem children" could be turned around if they had a caring grandparent, an "Oohoo," in their life. As high school and university instructors, we are told to call home at the first sign of any problem behavior, academic or otherwise. When my students' parents aren't home, or are too busy or just don't know how to help, I have the alternative solution. Invariably there is a caring, knowing, loving person already waiting to help. All I need to do is ask, "May I speak to your grandmother?"

> Chicken Soup for the Grandma's Soul: Stories to Honor and Celebrate the Ageless Love of Grandmothers ~Jack Canfield, et al.

INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR SUNDAY, JANUARY 6, 2019

HAPPY BIRTHDAY WISHES TO EVERYONE BORN IN THE MONTHS OF JANUARY AND FEBRUARY



<u>UBC COMMUNICATION CARDS</u>: Anyone worshiping with us today and "making a decision for Christ" by using one of our UBC Communication Cards found in the pocket of the pews, is encouraged to follow-up your decision TODAY, by contacting **REVEREND ALVIN L. WYATT, Minister of Christian Life and Witness at (513) 381-3858**. When calling, please leave your name, the spelling of your name, the date and time of your call, and, most importantly, a telephone number where you may be reached. **Reverend Wyatt will be in touch with you**, as quickly as possible, after receiving your telephone call, as to the next steps in your decision(s) for Christ. GOD BLESS YOU.

PRAYER BAND MINISTRY: A Prayer Request Box is located in the vestibule leading into the sanctuary. Please feel free to place your prayer request(s) there at any time. Our prayer partners stand ready to pray with you and for you. In the future, look for prayer request cards in the sanctuary pew pockets. You are invited to join us for prayer and meditation on Tuesdays at 6:30 a.m. The Prayer Line is (515) 604-9520 – Code 356781. Thank you. ~~Prayer Band Ministry

REPORTING ILLNESSES, **SURGERIES AND BEREAVEMENT INFORMATION**: Please contact the church office if you or a loved one is sick or entering the hospital, so that your Family Ward Deacon and Pastor may be notified. Please also let the office know if you or a loved one is being released from the hospital. If there is bereavement in your family, please notify the church office at (513) 381-3858. ~~ Church Office Staff

NEED A RIDE TO SUNDAY SCHOOL OR 10:00 A.M. WORSHIP SERVICE? If you are in need of a ride to Church, please call (513) 981-0423 and leave your name and your telephone number. GOD BLESS YOU.

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY AND FELLOWSHIP ON TUESDAYS AT 7:00 P.M. WILL RESUME ON

JANUARY 29, **2019**: We will continue with the Men's Bible study based on the series, "Searching for Heaven on Earth" by David Jeremiah. All men are invited to attend this powerful group study led by Pastor Yates in the church sanctuary What a blessing that awaits all who participate! ~~ Pastor Yates

WEDNESDAY NOON DAY BIBLE STUDY AT 12:00 P.M. WILL RESUME ON JANUARY 23,

2019: The Wednesday Noon Bible study will resume with a new series, **Be Worshipful by Dr. Warren W. Wiersbe**. (See flyer on page 28). You are invited to attend this dynamic group study led by Pastor Yates in the church sanctuary. **Lunch is served after each class.** Remember all are welcome and we will be blessed by your presence. ~~Pastor Yates

WEDNESDAY EVENING PRAYER SERVICE AND BIBLE STUDY AT 7:00 P.M WILL RESUME ON

JANUARY 23, **2019**: The Wednesday Night Bible study will resume with the same **Be Worshipful** series. Pastor Yates leads this class and all are invited to study and grow with us. ~~ Pastor Yates

8:00 A.M. WORSHIP SERVICES WILL RESUME ON JANUARY 13, 2019.

UBC WORSHIPS WITH SAVING GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH FOR THE DEDICATION OF THEIR NEW FACILITY ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 20, 2019 AT 3:30 P.M.: The deacons, choir, ushers and Health & Wellness Ministry are to serve. Pastor Yates will preach and all members are invited to attend. Saving Grace is located at 401 W. Wyoming Ave., Lockland, Ohio 45215. God Bless You. ~~ Pastor Yates

DEACONS MINISTRY: The Deacons Ministry will have a meeting on **Tuesday, January 22, 2019** and **February 4, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.** in the sanctuary (lower balcony). **Please have your monthly Family Ward Reports**. ~~Pastor Yates

TICKETS ARE AVAILABLE FOR THE DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. LEGACY AWARDS

BREAKFAST ON JANUARY 21, 2019: The annual King Breakfast (THEME: "400 Years of Enslavement: It Stops With Us") will be held at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center. The door to this event will open at 7:30 a.m. and the **Buffet Breakfast starts at 8:00 a.m**. Union Baptist Church has reserved a table and tickets are \$40 for adults and \$20 for youth/children. **Please contact Sis. Portia Fuller for tickets.**

Following breakfast, the **Annual March will begin at 10:30 a.m.** from the Freedom Center to Fountain Square for an Interfaith Prayer Service. The March will later continue to Music Hall where the **MLK Commemoration program will begin at 12 noon**. All events are FREE except for the BREAKFAST. (Please see flyer on page 21 for additional information.

JAMAICA MISSION TRIP UPDATE: I regret to inform you that due to unexpected circumstances I will not be going to Jamaica this year as planned. However, I am still collecting Bibles and school supplies, through February 3, 2019 to send with the mission group. Please feel free to contact me after morning worship service with any donations. Thank you. Sis. Doris Walker

10M hank

Thank you. During a time like this, we realize how much our family and friends really mean to us. Your expression of sympathy will always be remembered.

Eloise Southerland and Family (Sister-in-Law of Rev. George Southerland)

Sis. Veronica Battle (daughter of Sis. Elsie Pierre) wishes to thank the Union Baptist Church Family for all your prayers and thoughts during her illness, and as she continues to recover. God bless each and every one of you.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF THE COUPLES THAT RENEWED THEIR WEDDING VOWS DURING THE 10:00 A.M. WORSHIP SERVICE ON DECEMBER 9,2018:

The Renewal of Wedding Vows Ceremony was conducted by Reverend George F. Southerland, Pastor Emeritus, of First Baptist Church of Cumminsville. Rev. Southerland has since entered into eternal rest on December 19, 2018. We dedicate this page in his memory. This was his last worship service.



Couples participating in the ceremony (pictured above from right to left) included Pastor Orlando B. Yates and Sis. Margie Yates (married 45 years); Bro. Michael and Sis. Doris Walker (17 years); Dea. James and Sis. Lynette Darby (26 years); Reverend Alvin and Sis. Kimberly Wyatt (14 years); and Bro. Richard and Sis. Raven Spratley (1 year).



Union Baptist Church 15

THE SENIOR CITIZENS 2018 HALL OF FAME CEREMONY (Submitted by Sis. Kathy Spratley)

On Tuesday, November 13, 2018, the Senior Citizen Awards Banquet was held at Duke Energy Center. Curtis Fuller was the Master of Ceremony. He diligently called sixteen seniors to be honored. They saved the best for last. The very last person honored was our very own Deacon Marvin Grizzard.

Seated at Deacon Grizzard's table was his wife, Deaconess Betty Grizzard; his daughter, June; his brother, two of Betty Grizzard's sisters, her niece, and Pastor and Sis. Yates.

Seated at Herb Brock's table was Doris Blaine Smith and her sister, Faye Shirley; Renee Payne and her sister Cheryl Hill; Mother Ruth Phillips; Elsie Pierre; Erica Garrett and her daughter Raya. Raya caught the attention of Curtis Fuller with her dancing.

Enjoying the brunch at table 9 was Portia Fuller, Carolyn Davis, Angelita Moreno Jones, Deacon Ernest Norman, Kathy Spratley, Deacon Theodore Craig, Lois Harris and Gwen Hall. Also, from Union was Sterling Trice who sat with and performed with his line dancing group.

The celebrity host was Vinnie Clark, a former student at CAPE High School, (where Kathy Spratley was voted Most Beloved Teacher). Vinnie went on to play professional football and is now an entrepreneur.

Deacon Grizzard humbly went around to thank everyone for coming. He also stood when Curtis Fuller asked all the Veterans to stand, along with Deacon Ernest Norman, Deacon Theodore Craig and Kathy Spratley. After the brunch there was mixing and mingling as the DJ played "Sparkle" by Cameo and many other tunes of the times. A very special thank you to Deacon Grizzard for representing Union so well!!!







MESSAGE FROM THE SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT

Greetings Union:

As we begin a new year, I look forward to what God has in store for us as a church family for 2019.

I am challenging all leaders and the membership to make attending Sunday school a priority this coming year. Studying God's word has never been more important. We are facing difficult times which God already knew would take place. It is also important for our children to attend Sunday school as well, so they can start building a strong foundation in knowing what God's plans are for them.

On behalf of the Sunday school staff we look forward to seeing all of you this coming year. We will have classes as usual for all ages; so please make Sunday school a part of your worship experience in 2019.

May God bless and keep you all is our prayer.

Deacon Ernest Norman/Sunday School Superintendent



WOMEN'S MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Matthew 25

Matthew 25 ministry service will restart on Saturday, February 9, 2019 from the hours of 11:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. Please plan to arrive at Matthew 25 by 10:45 a.m. If you have any questions, please see Sis. Doris Walker.

Women's Ministry Meeting

There will be a Women's Ministry Meeting on Saturday February 23, 2018 at 9:00 a.m. We will discuss plans for 2019. Thank you, Sis. Louise Stevenson and Sis. Rogena Stargel.

Vessels of Praise Dance Ministry

The Vessels of Praise Dance Ministry will minister to the church on the occasion of Black History month and Easter. The ministry is open to females of all ages, children to adults. If you wish to join this ministry, please SEE Sis. Tristan Cargile or Sis. Carol Cargile.

FOOD PANTRY:The Food Pantry Ministry served 99 families in November and served 62 families inDecember.~~ Sis. Monica Ray, Ministry Leader



BELIEVE WHAT JESUS HAS ALREADY DONE FOR US

We have this in Christ: Saved by Grace through Faith, Framed in God's Word that we study! But we need to understand that Satan will philosophize. 2 Corinthians 4:4 - 5:17 states: "Among them the god of this world [Satan] has blinded the minds of the unbelieving to prevent them from seeing the illuminating light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ [that is, grafted in, joined to Him by faith in Him as Savior], he is a new creature [reborn and renewed by the Holy Spirit]; the old things [the previous moral and spiritual condition] have



passed away. Behold, new things have come [because spiritual awakening brings a new life]."

The Fall of Man

Genesis 3 - We all know this story but, maybe we don't clearly understand. Adam like Jesus was the closest man to God and Adam was not supposed to die. For example, when Adam was in the Garden of Eden there were four rivers in it. So, when he had to leave the side of the first river and go to the far side of the third river he immediately appeared there. Likewise, when Jesus' life was being threatened during his ministry travels, He suddenly disappeared and reappeared down the road. Adam had everything he needed, He knew the rules, but disobeyed. Jesus denied Satan at every turn because He knew who He was even until death and resurrection.

Who Are You – [focus – I Am in Christ]

Colossians 1:27-28 – "God [in His eternal plan] chose to make known to them how great for the Gentiles are the riches of His glory of this mystery, which is Christ and among you, the hope and guarantee of [realizing] glory. We proclaim Him, warning and instructing everyone in all wisdom [that is with comprehensive insight into the word and purposes of God], so that we may present every person complete in Christ [mature, fully trained, and perfect in Him – the Anointed]." [focus - and He is in Me]

Belief and Confession

Romans 10:10 – "For with the heart a man believes [in Christ as Savior] resulting in his justification [that is, being made righteous – being freed of guilt of sin and made acceptable to God]; and with the mouth he acknowledges and confess [his faith openly]. Resulting in and confirming [his] salvation."

Grace Though Faith

Hebrews 4:14 – "Inasmuch then as we [believers] have a great High Priest who has [already ascended and] passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession [of faith and cling tenaciously to our absolute trust in Him as Savior]."

I'm in Jesus and He is in Me.

When bills come – I'm in Jesus, money comes up short to buy groceries or pay the rent – I'm in Jesus, health issues – I'm in Jesus because He already knew 2000 years ago what I would go through. *God may not come when you want Him to, but He'll always be there right on time.* We must learn to trust and obey through faith! The best scriptures I found to help me in my walk is Psalm 1, 23, 91 and many more. Don't stop reading and mediating on His word. AMEN.

Deacon James E. Darby, Men's Ministry Leader

JANUARY IS "WORSHIPPING JESUS CHRIST ONLY, ALWAYS" MONTH

IMPORTANT DATES FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY

January 14, 2019:	First Quarterly Church Leadership Council Meeting at 7:00 P.M.
<u>January 20, 2019</u> :	Dedication and Fellowship Service at Saving Grace Community Church at 3:30 P.M.
<u>January 20, 2019</u> :	Special Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during 10:00 A.M. Worship Service
<u>January 21, 2019</u> :	City Wide Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Observance (Church Office Closed)
<u>January 22, 2019</u> :	Deacons Ministry Meeting at 7:00 P.M. Trustee Board Meeting at 6:00 P.M.
<u>January 22, 2019</u> :	First Quarter Official Board Meeting at 8:00 P.M.
<u>January 25, 2019</u> :	First Quarter Church Conference at 7:00 P.M.

January 28, 2019: Union Foundation Meeting at 7:00 P.M.

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was an American Baptist minister and activist who became the most visible spokesperson and leader in the civil rights movement from 1954 until his death in 1968.
- Dr. King was born Michael Luther King, Jr. on January 15, 1929, in Atlanta, Georgia. He later had his name changed to Martin.
- Dr. King married Coretta Scott in 1953 and they had five children.
- Dr. King led the first black nonviolent boycott (bus boycott) in 1955 which lasted 382 days.
- In 1957, Dr. King was elected president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.
- Dr. King received the Nobel Prize for Peace on December 10, 1964.
- Dr. King was awarded five honorary degrees; was named Man of the Year by *Time* magazine in 1963; and became not only the symbolic leader of American blacks but also a world figure.
- Dr. King was assassinated on April 4, 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee when he was just 39 years old.
- Dr. King's most famous speech is "I Have a Dream".





FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY OBSERVANCE MONTH

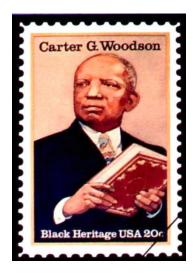
IMPORTANT DATES FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY



February 3-24, 2019: A Black History Tribute by The Mahala Saunders Library Ministry will occur during each Sunday 10:00 A.M. Worship Service.

- February 4, 2019: Deacons Ministry Meeting at 7:00 P.M.
- February 18, 2019: President's Day (Church Office Closed)
- February 18, 2019: Trustee Board Meeting at 6:00 P.M.
- **February 24**, **2019**: UBC African Heritage Observance (Wear African Apparel)
- February 25, 2019: Union Foundation Meeting at 7:00 P.M.

THE HISTORY OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH



Black History Month, or National African American History Month, is an annual celebration of achievements by black Americans and a time for recognizing the central role of African Americans in U.S. history. The event grew out of "Negro History Week," the brainchild of noted historian Carter G. Woodson and other prominent African Americans. Since 1976, every U.S. president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month. Other countries around the world, including Canada and the United Kingdom, also devote a month to celebrating black history. The month of February was chosen to coincide with the birthdays of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln.



Union Baptist Church 21

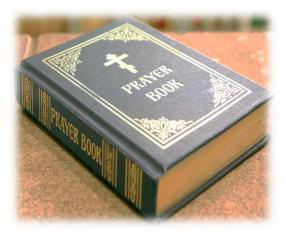
Union's Prayer Book

Just a friendly reminder!

If you haven't yet submitted your prayer for Union's Prayer Book, please do so as soon as the Lord leads you to. We pray to organize all prayers by the end of the month.

Thank you,

Sis. Renita Foster Sis. Denise Harris Sis. Angelita Jones Dea. Ernest Norman Sis. Melanie Montgomery Dea. Ed Phillips Sis. Ruth Phillips Sis. Elsie Pierre Sis. Kathy Spratley Sis. Louise Stallworth



Health and Wellness Ministry Initiative



All Men, Women, Youth and Children

Wear Red On

Sunday February 10, 2019

At Union Baptist Church 405 West 7th Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45203 Dr. Orlando B. Yates, Pastor

You Can Make a Difference

To show your commitment <mark>to re</mark>ducing risk, improving health and saving lives.

Heart disease is America's le<mark>adin</mark>g killer of women – and men

Pledge to Learn More about Heart Disease and Ways to Prevent Heart Disease and Its Complications

Union Baptist Church, Health and Wellness Ministry "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? (1 Corinthians 6:19)

FREE Blood Pressure Check



WHEN: Every Second Sunday of the Month

- WHERE: Union Baptist Church, Main Vestibule, 405 W. 7th Street, Cincinnati, OH 45203
- TIME: After 10 am Morning Worship Celebration

Do You Know Your Numbers? Do you Know Your Goal?



Pastor: Dr. Orlando B. Yates **Leader:** Annette I. Bell, R.D., L.D. **Co-Leaders:** Dr. Raven Spratley & <u>Renita Foster</u>

Phone: 513-381-3858 **Fax:** 513-381-1605 **website:** www.union-baptist.net

INTERESTED?

CALL US!



In Existence Since June 23, 1996



Mission:

- To promote health and wellness to the church congregation and the community.
- 2. During the church services:
 - To give urgently proper care, via CPR, and/or first aid, to a member or visitor who becomes sick or injured.

CTIVITY PYRAMIC

- b. To serve the Pastor, Ministers and Guest Speakers with juice or water.
- To provide, promote, and encourage a positive life style change as it relates to the entire being in spirit, mind, body, and relationships; first giving honor to God.

Vision:

To be known as a ministry who increases awareness of health related issues by providing opportunities for the church congregation and community to receive the necessary tools for improving/maintaining their overall wellness spiritually, mentally, physically, and socially.



Scriptures Ministry is based on:

- "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with you body." (1 Corinthians 6:19-20, NW)
- "Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well." (3 John 2, NIV)

Who May Become a Member?

- 1. Any dedicated church member.
- 2. Medical professionals, other professionals, high-school students, or any dedicated person.
- 3. Male or female over sixteen years of age.
- 4. Any member who has completed First Aid, CPR, and Blood Pressure certification training is a plus.

Who do you Contact if Interested in Being a Part of the Ministry or have questions? Sister Annette I. Bell, R.D., LD., at 221-7472

ATTENTION UNION: DID YOU KNOW THAT YOU MAY CONTRIBUTE YOUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS VIA PAYPAL? You may submit your payments via PayPal, even if you do not have a PayPal account. If interested, you may access PayPal on the UBC website. Just go to www.union-baptist.net and select the PayPal link. Thank you.

THE CITY GOSPEL MISSION OUTREACH MINISTRY: The schedule of the longstanding participation of Union Baptist Church Ministers began with Reverend Shawn D. Pate, is as follows:

January 26, 2019 February 23, 2019 March 23, 2019 Reverend Barry Hixon, Jr. Reverend Emanuel Marshall Reverend Alvin Wyatt Preaching at 7:30 p.m. Preaching at 7:30 p.m. Preaching at 7:30 p.m.

Union is asked to pray for and support, in every way possible, **our Associate Ministers** as they serve at City Gospel Mission. The City Gospel Mission is located at 1805 Dalton St., 45215. Thank You. ~~Pastor Yates

TRUTHSEEKERS SMALL CARE GROUP



The members of the Small Care Group TruthSeekers" **meet every Monday from 6:00 – 7:15 p.m. at the Avondale Branch Public Library** to study God's word and grow through the five purposes of the church, worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry and evangelism. Please feel free to join us as we learn about God's Word and how to become more Christ like.

For more information, please contact Rev. Shawn Pate, Small Care Group Ministry Leader at Email: unioncincinnati@gmail.com.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: All members are asked to be mindful that no one should be in the **church building between the hours of 11 p.m. to 7 a.m.** due to security reasons. Any necessary exceptions should be coordinated and approved by the Chairman of Property and Space, Bro. Don Johnson, at least one week in advance. Also, this is a reminder: **Please do not park in the Pastor's parking space at any time.** God Bless you!

~~Dr. Carolyn Turner, Trustee Board Ministry Leader

<u>UNION BAPTIST'S EMAIL ADDRESS</u>: The **church has an email address for all ministry announcements**. Please send all forms of communications (church announcements, flyers, upcoming events, etc.) to **unioncincinnati@gmail.com**. Thank you!

DEADLINE FOR NEWSLETTER ANNOUNCEMENTS: The deadline for church announcements for the March-April 2019 newsletter is February 19, 2019. Requests for announcements should be e-mailed in care of Sis. Shirley Norman, Public Relations Ministry Leader, at Union's email address: unioncincinnati@gmail.com. Please note "Sis. Norman – Announcement" on the subject line. Please note: any announcements received after the deadline date will be included in the May-June 2019 Newsletter.

UNION BAPTIST CHURCH OF CINCINNATI WEBSITE: Please visit our website (www.unionbaptist.net) which is both informative and interactive for those who are seeking the Will of God in their lives. On our website, you will see upcoming events; evangelistic missions inclusive for men, women and children; discipleship opportunities for building God's kingdom; exploratory devotional links for personal spiritual growth; and, community connections that have demonstrated, in the past, and continue to demonstrate, the POWER OF GOD throughout the Greater Cincinnati area, and beyond. UBC's Newsletter is also posted on the website in color. Share with others.

UNION BAPTIST CHURCH RADIO BROADCASTS: You can now also listen to the Union Baptist broadcast on WCVG 1320 every Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. through live stream radio by connecting to the Union Baptist Church website at www.union-baptist.net.

<u>UNION BAPTIST CHURCH IS ON FACEBOOK</u>: The official Union Baptist Facebook is also linked to the Union Baptist Church of Cincinnati website at www.union-baptist.net.

<u>UNION BAPTIST WI-FI SETTINGS</u>: Please see Executive Church Administrator, Bro. Dale McAllister, to obtain the settings for the wireless router (Wi-Fi). Thank you.

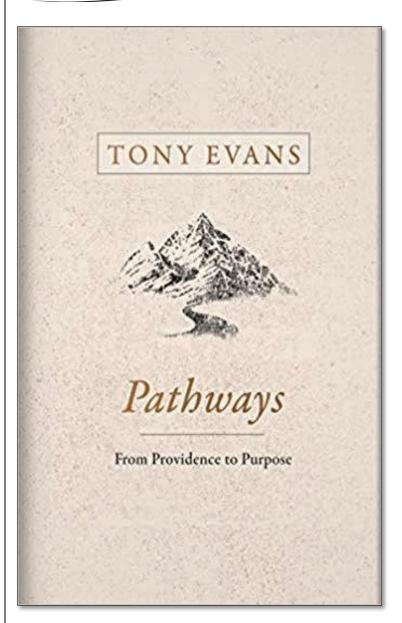
<u>CHURCH VOLUNTEERS ALWAYS NEEDED</u>: Opportunities for anyone interested in volunteering in the church office or other areas of the church are still available. Please contact Bro. Dale McAllister, Executive Church Administrator. Thank you.

UBC MEMBERSHIP DATA FORM: All members who have not completed their updated UBC Membership Form, are urged to complete and provide your updated information, including, any name change; your current home address; your home, cell and work telephone numbers; a number where you may be reached in case of an emergency; and, an emergency contact person, etc. Membership Data Forms are available in the wall receptacle near the church office. You may also use the UBC Communication Card (found in the pocket of the pew) to provide updated information. When you have completed your form, please give to **Sis. Gwendolyn Hall**, Church Office Receptionist. Thank You.

UNION BAPTIST CHURCH

Wednesday Noon Day and Wednesday Night Bible Study Series

405 W. 7th Street Cincinnati, Ohio 45203 Phone: 513-381-3858 – Web: <u>www.union-baptist.net</u>



The story of Esther appears to be a series of coincidences that deliver the Jews from certain death. However, God selected Esther for a particular purpose at a particular time in the history of His chosen people.

Pathways – From Providence to Purpose will help you discover the power of God's providence in the midst of your personal pain, fear, gain, loss, and love. You'll see that God has a purpose for your life, and He uses every action and event that occurs in it to make that purpose a reality.

Benefits of This Study:

- Learn how to locate God in the midst of what feels like His absence.
- Explore ways to trust God along the dark pathways of life.
- Position yourself on God's pathway of purpose for your life.
- Recognize that God uses every action and event that occurs in life to make His purpose a reality.
- Examine the story of Esther and understand her call to a particular purpose at a particular time in the history of God's chosen people.
- Allow the truth of God's Word to show you the power of providence in the midst of your personal pain, fear, gain, loss, and love.
- Be awed by the very personal nature of God as He guides humanity, leading each of us with His intended purpose for our lives.

Beginning January 23, 2019, Pastor Yates will lead us into this new dynamic bible study that will include *six (6) video presentations.* Classes will be held on Wednesdays - 12:00 Noon and on Wednesdays at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to attend one of these classes.

Lunch is served after the Noon Day class.



The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from my enemies. ~~Psalm 18: 2, 3

Lord,

I know I can trust You in the midst of a trial, because You measure the weight of it on my shoulders. You alone are my refuge and my strength. I come to Your throne and ask for grace and patience as I seek You for help in this time of need.

I pray that You would enable me to let go of the past. Help me remember that it is not a place to live in, but something from which I can learn. You are a redeemer and a restorer. Give me hope for the future and help me live "today" every day of my life in your service.

I adore You and give You all the glory and praise! In Jesus Name, Amen.



True prayer is to personally experience the presence of the living Christ in your quiet times and throughout the day. It is the joyous assurance that the Lord keeps His promises and that He lives in you and you in Him.

Lord my God, it is with gratitude and humility that I accept Your will for my life, for in You is perfect wisdom. Amen.



The Soul's Search for Intimacy with God. . . .

REUNION

In the book *Great Stories Remembered*, Paul Deutschman tells the story of an incredible reunion of a husband and wife who were separated during World War II. The almost unbelievable dynamics of this story are a metaphor of many of our relationships with God. Countless Christians have drifted away from God. He is pursuing a love relationship with you that is real and personal. You must open the door of your heart and let Him in!



Marcel Sternberger was a methodical man of nearly 50, with bushy white hair,

guileless brown eyes, and the bouncing enthusiasm of a czardas dancer of his native Hungary. He always took the 9:09 Long Island Railroad train from his suburban home to Woodside, N.Y., where he caught a subway into the city. On the morning of January 10, 1948, Sternberger boarded the 9:09 as usual. En route, he suddenly decided to visit Laszlo Victor, a Hungarian friend who lived in Brooklyn and was ill. Accordingly, at Ozone Park, Sternberger changed to the subway for Brooklyn, went to his friend's house, and stayed until midafternoon. He then boarded a Manhattan-bound subway for his Fifth Avenue office. Here is Marcel's incredible story.

*** * * ***

The car was crowded, and there seemed to be no chance of a seat. But just as I entered, a man sitting by the door suddenly jumped up to leave, and I slipped into the empty place. I've been living in New York long enough not to start conversations with strangers. But, being a photographer, I have the peculiar habit of analyzing people's faces, and I was struck by the features of the passenger on my left. He was probably in his late 30's, and when he glanced up, his eyes seemed to have a hurt expression in them. He was reading a Hungarian-language newspaper, and something prompted me to say in Hungarian, "I hope you don't mind if I glance at your paper."

The man seemed surprised to be addressed in his native language. But he answered politely, "You may read it now. I'll have time later on." During the half-hour ride to town, we had quite a conversation. He said his name was Bela Paskin. A law student when World War II started, he had been put into a German labor battalion and sent to the Ukraine. Later he was captured by the Russians and put to work burying the German dead. After the war, he covered hundreds of miles on foot until he reached his home in Debrecen, a large city in eastern Hungary.

I myself knew Debrecen quite well, and we talked about it for a while. Then he told me the rest of his story. When he went to the apartment once occupied by his father, mother, brothers and sisters, he found strangers living there. Then he went upstairs to the apartment that he and his wife once had. It also was occupied by strangers. None of them had ever heard of his family.

As he was leaving, full of sadness, a boy ran after him, calling "Paskin bacsi! Paskin bacsi!" That means "Uncle Paskin." The child was the son of some old neighbors of his. He went to the boy's home and talked to his parents. "Your whole family is dead," they told him. "The Nazis took them and your wife to Auschwitz."

Auschwitz was one of the worst Nazi concentration camps. Paskin gave up all hope. A few days later, too heartsick to remain any longer in Hungary, he set out again on foot, stealing across border after border until he reached Paris. He managed to immigrate to the United States in October 1947, just three months before I met him.

All the time he had been talking, I kept thinking that somehow his story seemed familiar. A young woman whom I had met recently at the home of friends had also been from Debrecen; she had been sent to Auschwitz; from there she had been transferred to work in a German munitions factory. Her relatives had been killed in the gas chambers. Later, she was liberated by the Americans and was brought here in the first boatload of displaced persons in 1946.

Her story moved me to the point that I wrote down her address and phone number, intending to invite her to meet my family and thus help relieve the terrible emptiness in her life.

REUNION . . . continued

It seemed impossible that there could be any connection between these two people, but as I neared my station, I fumbled anxiously in my address book. I asked in what I hoped was a casual voice, "Was your wife's name Marya?

He turned pale. "Yes!" he answered. "How did you know?" He looked as if he were about to faint. I said, "Let's get off the train." I took him by the arm at the next station and led him to a phone booth. He stood there like a man in a trance while I dialed her phone number.

It seemed hours before Marya Paskin answered. (Later I learned her room was alongside the telephone, but she was in the habit of never answering it because she had so few friends and the calls were always for someone else. This time, however, there was no one else at home and, after letting it ring for a while, she responded.)

When I heard her voice at last, I told her who I was and asked her to describe her husband. She seemed surprised at the question, but gave me a description. Then I asked her where she had lived in Debrecen, and she told me the address.

Asking her to hold the line, I turned to Paskin and said, "Did you and your wife live on such-and such a street?" "Yes!" Bela exclaimed. He was white as a sheet and trembling. "Try to be calm," I urged him. "Something miraculous is about to happen to you. Here, take this telephone and talk to our wife!"

He nodded his head in mute bewilderment, his eyes bright with tears. He took the receiver, listened a moment to his wife's voice, then suddenly cried, "This is Bela! This is Bela!" and he began to mumble hysterically. Seeing that the poor fellow was so excited he couldn't talk coherently, I took the receiver from his shaking hands.

"Stay where you are," I told Marya, who also sounded hysterical. "I am sending your husband to you. We will be there in a few minutes." Bela was crying like a baby and saying over and over again, "It is my wife. I go to my wife!"

At first I thought I had better accompany Paskin, lest the man should faint from excitement, but I decided that this was a moment in which no strangers should intrude. Putting Paskin into a taxicab, I directed the driver to take him to Marya's address, paid the fare, and said goodbye.

Bela Paskin's reunion with his wife was a moment so poignant, so electric with suddenly released emotion, that afterward neither he nor Marya could recall much about it.

"I remember only that when I left the phone, I walked to the mirror like in a dream to see if maybe my hair had turned gray," she said later. "The next thing I know, a taxi stops in front of the house, and it is my husband who comes toward me. Details I cannot remember; only this I know—that I was happy for the first time in many years."

"Even now it is difficult to believe that it happened. We have both suffered so much; I have almost lost the capability to not be afraid. Each time my husband goes from the house, I say to myself, 'Will anything happen to take him from me again?'"

Her husband is confident that no horrible misfortune will ever again befall them. "Providence has brought us together," he says simply. "It was meant to be."

*** * * ***

Skeptical persons will no doubt attribute the events of that memorable afternoon to mere chance. But was it chance that made Marcel Sternberger suddenly decide to visit his sick friend and hence take a subway line that he had never ridden before? Was it chance that caused the man sitting by the door of the car to rush out just as Sternberger came in? Was it chance that caused Bela Paskin to be sitting beside Sternberger, reading a Hungarian newspaper? Was it chance – or did God ride the Brooklyn subway that afternoon?

As significant and as this life-changing reunion became to Bela Paskin, our reunion to a nearer, deepening relationship with our God is of greater urgency and offers a far more wonderful reward. We would weep with regret if we knew what we are missing in a life that knows about Him, but rarely if ever feels His touch. His Spirit keeps urging us to live on a better plane, while we seem content to ride the subways of our lives in the routine normalcy of a self-imposed emptiness. We need not live alone. God waits patiently, yet insistently, for us to let Him give us His unhindered satisfaction, sustenance and security.

Far From Home: The Soul's Search for Intimacy with God ~~ Joseph M. Stowell

Bible Character Series . . .

ATHALIAH



and the Almost-Perfect Plan

Background: Queen Athaliah is the only woman in the Hebrew Bible reported as having reigned as a monarch within Israel/Judah. She is the daughter of either Omri, king of Israel (2 Kgs 8:26; 2 Chr 22:2), or, more probably, of his son King Ahab (2 Kgs 8:18; 2 Chr 21:6; the Jewish historian Josephus cites this in *Antiquities*), who ruled from 873 to 852 BC. There is no evidence that she was the daughter of Ahab's chief wife, Jezebel. Athaliah married Jehoram (reigned 851–843 BC.) of Judah (2 Kgs 8:18; 2 Chr 21:6). After Jehoram's death, their son Ahaziah reigned for one year, and "his mother was his counselor in doing wickedly" (2 Chr 22:3).

After Ahaziah is killed in a dynastic struggle (2 Kings 9), Athaliah sets out to kill the rest of the royal dynasty and seizes the throne of Judah in Jerusalem (2 Kings 9; 2 Chr 22:10–23:21). She manages to remain sole monarch for six years (842–836 BC.). In the seventh year a revolution led by Jehoiada the priest puts on the throne the seven-year-old Joash, Ahaziah's child who was rescued by his paternal aunt (and Jehoiada's wife) Jehosheba from the royal bloodbath six years earlier. The overthrow takes place in the Jerusalem temple. Athaliah is killed in what she terms "treason" (2 Kgs 11:14; 2 Chr 23:13) against her reign. ~~Athalya Brenner

It had all been so smooth, almost easy, Queen Athaliah reflected, watching in the bronze mirror as her maid combed her lustrous hair. "The jeweled combs, the ones with the ruby flowers, I think," she said to her reflection and her maid nodded.

"Yes, mistress. The red gown with them, or the ivory?" "The red, yes, the red will do very nicely," she said and smiled. The smile was not a nice one. The maid shivered in spite of herself, and the Queen, watching her, felt her lips stretch a bit more. Yes, red would do very well indeed. Red was for blood, wasn't it? And blood was life. Her life – before, now and always. Odd how that kept coming back, that last day before...

"Before everything," she thought. "Before I was myself. When I was only someone's daughter, someone's wife, someone's mother – beholden, bidden, constrained. Weak."

It had not been a bad life, exactly, she reflected. Only – limited. Blocked, Powerless, really. As Ahab of Israel's baby sister, she had lived in the court he kept with Jezebel and had tasted their heady brew of absolute authority and worship of Baal and the Canaanite pantheon in defiance even of the Lord God's prophets. When she married, she wore her own crown and called a king husband, but found the power she had sought had no substance, only ceremony.

Then Jehoram had died – not in kingly fashion, but like a mis-killed beast, his bowels consumed in an agony of pain and stomach-turning stink she could still smell. "And that was six years ago," she reminded herself, taking a deep breath of the unguents her maid was working into her hair as she dressed it. That death had changed everything. "How blind I was until then," she mused. "And how quickly I had to learn how to see!"

With her son Ahaziah taking his father's place as King of Judah, she had far more responsibility, of course. Jehoram had been an able king, but this son of his, the youngest, had had no training. His rule had been an accident, she thought. If the Arabs and Philistines had not killed his older brothers, he would never have ruled.

ATHALIAH . . . continued

So she took over his training, though subtly – Jezebel had taught her well. Like his father, Ahaziah had been amenable to the worship of the Canaanite gods she favored. The priests of the Lord God she scorned and taught him to do the same; Jehoram had not needed teaching, she remembered, and suppressed a sigh. She still missed him.

Then the unthinkable had happened. In the first year of his reign, Ahaziah had been killed by Jehu, sent by the Lord God he said as part of his program to wipe out the house of Ahab. Jehu had killed Ahab's son, Jehoram of Israel at the same time, and had followed it up with the elimination of Jezebel, whose own eunuchs had, at Jehu's challenge, tossed her out the window of her own palace in Jezreel to smash on the stones of the courtyard. Dogs had eaten her flesh after Jehu had ridden over it on horseback and left it there, unburied. A fate that still made her shiver at the man's cruelty, though he had piously declared that the whole thing was the Lord God's doing. "And if that's true," she said whenever she thought back on the grisly end of her model in queenship, "I'm, certainly glad that he's no god of mine!"

But Ahaziah's death had been a blow that had almost finished her – would have, except that she had known what would happen if she gave way, and took action to prevent it. She still didn't much like what she had done but, as she asked herself in a well-worn dialogue of justification, "What else was I to do? There was no one left strong enough to rule. Jehu would have conquered the Kingdom and that would have ended everything: worship of our gods, autonomy of the throne, freedom – my own life! I had to secure the throne – to save us all – and I had to act instantly!"

Unconsciously, she shrugged and shook her head. Hastily her maid backed away, and she rose. "All that blood," she murmured, raising her arms as the maid slipped the red gown over her head, "all that blood. But it was worth it. And I had to. If I had left even a single heir of Jehoram's alive. . But I didn't. And now I'm safe. My plan worked! It was perfect! I am the Queen, and I shall hold this Kingdom no matter what. Jezebel would have been proud of me! I did it!"

Arranging the folds of the gown, she smiled again. "The crown?" Her maid handed it to her and, as she placed it carefully on her head, they both heard a roar coming from the Temple. They exchanged a single, startled glance. Then the queen, whipping up the modest train of her gown in one hand, ran for the door.

Pushing into the Temple, Athaliah saw a huge crowd – Temple Guards armed to the teeth, the heads of families, everyone who could squeeze a way in. And they were shouting something that sounded like, "Long live the King!"

Shocked, the queen caught her breath. How could this be happening! She had had all the heirs of Jehoram killed! Her eyes found her enemy, the despised priest of the Lord God, Jehoiada, at once, but the seven-year old standing by the pillar in the King's place, surrounded by the armed circle of Temple guards, crowned and carrying a copy of the Lord God's Law she did not know. Who was this imposter?

And then she recognized Ahaziah's sister, Jehosheba, standing next to her husband Jehoiada with a smile of triumph, and remembered Joash, Ahaziah's son. "That – she must have hidden the brat! They'll never get away with it!" flashed through Queen Athaliah's mind.

"Treason! Treason!" she screamed with all her power, ripping her red gown from shoulder to hem. Her enraged voice cut through the shouts of the rejoicing like a sword, creating the instant of silence she waited for her people to fill. But it was Jehoiada who filled it.

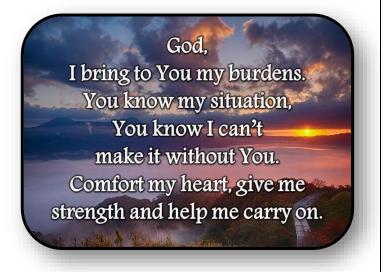
"You can't kill her in the Temple of the Lord God," he said to the Captain of the Guard, "so take her outside the precincts, and put to the sword any who dares to follow her."

And as she felt her arms gripped by the guards and began to move, numb, unresisting, toward the palace and the entry to the Gate of the Horses, Queen Athaliah knew, with a chill that invaded her bones, that her perfect plan had failed utterly, and that she had, finally, lost . . . Everything! "All that blood," she murmured regretfully," and it did no good at all."

Thoughts to ponder in the New Year

Anger

Whatever the need of the moment, the answer is to be found in Scripture, if we take the time to search for it. Whatever we're feeling, whatever we're suffering, whatever we're hoping—the Bible has something to say to us. Our focus this issue is anger.



Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. Psalm 119:105

Dear God,

Sometimes I get angry so easily. Things go wrong, people don't act the way I want them to, someone's words rub me the wrong way. Help me, Father, to control my anger, to keep it from spilling out, hurting those around me. Remind me that usually, when it comes right down to it. I'm angry simply because I can't have my own way. Give me the strength to accept whatever You send into my life. Amen.

Some Scriptures on Anger:

- A God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness. Nehemiah 9:17
- Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. James 1:19-20
- Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: far anger resteth in the bosom of fools. Ecclesiastes 7:9
- He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth is spirit than he that taketh a city. Proverbs 16:32
- A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger. Proverbs 15:1
- Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. Colossians 3:21

Heat not a furnace for your foe so hot that it singes yourself.

~~William Shakespeare

Light for My Path: Illuminating Selection from the Bible ~~Barbour Publishing