

# “THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

## Standing Upright When Our World Is Upside Down

By Jerry Fite

Our lives may go smoothly for a while, then suddenly, our world can be turned upside down. The sudden death of a close loved one, the doctor's diagnosis that we have a terminal disease, or the final word from our employer that we no longer have a job can send us for a loop. Companions gone on whom we often depended and with whom we enjoyed life; health gone that now seems so precious; and a job gone through which we supported ourselves and our families; all hit us hard. What should we do during these trying times?

### BE NOT ANXIOUS

God knows our situation in life at all times (Matt. 6:32). If we lose our jobs, we must not allow the situation to cause us to be distracted with anxiety. Jesus said, *“Be not therefore anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or, ‘What shall we drink’ or ‘Wherewithal shall we be clothed’”* (Matt. 6:31). Anxiety will not get us a new job, nor will it put food on the table. We must stand up straight in our overturned world with faith in our Lord. Trusting in the fact that God knows our need, we need to respond with: *“but seek ye first His kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you”* (Matt. 6:33). We must stand up and continue to pursue living according to God's righteous standard, the gospel of Christ, knowing God will help us find a way to feed, clothe and support our family.

### KEEP TRUSTING

Jesus points to two facets of faith that are effective antidotes for paralyzing anxiety. We must first trust the fact: *“your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things”* (Matt. 6:32). And, He will provide for our necessities to be met (Matt. 6:33). Trusting in God KNOWING our situation, and then, that He will ACT TO PROVIDE for our needs are powerful thoughts of faith that keep us upright in our upside down world.

Such trust undergirds us; vaccinates us from the paralyzing disease of worrying about tomorrow (Matt. 6:34); and frees us to do what we can do. We can concentrate on obtaining new skills, look for a new job, or do whatever is necessary to improve our immediate situation. Jesus wants us to keep trusting in Him, and to keep living righteous lives as He provides for our physical well being.

### BE THANKFUL

One way we stand upright in our upside down world is that we continue to be thankful, even in difficult times. While we are asking God for help in our immediate dark situation, we can be sure to give Him thanks for the companions, prosperity and health that He did allow us to have. The darkness that surrounds us at the moment should not cause us to cease to be thankful for the blessings enjoyed in former times. Paul exhorts us to *“Pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus to you-ward”* (1 Thess. 5:17-18). While we may not always feel thankful *“for”* everything that happens to us, we certainly can *“in”* all things express thanksgiving to God. We can be thankful to Him that we have a home in heaven prepared, reserved and waiting for us where death, loss of health or a lost job can't overturn everything.

In tough times, God wants us to focus, trust and act constructively in Him. May we all keep standing upright when our personal world is suddenly turned up-side down. – *Glad Tidings*, September 11, 2016. ■

## Overcoming the Barriers in Daily Bible Reading

By Jerry Fite

You are probably starting out the new year engaged in reading your Bible daily. If not, why not? Those trying to walk in God's ways, "*meditate*" on God's law "*day and night.*" (Psa. 1:2). In order to roll over and over God's law in your mind, you will have to first read, and then grasp the meaning of the words you read. Each twenty-four-hour period has a day and a night. Daily Bible reading provides you with new thoughts to meditate upon each day and night. It is early, if you have not yet started, begin today. You are not far behind.

It takes effort to read, think and meditate. To do this daily throughout the year requires motivation. Let Jesus motivate you to read the words God has revealed to you by listening to the words of His prayer unto His Father. As Jesus anticipates returning to the Father, His prayer reveals why He speaks in the world: "*that they may have my joy made full in themselves*" (Jn. 17:13). On behalf of His apostles, Jesus asks His Father to "*sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth*" (Jn. 17:17). Thinking of the apostles' work in proclaiming this truth, Jesus prays for those "*who believe*" on Him "*through their word*" (Jn. 17:20). The spoken and recorded word of God creates joy, holiness and belief in the reader. Realizing that such blessings are intertwined in truth, we should enthusiastically fill our mind daily with God's absolute Truth, as we encounter a world of deceit and doubt.

Being busy often becomes a barrier to daily Bible reading. Daily work to pay monthly bills is a must! Cleaning the house and attending to children are good things filling up our day. Recreation is also good, especially in busy lives, for we can "recreate" ourselves through pleasant divergence and refreshing relaxation. Rejuvenated in spirit and renewed in strength, we are ready to take on busyness yet again. Daily Bible reading, starting earnestly in January, becoming intermittent in February, can cease in March. Why? Often it is because we become too busy?

Are you so busy that you cannot set aside 15 minutes a day to read God's Word? The average reader can read about 200 words per minute or 3,000 words in 15 minutes. If you are below average, you have two other days in the week to catch up. You can read through your Bible in one year by reading 15 minutes a day, five days a week! Start a good habit in your life. Pick a quiet place and a designated time to busy yourself for a quarter of an hour in God's Word.

Know that in those 15 minutes you have the Lord's blessing. Jesus pointed out to Martha, who was so busy with serving, that Mary had "*chosen the good part*" when she chose to listen to the words of Jesus (Lk. 10:40). You must carve out time to read God's Word in a busy life. Fifteen minutes do not conveniently appear daily throughout the year.

Being tired keeps many from Bible reading. By the time you get everything done in a day, you are too tired to read. Half way through the daily reading, you dose off. Coming to, you have forgotten what you read, too exhausted to continue. The simple solution is to set your clock to wake up 30 minutes earlier. You have time to wake up from a night's rest and devote your alert time to reading and comprehending God's Word. You can shop till you drop! Pick your most rested time of the day to read God's Word! Motivated hearts and wise decisions break down many barriers in reading the Bible consistently throughout the year. May God bless your efforts! – *Glad Tidings*, January 13, 2019. ■

*"For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit"* (Eph. 3:1-5).

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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