

STUDIES IN THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY

“THE TWELVE STEPS TO A FANTASTIC FINISH”

STEP #11: 2 Timothy 4:9-15

“SERVANTHOOD: May I Hear Well-Done”

Key verse 2:15 — *“Make every effort to present yourself to God, approved, as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, guiding the word of truth along a straight path.”*

TEXT:

Key verses 4:10, 11

v. 9 Make every effort to come to me soon.

v. 10 ***For Demas deserted me, having loved this present world, and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia; Titus to Dalmatia.***

v. 11 ***Luke alone is with me. Pick up Mark and be bringing him with you, For he is useful to me for service.***

v. 12 But Tychicus I sent to Ephesus.

v. 13 When you are coming, be bringing the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, also the books, especially the parchments.

v. 14 Alexander, the coppersmith, did me a great deal of harm; the Lord will pay him back according to his deeds.

v. 15 And you also be guarding yourself against him for he vigorously opposed our words.

INTRODUCTION:**You're Going to Die**

A man went to the doctor after weeks of symptoms. The doctor examined him carefully, then called the patient's wife into his office. "Your husband is suffering from a rare form of anemia. Without treatment, he'll be dead in a few weeks. The good news is, it can be treated with proper nutrition."

"You will need to get up early every morning and fix your husband a hot breakfast—pancakes, bacon and eggs, the works. He'll need a home-cooked lunch every day, and then an old-fashioned meat-and-potato dinner every evening. It would be especially helpful if you could bake frequently. Cakes, pies, homemade bread—these are the things that will allow your husband to live.

"One more thing. His immune system is weak, so it's important that your home be kept spotless at all times. Do you have any questions?" The wife had none.

"Do you want to break the news, or shall I?" asked the doctor.

"I will," the wife replied.

She walked into the exam room. The husband, sensing the seriousness of his illness, asked her, "It's bad, isn't it?"

She nodded, tears welling up in her eyes. "What's going to happen to me?" he asked.

With a sob, the wife blurted out, "The doctor says you're gonna die!"

Source unknown

Multiple, 10,000 Sermon Illustrations, (Dallas, Texas Biblical Studies Press) 2000.

(Logos Library System)

TATORS

Some people are very bossy and like to tell others what to do, but don't want to soil their own hands.

They are called "Dick Tators."

Some people never seem motivated to participate, but are just content to watch while others do the work.

They are called "Speck Tators."

Some people never do anything to help, but are gifted at finding fault with the way others do the work.

They are called "Comment Tators."

Some people are always looking to cause problems by asking others to agree with them. It is too hot or too cold, too sour or too sweet.

They are called "Agie Tators."

There are those who say they will help, but somehow just never get around to actually doing the promised help.

They are called "Hezzie Tators."

Some people can put up a front and pretend to be someone they are not.

They are called "Emma Tators."

Then there are those who love and do what they say they will. They are always prepared to stop whatever they are doing and lend a helping hand.

They bring real sunshine into the lives of others.

They are called "Sweet Tators."

(Received via e-mail from Mark Skorheim, January 26, 2001)

DAD'S ADVICE

From a San Diego father who had identified 25 truths he learned from his children:

1. There is no such thing as childproofing your house.
2. If you spray hair spray on dust bunnies and run over them with roller blades, they can ignite.
3. A 4-year-old's voice is louder than 200 adults in a crowded restaurant.
4. If you hook a dog leash over the ceiling fan, the motor is not strong enough to rotate a 42-pound boy wearing pound puppy underwear and a Superman cape.
5. It is strong enough, however, to spread paint on all four walls of a 20' x 20' room.
6. Baseballs make marks on ceilings.
7. When using the ceiling fan as a bat, you have to throw the ball up several times before you get a hit.
8. You should not throw baseballs up when the ceiling fan is on.
9. A ceiling fan can hit a baseball a long ways.
10. The glass in windows (even double pane) doesn't stop a baseball hit by a ceiling fan.
11. When you hear the toilet flush and the words "uh-oh", it is already too late.
12. Brake fluid mixed with Clorox makes smoke—lots of it.
13. A 6-year-old boy can start a fire with a flint rock even though a 60-year-old man says it can only be done in the movies.
14. A magnifying glass can start a fire even on an overcast day.
15. If you use a waterbed as a home plate while wearing baseball shoes, it does not leak. It explodes.
16. A king-size waterbed holds enough water to fill a 2,000 sq. ft. house almost 4 inches deep.
17. Legos will pass through the digestive tract of a 4-year-old.
18. Duplos will not.
19. Play-Doh and microwave ovens should never be used in the same sentence.
20. Super glue is forever.
21. MacGyver can teach us many things we don't want to know.
22. So can Tarzan.
23. No matter how much Jell-O you put in the pool, you still can't walk on water.
24. Pool filters do not like Jell-O.
25. VCRs do not eject peanut butter.

(Received via e-mail from Mark Skorheim, June 6, 2001)

(Quote Unquote compiled by Lloyd Cory) Wheaton, IL: Victor Books / SP Publications, Inc. Copyright – SP Publications, Inc., 1977.

My rich uncle took out a million-dollar life insurance policy. But it didn't help—he died anyhow.

p. 165

(An Encyclopedia of Humor by Lowell D. Streiker) Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers Inc. Copyright – Lowell D. Streiker, 1998.

When small men begin to cast big shadows, it means that the sun is about to set.

—Lin Yutang

p. 211

(I'm Trying to Number My Days, But I Keep Losing Count!: Life Lessons on Living Your Days to the Fullest by Al Sanders) Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press. Copyright - Al Sanders, 1998. 158 pp.

It is an incontrovertible fact of life, "Everybody wants to live a long time, but no one wants to get old!"

p. 23

(The 776 Stupidest Things Ever Said by Ross & Kathryn Petras) New York, NY: Doubleday. Copyright – Ross & Kathryn Petras, 1993.

On Failure, Reasons for:

We made too many wrong mistakes.

Yogi Berra,

explaining why the Yankees lost the 1960 World Series

p. 62

On Father/Son Similarities:

The similarities between me and my father are different.

Dale Berra,

Yogi Berra's son

p. 64

On Football, Flooded Fields in:

If there's a pileup, they'll have to give some of the players artificial insemination.

Curt Gowdy,

television announcer,

during an AFL all-star game

marked by heavy rains that flooded the field

p. 68

(Christ and the Cowboy by Kenneth Wyatt) Tulia, TX: Y-8 Publishing Co.
Copyright – Y-8 Publishing Co., 1998.

Thoughts

by Kenneth Wyatt

Above the town I pause in thought
About my friends that live down there.
And in my mind is a vision caught—
A list of gifts that I would share.

I'd give them peace and daily bread,
Feed their souls and bodies all.
When sorrow comes, I'd end its dread,
And dry their tears before they fall.

I'd give them faith in double measure,
Wrapped in joy and tied with fun.
I'd give gifts of earthly treasure,
And wisdom, too, for everyone.

And in my heart, on the hill this night,
Looking down on the needs of friends,
I want the gifts to be just right,
Not just wishes that someone sends.

My spirit soars as I look down there,
And a Voice speaks quiet to me,
“Thus would Heaven care to share,
‘Now, thy God looks down on thee!’”

p. 92

(Calendar Poems 1951 / 2001 by Bruce Kiskaddon) Phoenix, AZ: Cowboy Miner Productions. Copyright – Walter J. Cheney and Jana Marck, 2000.

The Line Camp

YOU HAVE heard of the line camp wher folks left a man
 To “Locate” the stock on the range.
 Now there’s trucks and there’s fences. That kind of a hand
 Would be out of place and plum strange.
 The man in a line camp had no chance to shirk
 His job was cut out and he knew it
 Wherever he went there was plenty of work
 And no body but him there to do it.

He generally knowed about wolf traps and bait
 He savvied the habits of cattle
 He had to be able to shoot quick and straight
 If somebody started a battle.
 He was there to look after the stock for the boss
 He needn’t be very good lookin’
 He had to be able to shoe any hoss
 And live if he et his own cookin’

He baked his own biscuits he washed his own shirt.
 And earned his month’s wages beside
 If he ever got sick or in case he got hurt,
 He either lived through it or died.
 He didn’t have neighbors, he didn’t have law.
 He didn’t have much of his own.
 But he had to have plenty of sand in his craw
 If he held down a line camp alone.

(October)

BRUCE KISKADDON

(The Book of Cowboy Wisdom: Common Sense and Uncommon Genius From the World of Cowboys compiled and edited by Criswell Freeman) Nashville, TN: Walnut Grove Press. Copyright – Walnut Grove Press, 1997.

Make me as big and
open as the Plains;
As honest as the horse
between my knees;
Clean as the wind that
blows behind the rains;
Free as the hawk that
circles down the breeze.

From the Cowboy's Prayer, Badger Clark, 1906

p. 48

Out where the
handclasp's
a little stronger,
Out where the smile
dwells a little longer—
That's where
the West begins.
Arthur Chapman

p. 50

(All Hat & No Cattle: A Guide for New Texans and All the West of Us by Anne Dingus) Houston, TX: Lone Star Books. Copyright – Gulf Publishing Co., 1999.

DIFFICULT

Like unbreaking an egg.
Like trying to get a drink out of a fire hose.
That gun kicks as hard as it shoots.

GOOD

He's about half preacher.
Straight as a shingle.
Better'n buttered grits.

(Don't Whiz on a 'Lectric Fence: Grandpa's Country Wisdom by Roy English)
Salt Lake City, UT: Gibbs-Smith Publisher. Copyright - Roy English,
1996.

Forgive your enemies. It messes with their heads.
 p. 34

You can't blame a worm for not wanting to go fishing.
 p. 50

Debt is like dragging a rock in your cotton sack.
 p. 65

Interest on debt never sleeps.
 p. 77

(Don't Squat With Yer Spurs On!: A Cowboy's Guide to Life by Texas Bix
Bender) Salt Lake City, UT: Gibbs-Smith Publisher. Copyright - Texas
Bix Bender, 1992.

Too much debt
 doubles the weight
 on your horse
 and puts another
 in control of the reins.

p. 75

In our series of studies, we now come to consider:

Step #11—SERVANTHOOD: May I Hear Well-Done

SERVANTHOOD involves being spent in service. It means giving the gift of ourselves.

It is identifying with **Jim Elliott** who said:

“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”
(source unknown)

One of the great lessons we must learn is that **WE NEVER OUTGROW SERVANTHOOD**.

So many in our culture today reach the stage of age 65 and switch the tags and live by the **LAWS OF ENTITLEMENT** because they have done all the serving they are going to do.

(Descending into Greatness by Bill Hybels and Rob Wilkins) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright - Bill Hybels, 1993.

The first to give me this radical information was one of my college professors. “Fulfillment,” he would say in a thick French accent, “will never come through self-gratification.” I can remember sitting in his classroom, breaking out in a cold sweat. His words contradicted everything I had previously learned. “If you really want to live, then give yourself to God and others. Devote yourself to faithful and humble service, and you will discover joy.”
p. 98

The real shocker is that Jesus asks us, today, to be as countercultural and rebellious as He was. Into our screwed-up, twisted, dog-eat-dog world, He wants us to bring humility and servanthood. They will know you are My followers, He said, if you love one another.
p. 122

(The Seeking Heart by Fenelon) Auburn, ME: Christian Books. Copyright - Christian Books, 1992. 182 pp.

Remember that you are not called to be well-served, but to serve Him well. Learn to be gentle and patient with all that disturbs you.

p. 70

To do small things that are right continually, without being noticed, is much more important. These small acts attack your pride, your laziness, your self-centeredness, and your oversensitive nature. It is much more appealing to make great sacrifices to God, however hard they might be, so that you might do whatever you want with the small decisions of life. Faithfulness in the little things better proves your true love for God. It is the slow, plodding path rather than a passing fit of enthusiasm that matters.

p. 133

Mark 10:45

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

In John 13 we have this picture of Christ in the upper room with His disciples:

John 13:4, 5 (DAV)

He is rising from supper and is laying aside His outer garments; and having taken a towel, He tied it around himself. Then He is pouring water into the basin, and began to be washing the feet of the disciples and to be wiping them off with the towel which He had tied around himself.

Matthew 11:28-30

“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light.”

(Jumping Hurdles, Hitting Glitches, Overcoming Setbacks by Steve Brown)
Colorado springs, CO: NavPress. Copyright - Steve Brown, 1992.

During the American Revolution, a man in civilian clothes rode past a group of soldiers repairing a small defensive barrier. Their leader was shouting instructions at them but making no other attempt to help them. Asked why by the rider, the leader said with great dignity, “Sir, I’m a corporal!”

The stranger apologized, dismounted, and proceeded to help the exhausted soldiers. The job done, he turned to the corporal and said, “If you need some more help, son, call me.” With that, the Commander-In-Chief, George Washington, remounted his horse and rode on.

p. 164

**(Principle-Centered Leadership by Stephen R. Covey) New York: Fireside/
 Simon & Schuster. Copyright - Stephen R. Covey, 1991.**

In effect, every morning they, “yoke up” and put on the harness of service, thinking of others.

See yourself each morning yoking up, putting on the harness of service in your various stewardships. See yourself taking the straps and connecting them around your shoulders as you prepare to do the work assigned to you that day. See yourself allowing someone else to adjust the yoke or harness. See yourself yoked up to another person at your side—a co-worker or spouse—and learning to pull together with that person.

I emphasize this principle of service or yoking up because I have come to believe that effort to become principle-centered without a load to carry simply will not succeed. We may attempt to do it as a kind of intellectual or moral exercise, but if we don’t have a sense of responsibility, of service, of contribution, something we need to pull or push, it becomes a futile endeavor.

p. 34

(First Things First by Stephen R. Covey, A. Roger Merrill, & Rebecca R. Merrill) New York, NY: Simon & Schuster. Copyright - Stephen R. Covey, A. Roger Merrill, & Rebecca R. Merrill, 1994.

As one of the early pioneers of the American West, Bryant S. Hinckley, said:

Service is the virtue that distinguished the great of all times and which they will be remembered by. It places a mark of nobility upon its disciples. It is the dividing line which separates the two great groups of the world—those who help and those who hinder, those who lift and those who lean, those who contribute and those who only consume. How much better it is to give than to receive. Service in any form is comely and beautiful. To give encouragement, to impart sympathy, to show interest, to banish fear, to build self confidence and awaken hope in the hearts of others, in short—to love them and to show it—is to render the most precious service.

There is so much we can do to render service, to make a difference in the world—no matter how large or small our Circle of Influence. It's our hope that each of us will connect more deeply with conscience and give light and warmth to the world from our fire within.

p. 306

(Acts of Love: The Power of Encouragement by David Jeremiah) Gresham, Oregon: Vision House. Copyright - Vision House Publishing, Inc., 1994.

Only in giving our lives away do we discover the secret of living and loving. Someone illustrated the difference between heaven and hell by saying that heaven is a place where people are eager to serve, while everyone waits to be served in hell.

If we can put aside the cult of self that has become enthroned in the last thirty years and ask what it really means to love another person, we'll discover it is doing the hard thing. It's giving up our wants, our wishes, our personal goals in favor of blessing the life of another person.

p. 186

Deuteronomy 24:5

If a man has recently married, he must not be sent to war or have any other duty laid on him. For one year he is to be free to stay at home and bring happiness to the wife he has married.

A lot of marriage problems are solved by just getting our minds back on each other again.

MARRIAGE IS A LABORATORY designed by the Lord to teach us how to be servants.

Paul is speaking of young Timothy to the Philippian church in:

Philippians 2:20-22

For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus. But you know of his proven worth that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father.

The Apostle describes **LOVE SERVING** in three different passages of Scripture.

Love Serving is a **SACRIFICE**:

Philippians 1:20

according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I shall not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

In being **SPENT**:

2 Timothy 4:6-8

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

In being **SPILLED OUT**:

Philippians 2:17

But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all.

How extraordinary!!! is the situation of us mortals! Each of us is here for a brief sojourn; for what purpose he does not know, though he knows not, though he sometimes thinks he senses it. But without going deeper than our daily life, it is plain that . . . WE EXIST FOR OUR FELLOW MAN—in the first place for those upon whose smiles and welfare all our happiness depends, and next for all those unknown to us personally but to those whose destinies we are bound by the tie of sympathy. A hundred times every day I remind myself that my inner and outer life depends upon the labors of other men, living and dead, and that I must exert myself in order to give in the same measure as I have received and am still receiving.

Albert Einstein

(source unknown)

I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know; the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve.

Dr. Albert Schweitzera

(source unknown)

(Illustrations Unlimited by James S. Hewett, editor) Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House. Copyright – James S. Hewett, 1988.

FEELING THROUGH OTHERS

Helen Keller was deaf and blind from an incurable childhood disease. Anne Sullivan taught her to read through her sense of touch, smell, and taste. At the end of her autobiography Helen Keller says:

“Fate—silent, pitiless—bars the way. Fain would I question his imperious decree; for my heart is undisciplined and passionate, but my tongue will not utter the bitter, futile words that rise to my lips, and they fall back into my heart like unshed tears. Silence sits immense upon my soul. Then comes hope with a smile and whispers, ‘There is joy in self-forgetfulness.’ So I try to make the light in other people’s eyes my sun, the music in others’ ears my symphony, the smile on others’ lips my happiness.” pp. 283-4

(Is It Time to Make a Change?: Positive Thoughts for When Life Presents You with a New Direction by Deanna Beisser) ?: Blue Mountain Press.
Copyright - Deanna Beisser, 1997.

Special People

Special people are those
who have the ability to share
their lives with others.

They are honest in word and deed,
they are sincere and compassionate,
and they always make sure that
love is a part of everything.

Special people are those who have the ability
to give to others
and help them with the changes
that come their way.

They are not afraid
of being vulnerable;
they believe in their uniqueness
and are proud to be who they are.

Special people are those who
allow themselves the pleasures
of being close to others
and caring about their happiness.

They have come to understand
that love is what makes
the difference in life.

Special people are those who
truly make life beautiful

(Collected Verse of Edgar A. Guest by Edgar A. Guest) Chicago, IL:
 Contemporary Books, Inc. Copyright - Contemporary Books, Inc., 1934.

The Sorry Hostess

She said she was sorry the weather was bad
 The night that she asked us to dine;
 And she really appeared inexpressibly sad
 Because she had hoped 'twould be fine.
 She was sorry to hear that my wife had a cold,
 And she almost shed tears over that,
 And how sorry she was, she most feelingly told,
 That the steam wasn't on in the flat.

She was sorry she hadn't asked others to come,
 She might just as well have had eight;
 She said she was downcast and terribly glum
 Because her dear husband was late.
 She apologized then for the home she was in,
 For the state of the rugs and the chairs,
 For the children who made such a horrible din,
 And then for the squeak in the stairs.

When the dinner began she apologized twice
 For the olives, because they were small;
 She was certain the celery, too, wasn't nice,
 And the soup didn't suit her at all.
 She was sorry she couldn't get whitefish instead
 Of the trout that the fishmonger sent,
 But she hoped that we'd manage somehow to be fed,
 Though her dinner was not what she meant.

She spoke her regrets for the salad, and then
 Explained she was really much hurt,
 And begged both our pardons again and again
 For serving a skimpy dessert.
 She was sorry for this and sorry for that,
 Though there really was nothing to blame.
 But I thought to myself as I put on my hat,
 Perhaps she is sorry we came.
 pp. 175-6

**(Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul: 101 Stories of Life, Love and Learning
by Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, and Kimberly Kirberger)
Deerfield Beach, FL: Health Communications, Inc.. Copyright - Jack
Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, and Kimberly Kirberger, 1997.**

Mama's Hands

I saw you hide your hands in line,
behind that lady fair,
I noticed too, hers soft and white—
immaculate from care.
But Ma, I say, it's no disgrace
to have workin' hands like you,
and had she lived the life you have,
she'd have hands just like it too.

But her hands have never hauled in wood,
or worked in God's good earth.
They've never felt the bitter cold,
or chopped ice for waitin' stock,
they've never doctored sick ones,
or dressed a horse's hock.
They've never pulled a hip-locked calf,
or packed water to the barn.
They've probably never patched blue jeans,
or had worn ol' socks to darn.

They've never touched a young'n,
or caressed a fevered head,
with hands so gently folded,
all night beside his bed.

They've never scrubbed a kitchen floor,
or done dishes every day.
They've never guided with those hands
a child who's lost the way.

They've never made a Christmas gift,
shaped by a lovin' hand.
They've never peeled apples,
nor vegetables they've canned.
They've never worn a blister,
or had calluses to show,
for all they've done for others,
and the kindnesses I know.

So you see, my dearest Mama—
yours are hands of love.
And I bet the Lord will notice
when he greets you from above.

Tommi Jo Casteel

pp. 72-73

(The God of the Towel: Knowing the Tender Heart of God by Jim McGuigan)
West Monroe, Louisiana: Howard Publishing Co. Copyright - Howard
Publishing Co., Inc., 1997.

Wilbur Rees caught the scandal of it perfectly when he has one of his
characters say,

Your king lacks class! No one will follow him. A king has to have flare
and style. He has to arouse feelings of pride and prestige. People have
to identify with him. They must be able to say, “His prowess is my
prowess and his glory is my glory!” He has to have dignity and a
certain aloofness. He has to know how to carry his crown and flash his
sword in the sun. The least a king can do for his subjects is ride a
spirited steed! What will you answer when men ask for your king?
“He’s over there on that ass with his sandals dragging on the ground.”
“Ha! I’ll lay you ten to one no one will ever follow him!”¹

1. Rees, *3 Worth of God*, 83.

p. 133

Let us turn our attention now to the text of Scripture in 2 Timothy 4:9-15.

Lea & Griffin say:

This section reads like a personal letter from Paul to Timothy. Paul gave Timothy some requests and warnings (vv. 9-15), and he reminded him of God's delivery power (vv. 16-18). Paul still wanted to see Timothy very much (1:4), but he also wanted Timothy to assume some of the Pauline responsibilities in light of his approaching death. Paul's reminders here were not the demoralized rantings of a self-pitying wretch but the response of God's premier apostle gripped by the purposes of his apostolic call. Paul was still making plans for additional service despite the nearness of the end. Christianity produces stalwart disciples who can live courageously and single-mindedly in the face of intimidating circumstances.

p. 251

Wiersbe kind of gives us an overview of the verses that we will be considering:

"Hurry and get here!" is the meaning of the admonition to Timothy (4:9). Tychicus would take Timothy's place in Ephesus (4:12). As Timothy hurried to Rome, he could stop in Troas and get the cloak, books, and parchments (4:13). Paul probably left them there in his haste to depart. It is touching to see that, in his closing days on earth, Paul wanted his dear "son in the faith" at his side. But he was also practical: he needed his cloak for warmth, and he wanted his books for study. The "books" would be papyrus scrolls, perhaps of the Old Testament Scriptures; and the "parchments" would be books made from the skins of animals. We do not know what these "parchments" were, but we are not surprised that a scholar such as Paul wanted material for study and writing.

p. 159

Wiersbe titles this section:

Help is coming (9-12)! Paul was greatly disappointed when the people he had ministered to turned away from him and were ashamed of his bonds. He asked Timothy to come as soon as possible and to bring Mark with him. But best of all, the Lord came to Paul and encouraged him! No matter what His people may do, Jesus will never leave you or forsake you . . .
pp. 804-5

Barclay titles this section that we are studying in verses 9-15:

A ROLL OF HONOUR AND DISHONOUR *2 Timothy 4:9-15*
p. 244

Milne titles the verses down through verse 18:

Men and Movemets (4:9-18)
p. 182

Towner says:

This section is primarily designed to explain Paul's need for Timothy to visit. At this stage, although he knows there is no release from this imprisonment, Paul does foresee a length of time in custody before his end, and he urges Timothy to come to his aid.
p. 208

Quinn & Wacker title this section:

V.A. News for Timothy (4:9-15)

p. 792

They translate the verses as follows:

4⁹Do your best to come here soon; ¹⁰for Demas his heart set on this present world, left me helpless and set out for Thessalonika. Crescens has gone to Gaul; Titus, to Dalmaria. ¹¹Only Luke is with me now. Pick up Mark and bring him along with you, for he can be helpful to me in my ministry. ¹²I have appointed Tychicus to go to Ephesus.

¹³When you come, bring along that cape which I left behind in Troas at Carpus's home—and bring the books, too, particularly the notebooks. ¹⁴There in Troas, Alexander, the coppersmith, brought many false charges against me. (The Lord will give him the recompense that corresponds to his deeds). ¹⁵Watch out for him yourself now, because his defiance of our words was frenzied.

p. 792

J. Vernon McGee titles this section and then says:

PAUL'S LAST WORDS

We have heard a triumphant note in the preceding verses, but now it's not so triumphant. Paul faces the reality of his situation.

p. 478

Stott says:

From his majestic survey of the past ('I have fought the good fight . . .') and his confident anticipation of the future ('henceforth there is laid up for me the crown . . .') Paul returns in thought to the present and to his personal predicament. For the great apostle Paul was also a creature of flesh and blood, a man of like nature and passions with ourselves. Although he has finished his course and is awaiting his crown, he is still a frail human being with ordinary human needs. He describes his plight in prison, and expresses in particular his loneliness.

p. 117

Guthrie says:

The concluding section (verses 9-22) marks the climax of the Epistle, and shows the great apostle making his final personal arrangements before his departure.

p. 171

Kelly says:

The letter, save for some personal commissions, has virtually reached its end. Paul now comes, in a section which many who question the authenticity of the letters as a whole feel obliged to admit to be composed of genuinely Pauline fragments . . . to what may well have been one of his main motives in writing it, . . . his eager desire for Timothy to pay him a visit in his dangerous isolation.

p. 211

Demarest says:

It would seem that anything after Paul's magnificent valedictory address would be anticlimactic. For a long time, I more or less ignored these closing verses of the letter. I tended to regard them as being of limited local and historical interest. But I've since come to a joyous appreciation of these closing words of Paul's last letter.

They are very human words. In this section, we are very much in touch with Paul as a normal human being with some simple, but very real needs. Three of them are expressed: (1) the need for the presence of friends, (2) the need for physical comfort, and (3) the need for intellectual stimulus.

p. 291

Fee says:

This section exhibits all the earmarks of a piece of private correspondence from antiquity. The author urges its recipient to come posthaste (v. 9); indicates *why* he wants him to come (he is alone, vv. 10-11a), *who* and *what* to bring (vv. 11b-13), and *whom* to watch out for along the way (vv. 14-15) . . .

p. 292

Knights says:

In this section Paul gives instructions to Timothy regarding Paul's personal needs and relates to him several things about his personal situation. The personal character of the section is also evident from the appearance in every verse of the first person singular pronoun. Paul communicates three interrelated matters: his urgent request that Timothy come to him soon (vv. 9-13), a warning about Alexander the coppersmith (vv. 14-15), and a statement about Paul's own situation (vv. 16-18), which may also serve as a further encouragement for Timothy to come to him (see especially v. 16).
p. 463

Hughes titles these verses:

**Tough Friends for
Tough Times**
2 TIMOTHY 4:9-15

p. 257

He says further:

Years earlier while he was ministering in Macedonia, he became so exhausted by external conflicts and inner fears about the work and about the relentless fact that this body had no rest that he became "downcast" (2 Corinthians 7:6; "depressed," as the *New American Standard Bible* translates it). Times were tough, and his discouragement was substantial. "But God . . . comforted us by the coming of Titus." It was not things that brought him comfort. It was the touch of Titus, the loving encouragement of a trusted friend. And the effect was priceless, indeed golden. Titus relayed the affirmations of other friends, and so Paul said, "My joy was greater than ever" (v. 7). Titus modeled a ministry that God's people so need today. It would do the church great good to meditate on those beautiful verses in 2 Corinthians 7:5-7.
p. 257

2 Corinthians 7:5-7

For even when we came into Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted on every side: conflicts without, fears within. But God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus; and not only by his coming, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted in you, as he reported to us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced even more.

MacArthur says:

As he faced the executioner's ax, many of these people were on his mind. In passing on the mantle of ministry to Timothy, he brought the young pastor up to date on the spiritual condition, activities, and whereabouts of certain men and women. Some of them, including Timothy, he hoped would visit him before he died. Others he simply greeted or extended greetings from. Some are named, and others are nameless. Some of them he was sending out or had already sent out to strategic places to build up faltering congregations. Others he mentioned because of the special harm they had brought to him and to the cause of Christ.

p. 204

v. 9 Make every effort to come to me soon.

Our passage opens with a **COMMAND** and the word **“SOON”** lets us know that it is a command with urgency. It could be translated:

QUICKLY,

AT ONCE,

WITHOUT DELAY, or

AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

Ecclesiastes 4:9, 10

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!

He is saying:

“Timothy, I would like for you to drop everything and come as soon as you possibly can.”

**(This Dog'll Hunt: An Entertaining Texas Dictionary by Wallace O. Chariton)
Plano, TX: Wordware Publishing, Inc. Copyright - Wordware
Publishing, Inc., 1989, 1990.**

CHANCE, SLIM . . . ☐ there are two chances, slim and none and slim is saddling up to leave town . . .

p. 34

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

In this last section of the epistle Paul twice urged Timothy to join him in Rome (vv. 9, 21). The emphasis is on speed since Paul did not know how much longer he would be allowed to live. The delivery of the epistle, followed by Timothy's travel, would occupy some months as it was; any delay on Timothy's part could make his arrival too late. Paul evidently had reason to believe that his execution was imminent . . .
pp. 758-9

Hughes says:

Paul's insistence that Timothy come "quickly" was demanding, to say the least. The journey would take Timothy four to six months over land and sea—mostly land—by way of Troas (cf. v. 13), Philippi, the great Egnatian road to Dyrrachium, and then across to Brundisium and on to Rome. Paul was counting on the slow, grinding pace of Roman justice to allow Timothy to beat the apostle's appointment with death. The journey would have to be made as quickly as possible despite its inherent dangers.
p. 258

Fee says:

Given travel conditions and the length of time involved, these (i.e., impending death and the request for Timothy to come) may seem contradictory. However, as we will note on verses 16-17, Paul has had previous experience with the Roman judicial system, and though he apparently doesn't expect to be freed, he is well aware of the delays in the system.

This request controls all that is said in the following verses.
p. 293

Guthrie says:

Twice (in verses 9 and 21) he urges Timothy to lose no time to come to him, and this reiterated desire proves not only the imminence of the end but also the strong attachment which existed between the two men.
p. 171

Towner says:

Verses 9-13 mention seven of Paul's coworkers, whose movements have left Paul in a lonely position.
p. 209

Milne says:

Do your best to come to me quickly (verse 9) is a request that conveys a sense of the urgency Paul feels as he lives from day to day, not knowing just how long he may still have to live. He longs to see Timothy one more time before he dies (2 Tim. 1:4), but if that is to happen then Timothy must move quickly. By the time it took for this letter to reach Timothy, and for him to make arrangements for his own travel to Paul, he would have been still weeks or even months away from Rome, measured by ancient postal and travel times.
p. 182

Barker says:

Timothy also knew loneliness. Failure and discouragement are bad enough, but even these can be endured when there are fellow sufferers. But loneliness is different—particularly when it is the loneliness of prison. Timothy apparently served a prison stretch. (The closing verses of Hebrews mention in passing, “our brother Timothy has been released.”) Prison conditions in first-century provincial jails were horrible. Sentences sometimes were carelessly undetermined, and often men languished lifetimes as forgotten captives.
p. 97

Barker says further:

Sooner or later, every person knows loneliness, discouragement and failure. At such times you are tempted to say, “Yes, I know about it. But what does God know about it? What does He know about loneliness? How can God understand discouragement? *God* knows what failure is like? Ha!”

Have you forgotten that Man who hung on the cross—a lonely, discouraged failure? That is the message of the cross: God *knows*. God says, in effect, “I know; I understand *anything* that a man may suffer.” The cross is God’s signature for the lonely, the discouraged, the failure, to see that He has been through it too. Our God knows what it is like.

p. 98

Quinn & Wacker say:

. . . note that the sense may be “very quickly” or “as quickly as possible,” . . .
p. 799

Knight says:

The reference in v. 6 to Paul’s impending death is the setting for this request that Timothy come to him as soon as possible. Imperative . . . can mean either “hasten,” or “make every effort, do your best” . . .

p. 463

He says further:

Paul writes as a man who is certain that he will not be released and that before long he will depart this life (v. 6) to Christ’s heavenly kingdom (v. 18). In that light he writes urging Timothy to come to him as soon as he possibly can.

p. 464

Lea & Griffin say:

The reference to “quickly” in v. 9 indicates the urgency of the Pauline request. Paul had a foreboding of his fate, but he was not expecting immediate execution. Paul’s previous experience with the Roman judicial system had led to a lengthy confinement . . . and he anticipated normal delays.

p. 251

Larson says:

Paul embraced his humanity in this and the following verses. Though the cold breath of death was upon him, he did not know how many days he had left. He longed to see Timothy one last time, so he urged, **Do your best to come to me quickly.**

p. 323

Lange says:

After the glance into future glory, the eye of the Apostle reverts once more to the present, with its comparatively petty cares and concerns. He has yet a great number of little commissions and wishes as a last testament, which meanwhile open to us a deep insight into the heart of the testator.

p. 116

Parker says:

. . . he says at last, Now hear me: I want you to come; I would like to see some young life. An old man gets sometimes almost tired of his own shadow. “Do thy diligence to come”—put off anything that can be put off, and make haste to come to me; I want to shake hands with young life, one look at thy young face would make me forget my old age.

p. 156

Griffiths titles this section and then says:

Paul needs people

We sometimes imagine Paul as a dauntless superhero clad in emotional asbestos. This passage shows how human he is—revealing his need of human companionship and friendship, as well as normal material and physical needs like warmth and things to occupy his mind. *Do your best to come to me quickly*. In 1:4 Paul said he longs to see Timothy and now urges him to come *quickly* to Rome, and later expresses an even more pressing request *before winter* (verse 21). Paul is alone apart from Luke. Whether Timothy got there before Paul was executed we do not know.

p. 214

Wilson says:

In these closing sentences Paul outlines his present circumstances without a trace of self-pity, but there is deep pathos in the last picture they give us of the great apostle [vv 9-18]. As he awaits the final crisis in his cold, cheerless dungeon, he longs to see his 'beloved child' once more.

p. 164

Calvin says:

As Paul realized that his death was imminent, there were doubtless many matters about the welfare of the church that he wanted to discuss with Timothy. So Paul does not hesitate to ask him to travel across the sea to visit him. Certainly there must have been very good reasons to justify asking him to leave the church he looked after in order to make such a long journey.

p. 164

Liefeld says:

“DO YOUR BEST” (v. 9) translates the word *spoudazo* . . . It conveys a sense of urgency that is here increased by the word “quickly.” This may express Paul’s desire to have Timothy with him as quickly as possible for some specific reason, or it may simply be practical advice to start out before the shipping lanes are closed for the winter (v. 21). Ancient travel had enough hazards; overland was especially difficult in winter, and sea travel was impossible. If Timothy was to follow the usual route going from western Asia Minor, the Aegean Sea, across Macedonia, and then finally crossing the Adriatic Sea (assuming Paul was in Rome), he could meet delays at a number of points on the journey.

pp. 296-7

Barnes says:

As soon as possible, Timothy had been Paul’s travelling companion, and was his intimate friend. The apostle was now nearly forsaken, and was about to pass through severe trials. It is not certainly known for what purpose he wished him to come to him, but perhaps he desired to give him some parting counsels; perhaps he wished him to be near him when he died.

p. 248

Lenski titles this verse and then goes on to say:**Paul Begs Timothy to Come**

The body of the letter is complete. The last clause speaks fittingly about “all who have been loving his epiphany,” and the last word is “his (the Lord’s) epiphany.” So near is Paul’s martyrdom that the light of that epiphany is already reflected in his eyes. The rest of the letter consists of personal addenda, the last of these being the greetings.

p. 866

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

Timothy is asked to come to be a comfort to Paul, and also to be strengthened by Paul, for carrying on the Gospel work after Paul's decease.
p. 1382

DON'T GO IT ALONE!

A school boy in London won first prize for an essay contest. One of the lines from his composition was this: "I believe so many twins are born into the world today because little children are frightened of entering the world alone!" While the young writer's "theological conclusion" is on shaky ground, it does focus on one of man's most nagging problems—loneliness.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

HE DOES THE REMEMBERING!

Mrs. Lillian Helm, a 91-year-old woman from Citrus Heights, California wrote, "I spend about one hour every day with my Lord, reading my Bible and Christian literature pertaining to the Bible. When people ask me what good all my reading does if I can't remember what I've read, my answer is always the same. I'm in pretty good health, have a roof over my head, and have plenty of food to eat . . . I also have two sons and one grandson who love me dearly. My cup runneth over. So you see, I am not concerned about my memory. I just do my reading and God does the remembering."

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

FAILING TO SHOW LOVE

A young man shot and killed himself in a phone booth. The police officer, seeking to establish his identity, found a worn but neatly folded piece of paper in his pocket. It said, “Please leave on my person. I want it buried with me.” When they opened it, they saw a crayon drawing made by a small child. Beneath it was printed the name SHIRLEY LEE. The authorities learned later that the dead man was James Lee, and that his little daughter had been fatally burned 5 months earlier in a fire. And the girls’ mother had died just 2 years before that. Apparently this father was so lonely and brokenhearted that he decided to take his own life.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

TIRED OF LIVIN’—SKEERED OF DYIN’

The song “Ol’ Man River” plaintively depicts the misery of slaves who worked long hours lugging bales of cotton. With bodies aching and racked with pain, they were “weary an’ sick of tryin’, . . . tired of livin’ an’ skeered of dyin’.” They looked at the muddy Mississippi and wished their lives were as peaceful and serene as that mighty stream seemed to be, for “Ol’ Man River, he just keeps rollin’ along.” The same dreadful loneliness and uncertainty—tired of life but afraid of death—is experienced today by many people despite their luxury and affluence.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

LONELY, BUT NOT ALONE

Her brief note spoke volumes. “I am a handicapped person in a wheelchair,” she wrote. “I am very lonely even though I know I’m never alone. God is always there. I don’t have a lot of people to talk to.”

Loneliness has been termed the most desolate word in the English language. It is no respecter of age, race, economic status, or intelligence. Albert Einstein said, “It is strange to be known so universally, and yet to be so lonely.”

God made us for intimacy and companionship with others. Even before sin entered, He declared that it is not good for man to be alone. That’s why many people often feel so empty inside.

We can lessen our feelings of loneliness somewhat by reaching out to other people. But even more important, we must reach out to the Lord.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

NEVER ALONE

When the famous missionary David Livingstone made his first trip to Africa, some friends accompanied him to the ship to bid him farewell. They loved him deeply and were greatly concerned for his safety in that faraway land. In fact, one of them pleaded with him not to go.

Livingstone, however, was convinced that he was doing God’s will. Opening his Bible, he read to his concerned friend Jesus’ words, “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Then he said, “That, my friend, is the word of a gentleman. So let us be going.”

Many years later Livingstone was invited to speak at the University of Glasgow. He posed this question to his audience, “Would you like me to tell you what supported me through all those years of exile among a people whose language I could not understand, and whose attitude toward me was always uncertain and often hostile? It was this: ‘Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ On these words I staked everything, and they have never failed.”

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

OUR UNFAILING FRIEND

As a young man, Joseph Scriven had been engaged to a woman he deeply loved, but tragedy struck the night before their wedding when the boat she was in capsized and she drowned. In hopes of forgetting the shock, which he never did, Joseph left his home in Ireland and went to Canada.

There he taught school and served as a tutor. He chose to live very simply, spending his money and his strength in generously providing for destitute people. At times he even gave away his own clothing. He was considered an eccentric by some, yet all he tried to do was obey God's Word as best he could understand it.

In his loneliness, Joseph Scriven needed a steadfast friend. Having found that friend in Jesus Christ, he wrote these simple words, which movingly express his experience:

What a friend we have in Jesus,
 All our sins and griefs to bear!
 What a privilege to carry
 Everything to God in prayer!

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

LONELY AS HELL

Just a few weeks before his death, Elvis Presley was asked a penetrating question by a reporter: "When you first got started in your musical career, you said you wanted three things in life—to be rich, to be famous, and to be happy. Are you happy, Elvis?"

The singer replied, "No, I'm as lonely as hell."

"Well put," says Luis Palau. "Hell IS a lonely place." Elvis was certainly wealthy and well-known. He was called the king of rock and roll. Women screamed for him. He had a beautiful wife, a child, and more money than he could ever spend. But for Elvis, happiness was a fleeting dream.

[Pursuit, Vol 4, No 1, 1997. Page 16.]

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

LONELY AT THE TOP

Among all the books and exhibits in the Library of Congress, there is a small blue box labeled “Contents of the President’s pockets on the night of April 14, 1865.” That was the night Abe Lincoln was assassinated. Can you guess what it contains?

There are five items: A handkerchief (embroidered “A. Lincoln”), a country boy’s pocketknife, a glasses case (repaired with string), a purse containing a \$5 bill (Confederate money!), and some old worn newspaper clippings. The clippings are of particular interest because they were reports of Lincoln’s great deeds. One of them quotes a speech in which British statesman John Bright called the President “one of the greatest men of all times.”

That opinion of Lincoln is quite common today. But back then there were plenty of folks who held an opposite view. Lincoln had many outspoken critics. It is, indeed, lonely at the top.

“There is something touchingly pathetic,” writes Chuck Swindoll, “in the mental picture of this great leader seeking solace and self-assurance from a few old newspaper clippings as he reads them under the flickering flame of a candle all alone in the Oval Office.”

[Man to Man by Charles Swindoll.
Zondervan, 1996. Pages 260-261.]

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

THEY CONFIRMED IT

Joan: “Is Ken a confirmed bachelor?”

Lynn: “He sure is. He sent his picture to a lonely hearts club and they returned it saying, ‘We’re not that lonely!’”

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

It is strange to be known so universally and yet to be so lonely.

—Albert Einstein

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

In Genesis it says that it is not good for a man to be alone, but sometimes it is a great relief.

—John Barrymore

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

Solitude: A good place to visit, but a poor place to stay.

—Josh Billings

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

One of the oldest human needs is having someone to wonder where you are when you don't come home at night.

—Margaret Mead

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

Death and Dying

What is the worst of woes that wait on age?
 What stamps the wrinkle deeper on the brow?
 To view each loved one blotted from life's page,
 And be alone on earth, as I am now.

Lord Byron (1788-1824), English poet. *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812).

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Depression

Have you any idea
How long a night can last, spent
Lying alone and sobbing?

Mother of Michitsuna (954-974), Japanese diarist, 974?
Quoted in: *Hundred Poets, A Poem Apiece* (13th century).

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Emotion

My heart is a lonely hunter that hunts on a lonely hill.

William Sharp (1855-1905), Scottish poet and writer, 1896.
Poems and Dramas by “*Fina MacLeod*” “The Lonely Hunter” (1910).

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Human Condition

You come into the world alone, you go out alone. In between it's nice to know
a few people, but being alone is a fundamental quality of human life,
depressing as that is.

Helen Mirren (1946-), British stage and motion picture actor.
(January 1989).

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Loneliness

Alone, alone, all, all alone,
 Alone on a wide wide sea!
 And never a saint took pity on
 My soul in agony.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), British poet.
Lyrical Ballads "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (1798).

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Loneliness

Pray that your loneliness may spur you into finding something to live for,
 great enough to die for.

Dag Hammarskjöld (1905-1961), Swedish statesman and diplomat, 1951.
 Quoted in: *Markings* (L. Sjsberg and W. H. Auden (tr.); 1964).

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A crowd is not company.

—UNKNOWN

Bear patiently your exile and the dryness of your mind. The time will come when I will make you forget these painful moments and you will enjoy inward quietness. I will open the Bible for you and you will be thrilled by your new understanding of my truth.

—THOMAS À KEMPIS (C. 1380-1471)

Cannot the heart in the midst of crowds feel frightfully alone?

—CHARLES LAMB (1775-1834)

Didst thou give me this inescapable loneliness so that it would be easier for me to give thee all?

—DAG HAMMARSKJÖLD (1905-1961)

Essentially loneliness is the knowledge that one's fellow human beings are incapable of understanding one's condition and therefore are incapable of bringing the help most needed.

—HUBERT VAN ZELLER

For each, God has a different response. With every man he has a secret—the secret of a new name. In every man there is a loneliness, an inner chamber of peculiar life into which God only can enter.

—GEORGE MACDONALD (1824-1905)

If you are afraid of loneliness, don't marry

—ATON PAVLOVICH CHECKHOV (1860-1904)

It is one thing to go through a crisis grandly, and another thing to go through every day glorifying God when nobody is paying any attention to you.

—OSWALD CHAMBERS (1874-1917)

It is strange to be known so universally and yet be so lonely.

—ALBERT EINSTEIN (1879-1955)

(From Quick Verse 6.0)

Language has created the word *loneliness* to express the pain of being alone, and the word *solitude* to express the glory of being alone.

—PAUL JOHANNES OSKAR TILlich (1886-1965)

Loneliness and the feeling of being uncared for and unwanted are the greatest poverty.

—MOTHER TERESA OF CALCUTTA (1910-)

Loneliness can be conquered only by those who can bear solitude.

—PAUL JOHANNES OSKAR TILlich (1886-1965)

Loneliness eats into the soul.

—JEWISH PROVERB

Loneliness is a great price to pay for independence.

—UNKNOWN

Loneliness is the first thing that God's eye nam'd not good.

—JOHN MILTON (1608-1674)

Loneliness, far from being a rare and curious phenomenon, peculiar to myself and to a few other solitary men, is the central and inevitable fact of human existence.

—THOMAS CLAYTON WOLFE (1900-1938)

Most of the world's great souls have been lonely.

—A. W. TOZER (1897-1963)

People are lonely because they build walls instead of bridges.

—JOSEPH FORT NEWTON (1880-1950)

(From Quick Verse 6.0)

Pray that your loneliness may spur you into finding something to live for,
great enough to die for.

—DAG HAMMARSKJÖLD (1905-1961)

Shakespeare, Leonardo da Vinci, Benjamin Franklin, and Lincoln . . . were
not afraid of being lonely because they knew that was when the creative
mood in them would work.

—CARL SANDBURG (1878-1967)

So lonely 'twas that God himself
Scarce seemed there to be.

—SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE (1772-1834)

The deepest need of man is the need to overcome his separateness, to leave
the prison of his aloneness.

—ERICH FROMM (1900-1980)

The essential loneliness is an escape from an inescapable God.

—WALTER FARRELL (1902-1951)

The loneliness you get by the sea is personal and alive. It doesn't subdue you
and make you feel abject. It's a stimulating loneliness.

—ANNE MORROW LINDBERGH (1906-)

The soul hardly ever realizes it, but whether he is a believer or not, his
loneliness is really a homesickness for God.

—HUBERT VAN ZELLER

There is none more lonely than the man who loves only himself.

—MOSES BEN JACOB IBN EZRA (C. 1135)

We're all sentenced to solitary confinement inside our own skins, for life.

—TENNESSEE WILLIAMS (1914-1983)

What loneliness is more lonely than distrust?

—GEORGE ELIOT (1819-1880)

(From Quick Verse 6.0)

Women and men in the crowd meet and mingle,
 Yet with itself every soul standeth single.

—ALICE CARY (1820-1871)

You come into the world alone and you go out of the world alone. Yet it
 seems to me you are more alone while living than even going and coming.

—EMILY CARR (1871-1945)

(From Quick Verse 6.0)

ATTITUDE

Parker and Hart's comic strip "The Wizard of Id" showed a lonely and bored little king who finally sighed from his balcony, "It's lonely at the top." A voice from below answered, "It ain't no bed of roses at the bottom, Charlie!"

—Robert C. Shannon, *1000 Windows*,
 (Cincinnati, Ohio: Standard Publishing Company, 1997).

(From *Parson's Technology*)

WANTED: A FRIEND

A country politician, a happily married man with four children, was falsely accused of sexual misconduct and arrested. He was heartbroken. His wife was humiliated. His children were tormented by schoolmates. Friends avoided him.

The jury found the man “not guilty.” The verdict, however, could not save his career nor take away the hurt. As he walked out of the courtroom, an old friend approached him and said, “I know I let you down. I wanted to do *something* to help but couldn’t. I felt so frustrated.” The wounded man later said, “I needed the warmth of his friendship, but he wanted to play God. No wonder he was frustrated.”

We tend to think that unless we can say or do something special for a friend who is going through a difficult time we might as well stay away. Actually, what is needed most is a simple expression of our friendship—a hug, an encouraging word, an opportunity to talk.

Paul needed friends as he sat in a dungeon awaiting execution. True, he had the Lord, yet he longed for flesh-and-blood companionship. That’s why he asked Timothy to come and to bring Mark with him.

Lord, help me to be a friend to hurting people by being there when they need me. —H.V.L.

*What does it mean to be a friend?
A helping hand to the journey’s end,
A loyal heart and a loving one too;
No task too great for a friend to do! —Campbell*

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Thursday, September 10, year unknown)

FRIENDS

A widower and a widow I know are both aged, shut-in, quite alone, and on the prayer list at their church. And they both have a true friend. The widower, who loves classical music, looks forward to alternate Tuesdays because a young man comes with a couple of tapes and spends the evening visiting, and they enjoy the music together.

The widow, who is diabetic and has a very limited income, receives visits regularly from a woman who is very kind to her. Recently she bought her a blood-testing device that greatly helps her control her diabetes. It's something the diabetic woman could not afford to buy for herself.

Both the widower and the widow are fortunate to have at least one person who really cares about them. There are many people who are friendless, and no one ever visits them. There's a tragic shortage of those who will take the time to be a friend.

Even Paul, who knew the reality of Christ's presence, needed friends as he awaited execution in a Roman dungeon. He longed for flesh-and-blood companionship. He wanted a heavy garment and some books. He could get these only from friends.

Lord, help us to be a friend to someone in need. —HVL

To those in darkest night,

Go be a kindly friend;

Pour love and sunshine on their cares—

And broken lives you'll mend. —Zimmerman

A TRUE FRIEND WILL NOT LET YOU STAND ALONE.

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Wednesday, March 30, year unknown)

(A 3rd Serving of Chicken Soup for the Soul: 101 More Stories to Open the Heart and Rekindle the Spirit compiled by Jack Canfield & Mark Victor Hansen) Deerfield Beach, FL: Health Communications, Inc. Copyright - Jack Canfield & Mark Victor Hansen, 1996.

Some people come into our lives and quickly go. Some stay for a while and leave footprints on our heart and we are never, ever the same.

Source Unknown

p. 134

(Rachel's Tears: The Spiritual Journey of Columbine Martyr Rachel Scott by Beth Nimmo, Darrell Scott, and Steve Rabey) Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson. Copyright – Beth Nimmo and Darrell Scott, 2000.

Rachel wrote much about friendship in her journals. One entry describes what a true friend is. Maybe this would be a good model for all of us to follow in our relationships with others.

A friend . . .

A friend is someone who can look into your eyes and be able to tell if you're alright or not.

A friend . . .

A friend is someone who can say something to you without you telling them anything and their words hit the spot.

A friend . . .

A friend is someone who can brighten your day with a simple smile when others try to do it with a 1,000 words.

A friend . . .

A friend is someone who can reach out their hand and help you thru the hurt.

A friend . . .

A friend is someone who can help me and talk to me the way you do . . . and in you I have found a friend.

p. 86

v. 10 For Demas deserted me, having loved this present world, and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia; Titus to Dalmatia.

The word “FOR” introduces to us another REASON why Timothy needs to make tracks to Rome to be with the Apostle as soon as possible:

“DEMAS DESERTED ME.”

Two verses really came to my mind with regard to Demas:

Hosea 10:12

Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, until he comes and showers righteousness on you.

Jeremiah 4:3

This is what the Lord says to the men of Judah and to Jerusalem: “Break up your unplowed ground and do not sow among thorns.

Probably part of the reason that “DEMAS DESERTED” at this time is Paul’s own testimony back in:

2 Timothy 4:6 (DAV)

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering. The time of my breaking up camp [or setting sail] is already present.

2 Timothy 1:15 (DAV)

You are knowing this that all those in Asia turned away from me, of whom there are Phygelus and Hermogenes.

Paul knew the pain of desertion on the part of those who should have been loyal and carried the message of the Gospel, but who made choices to put other things first in their lives above the Lord.

The choice comes to each of us as to whether we will dedicate or desert. Demas chose the later. He would never be able to say:

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course; I have kept the faith.”

Matthew 27:46

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “ELI, ELI LAMA SABACHTHANI?” that is, “MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?”

Hebrews 13:5

Let your way of life be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, “I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,”

Deuteronomy 31:8

The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.”

Deuteronomy 33:27

The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. . . .

Jeremiah 2:13

“My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.

Isaiah 42:16

I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Paul's need for Timothy was intensified by the defection of **Demas** who, instead of loving the Lord's appearing (v. 8), **loved this world**. . . . [Demas, mentioned] in Colossians 4:14 and Philemon 24, Demas **deserted** the apostle to embrace the safety, freedom, or comfort of **Thessalonica**. It should not be surprising that Paul would long for his most faithful disciple Timothy at such a time [as this].
p. 759

2 Timothy 1:4 (DAV)

Greatly longing to see you, when I recall to mind your tears, in order that I may be filled with joy.

Lenski says:

We are compelled to believe that Demas gave up the love of that coming epiphany for the love of this present world's course. This is what cut into Paul's heart most deeply.
pp. 867-8

Barnes says:

He was not willing to stay with Paul, and subject himself to the probabilities of martyrdom; and, in order to secure his life, he departed to a place of safety.
pp. 248-9

Barnes says further:

That Paul was pained by his departure, and that he felt lonely and sad, is quite apparent; but I see no evidence that Demas was influenced by what are commonly called *worldly* feelings, or that he was led to this course by the desire of wealth, or fame, or pleasure.

p. 249

I love Gary Larson's **FARSIDE** cartoon of two old gentlemen sitting on a tiny little island with a couple of palm trees. The one is saying to the other:

"THANKS FOR BEING MY FRIEND, WAYNE."

Liefeld says:

Demas made a choice for the present world, an act that may be compared to that of Esau, who sold his birthright for an immediate meal of red stew (Gen. 25:29-34).

p. 297

It is **Judas Iscariot** choosing:

SILVER over the **SAVIOR** in an act of betrayal.

It is a very real possibility that **Peter** faced a similar choice when he:

DENIED THAT HE KNEW THE LORD on that night before the crucifixion.

Matthew 26:31

Then Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away because of Me this night, for it is written, 'I will strike down the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered.'

Calvin says:

It was disgraceful that a person could be more in love with this world than with Christ. But we do not have to suppose that he denied Christ completely and went over to a life of ungodliness and allowed the allurements of the world to take him over, but only that he cared more for his own convenience and safety than for Paul's life. He could not stay with Paul without becoming involved in Paul's trials and tribulations and put his life on the line. Demas was exposed to many insults, was forced to stop caring about himself, and in these circumstances he was overcome by the thought of suffering for Christ, so he decided to look after his own interests. Doubtless the world encouraged him to make this decision.

p. 164

Lange says:

Demas, in the New Testament, is like Lot's wife in the Old.—Even when beginning to give ourselves up to Christ, return to the present world is (1.) possible; (2.) criminal; (3.) disastrous.

p. 119

Larson says:

Here, at the end of his life, Paul felt lonely. This was probably the main reason he wanted desperately to see Timothy. We can learn from Paul, and find encouragement. Although we still struggle within the frame of our emotions and difficulties, our future remains secure. We should never expect Christians to exhibit perpetual happiness, as though the harsh realities of life do not affect them. This life seethes with difficulties, and all the more so for those who faithfully live and proclaim God's truth. Weariness, discouragement, and loneliness visit the faithful Christian.

p. 323

Larson says further:

Demas was one of the apostle's friends and associates; Paul mentioned him in Colossians 4:14 and Philemon 24, describing him as a "fellow worker." He seems to have served faithfully with Paul, Luke, and others in the missionary endeavor. Yet, at the end, he abandoned Paul and the work **because he loved this world**. In a few words, Paul penned a double tragedy: not only was Paul abandoned, but Demas had forsaken the goodness of the gospel. Two men suffered loss, though Demas's was more lasting.
p. 323

Lea & Griffin say:

His love for this world probably involved a preference for ease and comfort along with a reluctance to share Paul's sufferings. Paul's words did not picture him as an utter apostate but reflected disappointment at his self-interest.
p. 252

Knight says:

. . . Demas has begun to love and still loves the present age. Elsewhere Paul refers to . . . [now] "the present age, the present world" . . . Since it is an "evil" age . . . whose God is the evil one . . . Christians are not to be conformed to it . . . Paul seems to be contrasting Demas's love with that which makes true Christians . . . who love and long for the future appearance of the Lord. Demas's love for this world implies that he is one whose love for something else has taken the place of love for God . . .
p. 464

Quinn & Wacker say:

The reasons for the prompt trip of Timothy are now adduced: “For Demas left me . . .
p. 793

They say further:

The precise sense of the verb is “to leave one helpless.”
p. 799

They say finally:

If Demas had somehow provided for the imprisoned apostle and then left with the purse, using an “apostolic” trip as an excuse for his departure, the reason for this open and devastating declaration of Paul’s judgment on him becomes clearer. The apostle will have no misunderstanding. Some, indeed, he has sent off deliberately, but his present straits have been brought on not by his own imprudence but by the deliberate selfish choice of one co-worker. He does not say that Demas has abandoned the Lord, but that implication is not far from the surface.
p. 801

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

His motive for forsaking Paul seems to have been love of worldly ease, safety, and comforts at home, and disinclination to brave danger with Paul . . .
p. 1382

Milne says:

His 'loving this present age' was conjecture meant that Demas preferred the personal and material rewards to be found at Thessalonica, such as popularity and comforts, to the more rigorous demands and the popular stigma of working with Paul. The love of this world had, to a large extent, replaced the love of Christ's appearing (verse 8).

p. 182

Towner says:

Demas is listed along with other faithful assistants of Paul. Here, however, we read of his desertion, which disappointed Paul greatly. No details are given. Perhaps Thessalonica was his home. But that his faithfulness flagged is attributed to love for *this world*, literally "the present age." Paul describes the object of Demas's affections as this fallen world influenced by sin, with values opposed to God's, rather than "the age to come" (compare 4:8), where the Christian's faithfulness will be rewarded and hopes will be fulfilled. Demas may have left out of fear or being too closely associated with one who was to be put to death. In any case, the attraction of this world is its false promises of comfort and ease. It may offer these things on one level, but to accept the offer and live by its values is to reject the way of the cross. Demas's desertion illustrates how even service alongside a spiritual giant does not remove one from the dangers of the world. Faithfulness does not simply rub off.

p. 209

Guthrie says:

The contrast between those who love Christ's appearing and *Demas* who loved *this present world* . . . is brought out not only by the use of the same verb (*agapaō*, 'love'), but also by the fact that *aiōn* denotes the world under aspects of time, thus emphasizing the difference between the present and future time sequences.

p. 172

Fee observes:

Demas is mentioned first, perhaps because his departure was the most painful. Little is known of him—although he is well covered in the apocryphal literature—except that he was a co-worker during Paul’s earlier imprisonment (Col. 4:12; Philem. 24) along with four others, including **Mark** and **Luke**.

But now he **has deserted . . . me, because he loved this present world**. This last phrase is eschatological language . . . contrasting the present with the coming age, and in this case offers a sharp contrast to Paul, Timothy, and others who “love Christ’s appearing” (v. 8). Why he should go **to Thessalonica** is unknown. It has no reputation as one of the “hot spots” of the Greco-Roman world; perhaps it was his home town.
p. 293

Hughes points out:

Demas wasn’t a lightweight, and he had been with Paul in many ups and downs. But this time the situation in Rome was apparently too much for him. Paul was not under house arrest as before but was in the infamous Mamartine prison, on his way to a sure death for sedition. So Demas packed his bags and took off to Thessalonica.
p. 259

MacArthur says:

Paul moves from the most faithful to the most unfaithful. It is possible that **Demas** in some ways had been valuable to Paul and to the ministry in Rome and that the apostle wanted Timothy to come soon in order to pick up the work that **Demas** had abandoned.
p. 206

MacArthur says finally:

As the risk increased, Demas's resolve decreased, because he **loved this present world** more than he loved the Lord, the Lord's people, or the Lord's work. He may not have been a true believer at all. "If anyone loves the world," John says, "the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15). Demas's heart may have been a rocky place, covered by just enough soil to superficially accept the seed of the gospel but not enough to bring full salvation. When the heat of the world's "affliction or persecution" became too fierce, he withered and fell away . . . Or perhaps his heart was thorn infested; and when "the worry of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches [choked] the word, . . . it [proved to be] unfruitful" . . . His reaction to the deprivations faced in his physical life eventually exposed the depravation of his spiritual life.

p. 206

Demarest says:

The cause for his defection, "*having loved this present world*," gives us no real indication of his reasons. The tragedy is that here is one who at one time was running well but now has dropped out of the race. Fidelity in Christian life and ministry must be constantly renewed. Yesterday's trophies do not win today's races. And I've never known any parents who named their children after Demas. How sad.

p. 292

Stott says:

The desertion of Demas is obviously extremely painful to Paul. He was previously one of his close associates or 'fellow workers'. In the two other New Testament verses in which he is mentioned his name is coupled with Luke's (Col. 4:14; Phm. 24). But now, instead of setting his love on Christ's future appearing (8), he has fallen 'in love with this present world' (literally, 'age'). The details are not divulged. Bishop Moule may have been right to guess that he was 'smitten with cowardice in that reign of terror'.

p. 118

J. Vernon McGee says:

Demas took off—he couldn't stand the heat. So he left Paul and went to Thessalonica, which was quite a distance.
p. 478

Barclay says:

First, Demas is Demas the fellow-labourer; second, Demas is just Demas; third, Demas is the deserter who loved the world. There is the history of a spiritual degeneration there. Bit by bit the fellow-labourer has become the deserter; the title of honour has become the name of shame.
p. 244

He says further:

It may be that Demas was swept into the Church in a moment of emotion without ever thinking things out; and then when unpopularity, persecution, the necessity of sacrifice, loneliness, imprisonment came, Demas quit because Demas had never bargained for anything like that. When a man undertakes to follow Christ, the first essential is that he should know what he is doing.
p. 245

He says finally:

Dean Inge had a sermon on *Psalms 91:6*—"The destruction that wasteth at noonday." He called it "The Peril of Middle Age." There is no threat so dangerous and so insidious as the threat of the years to a man's ideals. And that threat can only be kept at bay and defeated by living constantly in the thrill of the presence of Jesus Christ.
p. 246

Wiersbe says:

Demas is named only three times in the New Testament; yet these three citations tell a sad story of failure. Paul listed Demas along with Mark and Luke as one of his “fellow laborers” (Phile. 24). Then he is simply called “Demas” (Col. 4:14). Here (2 Tim. 4:10), it is, “Demas hath forsaken me.”

Paul gave the reason: Demas “loved this present world.” He had, as a believer, “tasted . . . the powers of the world to come” (Heb. 6:5); but he preferred “this present evil world” (Gal. 1:4).

p. 160

He says further:

In his *Pilgrim’s Progress*, John Bunyan pictured Demas as the keeper of a silver mine at the Hill Lucre. Perhaps it was the love of money that enticed Demas back into the world. It must have broken Paul’s heart to see Demas fail so shamefully; yet it can happen to any believer. Perhaps this explains why Paul had so much to say about riches in his pastoral letters.

p. 160

Matthew Henry says:

Love to this present world is often the cause of apostasy from the truths and ways of Jesus Christ.

p. 1898

Gaebelein says:

Demas, a fellow worker and with Paul in his first imprisonment (Philemon, verse 24; Col. [4] iv:14), perhaps a Thessalonian, had forsaken the prisoner of the Lord. It is a mournful record, “having loved the present age, and is departed unto Thessalonica.” It is wrong to conclude from this that Demas ceased to be a Christian and had renounced the Name of the Lord. He, with love for the present age in his soul, would avoid the cross and its shame, and therefore abandoned Paul. What became of Demas? What was his after history? The Lord alone knows this.

p. 200

King says:

That had possibly been coming on for a long while. In Philemon 24, Paul had said, “Demas . . . my fellow-labourer”—as if he had shared as fully as any of the others in the work; but in Colossians [4] iv. 14 he wrote, “. . . and Demas”—with no added encomium, or remark of any kind, as if, according to Dr. James Spence, “he was beginning to suspect him, to mark worldliness creeping over his spirit.” Ah yes (a) *A worldly spirit*—what damage that has done to Christians, and to the Church. I wonder what form it took with Demas?

p. 125

He continues:

You will observe that this worldly spirit in Demas was accompanied by (b) *A cowardly spirit*—he “departed”! The Greek word is an entirely different one from that which we studied in verse 6 last time. There was nothing splendid, ennobling, enriching, about this man’s going. (i) Why did he go? Well, the persecution of Christians was in the air; to have abode with Paul, to have been known as one of them, was to court trouble; better go while the good was good. So he “departed” from Rome.

p. 126

Lock says:

The suggestion is that his courage failed . . .

p. 117

Hendriksen says:

The verb used in the original implies that Demas had not merely *left* Paul (on this or that legitimate mission), but had *left him in the lurch*, had abandoned, forsaken him. The separation was not merely local but spiritual. Paul is deeply disappointed with Demas. Demas left *because he fell in love* with the present age, the “world” on this side of the grave, the transitory era which, in spite of all its pleasures and treasures, will soon be past . . .

p. 318

Hendriksen then says:

Just why Demas went *to Thessalonica*, and not to some other place, is not known. Perhaps he thought that the deepest desires of his soul could be better satisfied there than elsewhere. Did he leave Rome because this capital was at that time the most dangerous place for a Christian to be? Did he have business, friends, or relatives in Thessalonica? We do not know.

p. 319

“FOR DEMAS DESERTED ME, HAVING LOVED THIS PRESENT WORLD, AND GONE TO THESSALONICA; CRESCENS TO GALATIA; TITUS TO DALMATIA.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Of **Crescens** nothing is known. . . . Unlike Demas, there is no hint of any defection on their part.

p. 759

King says:

“*Crescens to Galatia.*” Never heard of him! No; he was only a private, only an ordinary soldier; but here he is Mentioned in Despatches. (a) *How much GOD’S cause is advance* by ordinary, unknown people.

pp. 126-7

“TITUS TO DALMATIA.”

We have seen **“TITUS”** as a **TEST-CASE** at the Jerusalem council and as a **GENTILE** who is uncircumcised, but who knew the Savior. We have also seen him involved in ministry in the city of **CORINTH**. His previous ministry to this assignment was on the Island of **CRETE**.

He must have left Crete and then has been sent by the Apostle to **“DALMATIA.”**

In my book, **Ecclesiastes: The Mid-Life Crisis**, I say:

Crossing the finish line with quiet resolve beats being pulled from the race, as Lot's wife was. In Genesis 19, Lot and his family were led out of Sodom before the city was obliterated. Lot's wife, in direct disobedience, turned her head to look at the smouldering ruins. As a result of her defiance, her blatant refusal to follow the orders of God, her foolishly rebellious heart, she became a pillar of salt.

The actions we take daily from hereon in will determine whether we will finish well or finish poorly. It's good to remember, too, that quitters never win . . . and winners never quit.

pp. 258-9

Barker, speaking of "TITUS," says:

Nineteen hundred years later, archaeologists excavated Crete. They came across remains of chapels and churches dating back to early Christian times. These bore the inscription, "Dedicated to our beloved St. Titus."

p. 75

He says further:

For example, Paul refers to him as "a brother" (II Corinthians 2:13), a "partner and fellow worker" (II Corinthians 8:23). On other occasions mention is made of how a visit by Titus brought such comfort (II Corinthians 7:6), and how God has put such care and concern for others into the heart of Titus (II Corinthians 8:16).

p. 76

“NINE-FINGERED CHRISTIANS”

The Romans had a custom of cutting off the little finger of anyone caught deserting his post of duty, even for a brief moment. If every believer who shirks his responsibility or is untrue to the Lord were to be similarly penalized, one wonders how many in the church today would be minus a pinkie!

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

NO TURNING BACK!

When F. B. Meyer was 7, he felt that the Lord was calling him into the ministry. The first one he told was his mother, who reminded him that making such a decision would involve much sacrifice and many difficult moments. But she also hinted that if he later regretted taking such a step, he could always leave the ministry. Looking her straight in the eye, the young man said, “Never, Mother! That would be putting my hand to the plow and looking back.” Enabled by God’s grace, F. B. Meyer did not retreat from his high calling nor slacken his zealous pace for God. As a result he did a marvelous work for the Savior on the mission field. One of his biographers traces his success to that momentous decision he made at 17 when he told his mother that having put his hand to the plow, he would never look back!

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

DISTRACTED BY THE WORLD

A man bought a new hunting dog. Eager to see how he would perform, he took him out one day, hoping to track down big game. No sooner had they gotten into the woods than the animal picked up the trail of a bear. Excitedly the hunter followed close behind. Then suddenly the dog stopped, sniffed the ground, and headed in a different direction. He had caught the smell of a deer that had crossed the path of the bear. A few moments later he halted again, this time captivated by the scent of a rabbit that had crossed the path of the deer. And so, on and on it went until finally the breathless hunter caught up with his dog, only to find him barking triumphantly down the hole of a field mouse.

Many new Christians start out with the high resolve of keeping the Savior first in their lives. But it isn't long before their whole attention is diverted to things of temporal importance.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

“KEEP ME FROM TURNING BACK!”

A missionary to Thailand named Miss Hammer faced many obstacles in her work, and she saw few visible results despite her earnest endeavors. Her confidence was in the Lord, however, so she refused to yield to despair. Her only desire was to “plow out her furrow for God,” no matter how stony the field or how difficult it might be to sow the seed. In 1962 this gallant servant of Christ suffered a cruel death at the hands of a heroin addict. In her last letter to a friend she quoted a poem which not only told of the great trial of her faith, but revealed her holy determination to go on serving God without flinching or retreating in the face of overwhelming odds. This bit of verse, which so aptly expressed her feelings, is a touching commentary on a life completely dedicated to the Lord:

My hand is on the plow, my falt'ring hand;
 But all in front of me is untilled land.
 The wilderness and solitary place,
 The lonely desert with its interspace.
 The handles of my plow with tears are wet:
 The shares with rust are spoiled, and yet,
 Out in the field, ne'er let the reins be slack;
 My God! my God! keep me from turning back!

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

BURNING YOUR BOATS

When Julius Caesar landed on the shores of Britain with his Roman legions, he took a bold and decisive step to ensure the success of his military venture. Ordering his men to march to the edge of the Cliffs of Dover, he commanded them to look down at the water below. To their amazement, they saw every ship in which they had crossed the channel engulfed in flames. Caesar had deliberately cut off any possibility of retreat. Now that his soldiers were unable to return to the continent, there was nothing left for them to do but to advance and conquer! And that is exactly what they did.

A similar psychology for discipleship is suggested by Christ in Luke 14:26. He declared that His followers must break all ties that weaken or interfere with wholehearted commitment to Him.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

NO FRIENDS

I never had friends to play with at the park. I'll never forget the seesaw.
I nearly killed myself running from one end to the other.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

(The Anchor by Stephen and Tony Fortosis) source information unknown.

Oct. 1

ROMANS 8:14-17

GETTING GOD'S AUTOGRAPH

His servants will worship him and see his face. His name will be on their foreheads (Revelation 22:3-4).

During the Civil War, the army took a rather dim view of desertion. Some deserters were hanged. Others stood publicly as a white-hot *D* was branded into their foreheads, and they were drummed out of the corps. After Cain murdered Abel, God placed a mark on him, but it was hardly a mark of warm ownership or one in Cain could take pride.

The Bible also mentions positive marks for those God claims as his own. Our names are inscribed in the lamb's Book of Life and are engraved on his palms. Saints in Revelation have God's seal on their foreheads and each saint is given a white stone with his or her new name on it. In addition, the Spirit of God living within us seals us forever as God's possessions.

Life on this earth is a bittersweet mixture. For some, the troubles far outweigh the outward blessings, yet we can take great encouragement if God's autograph is written across our hearts. John Bale, an English reformer, writes, "If adversity, loss of goods, detriment of fame, sickness, or any other troublous cross happeneth, it is evermore for the best to them that are faithful. Perfectly shall all these be taken away in the regeneration, when to their glory both heaven and earth shall be blessed."

LIFE FOCUS: Success begins with God's autograph written across a human heart—an indelible mark of ownership. Take restful security in this mark that God will never erase.

p. 288

DEMAS: STRENGTH TO CONTINUE

Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone . . .
2 Timothy 4:10

Paul mentions Demas three times in his letters: in Philemon he is “Demas . . . my fellow worker”; in Colossians he is simply “Demas”; and now he is Demas who “has deserted.” His story is frightening—and familiar, because what tugged him back into “this world” is what pulls us in the same direction. Maybe if we see what made Demas quit, we’ll find the strength to continue.

Was he following too hard? Were Christ’s claims on his life too much? Did his enthusiasm die, his ideals expire? Perhaps it was bit of each of these. But the heart of his problem was that he “loved this world” and “deserted” Paul. He found so many things going on in this world that interested him, so many things he wanted to do and own and experience, that he no longer had time for or interest in God. And to love “this world” is to fail to love God. Demas let go of God because he would not let go of “this world.” Then he let go of Paul, too, and “deserted” him. Demas had no time for God or Paul because he had time only for himself.

How can you—and I—*unlike* Demas, continue as Christians? First, never let go of God, whose loving hands reach toward you. Then, never withhold your love from other believers. You will then discover that the reason you *don’t* let go is that God *won’t* let go of you!

PRAYER

Lord, so much around us competes with you for our attention and devotion. Help us to live in “this world” without falling in love with it. Let us be your “fellow workers.” In Jesus, Amen.

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Wednesday, February 22, year unknown)

compromise

com•pro•mise *noun* (plural **com•pro•mis•es**)

1. **agreement:** a settlement of a dispute in which two or more sides agree to accept less than they originally wanted • *After hours of negotiations a compromise was reached.*
2. **something accepted rather than wanted:** something that somebody accepts because what was wanted is unattainable
3. **potential danger or disgrace:** exposure to danger or disgrace

verb (past **com•pro•mised**, past participle **com•pro•mised**, present participle **com•pro•mis•ing**, 3rd person present singular **com•pro•mis•es**)

1. *intransitive verb* **agree by conceding:** to settle a dispute by agreeing to accept less than what was originally wanted.
2. *transitive verb* **lessen value of something:** to undermine or devalue something or somebody by making concessions • *Don't compromise your integrity by telling half-truths.*
3. *transitive verb* **expose to danger:** to expose somebody or something to danger or risk • *This scandal could compromise his chances for reelection. • drugs that can compromise the immune system*

[15th century. Via French *compromise* from Latin *compromissum* “mutual agreement,” from the past participle of *compromittere*, literally “to make mutual promises,” from *promittere* (see promise).]

—**com•pro•mis•er**, *noun*

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servant

ser•vant (*plural ser•vants*) *noun*

1. **somebody who serves another:** somebody who serves another, especially somebody employed to do household jobs such as cooking, cleaning, and serving meals
2. **somebody working for public:** somebody in the public employ.

See also civil servant

See also public servant

[12th century. From Old French, present participle of *servir* (see serve).]

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WORLDLINESS

The Bible defines worldliness by centering morality where we intuitively know it should be. Worldliness is the lust of the flesh (a passion for sensual satisfaction), the lust of the eyes (an inordinate desire for the finer things in life), and the pride of life (self-satisfaction in who we are, what we have, and what we have done).

Worldliness, then, is a preoccupation with ease and affluence. It elevates creature comfort to the point of idolatry; large salaries and comfortable life-styles become necessities of life. Worldliness is reading magazines about people who live hedonistic lives and spend too much money on themselves and wanting to be like them. But more importantly, worldliness is simply pride and selfishness in disguises. It's being resentful when someone snubs us or patronizes us or shows off. It means smarting under every slight, challenging every word spoken against us, cringing when another is preferred before us. Worldliness is harboring grudges, nursing grievance, and wallowing in self-pity. These are the ways in which we are most like the world.

Dave Roper, *The Strength of a Man*,
quoted in *Family Survival in the American Jungle*,
Steve Farrar, 1991, Multnomah Press, p. 68

Multiple, 10,000 Sermon Illustrations, (Dallas, Texas Biblical Studies Press) 2000.

(Logos Library System)

VALUES

A few years ago, the St. Petersburg Times reported the story of a young man who was driving his Porsche to work when it caught fire. He stood there watching it burn and was quoted as saying, “That car meant everything to me.” Even if we make some allowance for youth and for the inexact use of language, the statement is still startling. If your car means everything to you, you have a misplaced sense of values. If your career, or your home, or your family, or your health means everything to you, you’ve forgotten something. Even if life means everything to you, you’ve forgotten something.

—**Robert C. Shannon**, *1000 Windows*,
(Cincinnati, Ohio: Standard Publishing Company, 1997).

(From *Parson’s Technology*)

(The Perfect Christian: How Sinners Like Us Can Be More Like Jesus by Tony Evans) Nashville, TN: Word. Copyright – Tony Evans, 1998.

Now God doesn’t expect us to hide from the world. He knows we have to live in this age and place. What He wants is for us to move through this world the way fish move through salt water. Fish can swim in salt water their whole lives without tasting salty when we have them for dinner. In the same way, God expects us to swim in this world without becoming worldly.
p. 150

(Sport Shorts Calendar by Jay Carty) Bloomington, MN: Garborg’s Heart ‘n Home, Inc. Copyright – Jay Carty, 1993.

The answers to three questions will determine your success for failure.
(1) Can people trust you to do your best? (2) Are you committed to the task at hand? (3) Do you care about other people and show it? If the answers to all these questions are yes, there is no way you can fail.

Lou Holtz, College Football Coach

(April 19)

Desire and determination must overcome disappointment.

Walter Alston, Major League Manager

(November 6)

(The Book of Wisdom by Multnomah Books) Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, Inc. Copyright -Multnomah Publishers, Inc., 1997.

Old age is no excuse for copping out.
Each of us can find ways in which to make a difference.

Eda LeShan

It's Better to Be Over the Hill Than Under It

p. 501

Verses 10 and 11 are the **KEY VERSES** to:

Step #11—SERVANTHOOD: May I Hear Well Done.

How sad that Demas will never be able to hear those words!

What a **CONTRAST** to this dilemma for Demas is the life and witness of Timothy, to whom the letter is written.

Philippians 2:20-22

For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus. But you know of his proven worth that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father.

F. F. Bruce in his little book The Pauline Circle, says:

We do not know if Timothy reached Rome in time to see the apostle alive.

Nor do we know if it was before this, or at a rather later date, that Timothy himself was imprisoned for the gospel's sake. 'Our brother Timothy', we read in the personal notes with which the Epistle to the Hebrews is concluded, 'has been released, with whom I shall see you if he comes soon' (Heb. 13:23). The place and circumstances of this imprisonment must remain obscure; Timothy, as we take our leave of him, continues to be involved in the activities and hazards of the gospel ministry.

p. 34

(1001 Great Stories & “Quotes” by R. Kent Hughes) Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. Copyright – R. Kent Hughes, 1998.

*You know, Lord, how I serve You
With great emotional fervor
In the limelight. . . .*

*But how would I react, I wonder
If you pointed to a basin of water
And asked me to wash the calloused feet
Of a bent and wrinkled old woman
Day after day
Month after month
In a room where nobody saw
and nobody knew.*

Ruth Harms Calkin

p. 384

(Quote Unquote compiled by Lloyd Cory) Wheaton, IL: Victor Books / SP Publications, Inc. Copyright – SP Publications, Inc., 1977.

Business is a lot like a game of tennis—those who don’t serve well end up losing. **(DOC ANKLAM)**

p. 40

(A Man to Match the Mountain: Overcoming the Obstacles of Life by David Roper) Grand Rapids, MI: Discovery House. Copyright - David Roper, 1996.

*Alas! how easily things go wrong!
A sigh too deep or a kiss too long,
And then comes a mist and a weeping rain,
And life is never the same again.*

—George MacDonald

p. 193

In my book, Drawing Closer Growing Stronger, I make the following observations:

A few years out of seminary I was touched by Jesus' words: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal" (John 12:24-25). With Jim Elliot's words ringing in my ears: "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." I surrendered afresh to my Father's plan for service. I remember we were singing:

So send I you to labor unrewarded,
To serve unpaid, unloved, unsought, unknown,
To bear rebuke, to suffer scorn and scoffing;
So send I you to toil for Me alone.

So send I you to bind the bruised and broken,
O'er wand'ring souls to work, to weep, to wake,
To bear the burdens of a world aweary;
So send I you to suffer for My sake.

So send I you to loneliness and longing,
With heart a hung'ring for the loved and known.
Forsaking home and kindred, friend and dear one;
So send I you to know My love alone.

So send I you to leave your life's ambition,
To die to dear desire, self-will resign,
To labor long and love where men revile you;
So send I you to lose your life in Mine.

So send I you to hearts made hard by hatred,
To eyes made blind because they will not see,
To spend, tho' it be blood to spend and spare not;
So send I you to taste of Calvary.

As the Father hath sent me,
So I send you.

pp. 209-10

v. 11 Luke alone is with me. Pick up Mark and be bringing him with you,
For he is useful to me for service.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Of all Paul's close associates, **only** the "beloved physician" **Luke** (cf. Col. 4:14) was **with** Paul. He had accompanied Paul on many of his travels and had shared the first Roman imprisonment with him . . . In joining the two of them, Timothy was to pick up **Mark** along the way. It is not known where Mark might have been located. But this one whom Paul had once considered untrustworthy (Acts 15:36-40) was now considered **helpful to Paul in his ministry**. Barnabas' concern . . . to salvage the young John Mark was now paying dividends to Paul himself . . .

p. 759

Hendriksen says:

Paul needed a doctor and a friend. Luke was both, and *directly or indirectly* may also have served in the capacity of Paul's secretary.

Luke and Paul had much in common. Both were educated men, men of culture. Both were big-hearted, broad-spirited, sympathetic. Above all, both were believers and missionaries.

p. 320

Hendriksen also has this to say about Mark:

The home of Mark was in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12). It was he who had deserted Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey. Paul, therefore, had refused to take Mark with him on the second tour. So Barnabas had taken Mark and had sailed away to Cyprus (Acts 15:36-41). Subsequently, however, we find Mark again in the company of Paul at Rome during the apostle's first imprisonment (Col. 4:10; Philemon 24). Afterward he is with Peter in Rome (I Peter 5:13). Tradition supports the idea that there was a close connection between Peter's preaching in Rome and the writing of Mark's Gospel. After Peter's martyrdom Mark seems to have become *Paul's* assistant once more. At Paul's request and in co-operation with Timothy he may have been making a tour of the churches in Asia Minor while Paul was writing II Timothy. Timothy, leaving for Rome, is urged to "pick him up," because Paul knows that by this time Mark is very useful to him "for ministry." The implication is probably this: since Mark has experienced a change for the better, having taken to heart the lesson which his earlier failure has taught him, and since he is well acquainted with Rome and with the condition of the church in that city, hence *in Rome* he will be the right man in the right place. The context indicates that when Paul uses the term *ministry* or *service*, he is thinking of kingdom-work, service in the interest of the gospel, and does not merely mean, "He can perform certain duties to make life easier for me personally."

p. 321

Gaebelein says:

For a time after his failure in service Mark was unprofitable. His restoration had taken place, accomplished by the grace of God, and therefore the Apostle desires to have him again at his side, "for he is profitable to me for the ministry." And this John Mark became the chosen instrument to write the Gospel record which bears his name, in which the Spirit of God describes so blessedly the Servant of all, who never failed.

p. 200

Matthew Henry says:

By this it appears that Paul was now reconciled to Mark. We must not disclaim for ever making use of those that are profitable and useful, though they may have done amiss.

p. 1898

Wiersbe, commenting on Luke, says:

Luke (4:11) is the “beloved physician” who traveled with Paul (Col. 4:14). He is author of the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts. (Notice the “we” sections in Acts, the eyewitness reports of Dr. Luke.) Paul probably dictated this letter (2 Tim.) to Luke. Being a doctor, Luke must have appreciated Paul’s reference to “gangrene” (2:17, NIV).

p. 162

J. Vernon McGee says:

“Only Luke is with me”—good old Dr. Luke stood by Paul clear to the end.

“Take Mark, and bring him with thee.” Remember that Paul wouldn’t take John Mark with him on his second missionary journey. But Paul had been wrong about Mark, and now he was able to say that Mark was profitable to him in his ministry—and I am glad he said that here as one of his last words.

p. 478

Demarest says:

We'll never know the middle of the story, but by the time Paul wrote Colossians, healing has occurred, and Mark is but Paul in his first Roman imprisonment. And now, at the end, Paul wants "*useful*" Mark with him. Mark thus stands as the patron saint of all who recover from previous failures. Today's defeats can be forgiven and overcome. Ask Mark and Paul!

But the unsung hero is clearly cousin Barnabas. He was willing to take a chance on Mark. He believed so strongly that Mark could make it, given another opportunity, that he risked a lot for his young cousin. We can't separate Mark's recovery from Barnabas' risk and trust. Thank God for the cousin Barneys who will stand by us in our failures. There are two questions here. Who has been a Barnabas to me? The second is more demanding. Who needs me as a Barnabas?
pp. 292-3

Hughes says:

Likely, Luke was Paul's secretary for the writing of 2 Timothy and penned the personal, self-effacing "Only Luke" with a wry smile.
p. 260

He says finally:

What profound encouragement we find in the life of John Mark. Past failure, even rejection, does not prevent present usability. You can come back from disgrace. Not only that, you can become immensely useful to Christ. Even a shirker can become a major worker in the gospel enterprise—the kind of man or woman that the apostle would call for.

In a few months Luke, Mark, and Timothy are all going to be gathered together in Paul's departure. *That* is a tough team for tough times!
p. 261

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

Mark had been under a cloud for having forsaken Paul at a critical moment in his missionary tour with Barnabas . . . Timothy had subsequently occupied the same post in relation to Paul as Mark once held. Hence Paul, appropriately here, wipes out the past censure by high praise of Mark and guards against Timothy's making self-complacent comparisons between himself and Mark, as though he were superior to the latter . . .
p. 1382

Hawthorne & Martin say:

It seems clear that Paul, Barnabas and John Mark shared a longer working relationship than Acts implies. Paul's reference to Barnabas in 1 Corinthians 9:6 shows not only that the Corinthians knew Barnabas but that Paul continued to respect him. Calvin and Luther were convinced that 2 Corinthians 8:18-19 also referred to Barnabas: "With him (Titus) we are also sending the brother who is famous among all the churches for his preaching of the gospel." Likewise, the mention of John Mark in Philemon 24 and 2 Timothy 4:11 shows that Paul and this younger disciple were later reconciled.
p. 67

A. T. Robertson says:

Paul had long ago changed his opinion of Mark (Col. 4:10) because Mark had changed his conduct and had made good in his ministry. Now Paul longs to have the man that he once scornfully rejected (Acts 15:37ff).
p. 632

Kelly says:

Apparently **The only one** who is left at Paul's side **is Luke**. This does not imply, as is often assumed, that the Apostle is literally alone, but that Luke is the only member of his intimate circle who is with him. He had also been with Paul during his earlier imprisonment, earning the title 'my well loved doctor' (Col. iv. 14: cf. Phm. 24). The motive of his staying, affection apart, can only be guessed at; it may have been because Paul needed medical attention, or assistance of some special kind.
pp. 213-14

He says further:

Long ago, when setting out on his second missionary tour, he had refused to take Mark with him; he had lost confidence in him because of his reluctance to share the difficulties of his earlier tour . . . This distrust, however, was now a thing of the past, for we find Mark with Paul during his first Roman imprisonment and even being commended by him to the Colossian church (Col. [4] iv. 10). We must suppose that at the moment of writing he is at some spot on Timothy's proposed route. Paul explains why he wants him: **I find him a useful assistant**. A literal translation would give, 'for he is useful to me for ministry' (Gk. *diakonian*), where the last word means either personal service to Paul or public ministering. Either interpretation is possible, but the tone of the passage favours the former.
p. 214

Griffiths has this to say:

Get Mark (verse 11). This comes as a surprise. It is a real turn-around in Paul's attitude after his quarrel with Barnabas over Mark deserting them in Pamphylia (Acts 15:38). Paul now describes Mark as *useful* (a word used only three times in the New Testament, here; 2:21 'useful utensils'; and a word play in Philemon 11 on Onesimus's name meaning 'Profitable'). So two useless people, both runaways who deserted their jobs, have become 'useful' through the operation of God's grace in their lives. Paul was great enough to change his mind in his estimation of a fellow Christian. Are there any people we have written off? Should we change our minds about them and give them a fresh chance to serve?
p. 215

Wilson says:

Luke very likely acted as Paul's secretary in taking down this Epistle. 'The faithful Luke bides still with the age-worn apostle, to whom he could best minister in his painful weakness and suspense. His comradeship must have been the bright spot in the encircling gloom of his close captivity. There is a tremulous note in the *only*' (Simpson).
p. 1665

Lenski says:

At this time Luke was Paul's only loyal, faithful stay in Rome. "Luke only"—so brief the words, yet so full of meaning. Where were all the Roman Christians, some of them even in Caesar's household? To avert suspicion from himself Nero had blamed the Christians for the burning of Rome in July, 64, and many had perished awful deaths the following October (see the introduction). The few greetings, only four names, in v. 21 tell their own tragic tale.
p. 868

Barnes says:

He felt that he was not about to die. If he suspected that there was on the part of Mark any lingering apprehension that the great apostle was not entirely reconciled to him, or retained a recollection of what had formerly occurred, nothing would be more natural than that, at this trying time of his life, Paul should summon him to his side, and express towards him the kindest emotions. It would soothe *any* lingering irritation in the mind of Mark, to receive such a message.
p. 249

Liefeld says:

The reason Paul wants Mark is that “he is helpful to me in my ministry.” The present tense implies that Mark is already associated again with Paul. At some point after Paul’s refusal to have Mark continue with him on his missionary journeys . . . a change took place in Mark or in Paul, or perhaps in both, that made it possible for Paul to trust Mark again as an associate in his ministry. The nature of Mark’s ministry is not explained, but the word *diakonia* used here refers (in addition to the specialized ministry of deacons and its general use to describe servanthood for Christ) to the evangelistic work of Paul and his associates . . .

p. 297

Lea & Griffin say:

Paul had earlier refused to carry Mark on his second missionary journey . . . because Mark had deserted Paul in the field . . . Paul’s magnanimity showed itself in his regarding Mark as a fellow worker (Col. 4:10-11; Phlm 24) during his first imprisonment. Now he indicated his desire to have Mark with him again because of his great helpfulness in service. The “ministry” Mark performed could have been gospel preaching and teaching, a personal ministry to Paul, or a combination of both. Since Paul was discussing personal needs in this context, it is likely that meeting such needs was at least a part of Mark’s proposed duties. Mark was presumably somewhere along Timothy’s route to Paul in Rome.

p. 253

Knight says Mark:

. . . undoubtedly refers to the one associated with Paul elsewhere in the NT. Hence “Mark” is the surname of John, son of Mary of Jerusalem and cousin of Barnabas (Col. 4:10) who accompanied Paul and Barnabas on the so-called first missionary journey but left them early during that journey . . . Paul did not want to take Mark on his next journey because of this desertion . . . but Mark proved himself after that time and came to be regarded by Paul as a fellow worker (Phm. 24; cf. 1 Pet. 5:13).

p. 465

Quinn & Wacker say:

Timothy is indeed to come quickly (v. 9), but not just because Paul is lonely. He is to come to help man a decimated staff, and he is to bring another man with him for that same service . . .

p. 805

They say further:

The letter here aims precisely at restaffing the Pauline entourage (v. 11, with Mark as well as Timothy).

p. 800

Milne says:

Now Paul commends him for his usefulness in ministering either to himself privately or in the apostle's wider mission. Like Onesimus, and all true believers, Mark had been made useful (helpful) by Christ. This is also a tribute to the reconciling power of the gospel in human relationships over a period of time.

p. 184

Towner says:

Mark's life had its "hiccups." But by God's grace and with the help of Christian leaders willing to allow for growth and willing to forgive, his story became one of success.

p. 210

Fee says:

At an earlier stage Mark had bailed out during some rough going . . . and had become a point of contention between Paul and Barnabas . . . But Paul's largeness of character can be seen in the fact that at a later stage Mark had once more become a coworker . . . Now he urges Timothy to **get Mark** (implying that he is not in Ephesus) **and bring him with you**. And the reason? **Because he is helpful to me in my ministry** (lit., "he is useful to me for service"). The phrase "for service" (*diakonian*), although a favorite of Paul's for the ministry of the gospel . . . is ambiguous here and may refer to personal service . . . Perhaps a little of both is intended, but the context suggests that at least ministry to his personal needs is involved . . .

p. 294

Barker says:

John was a failure. He could not take it. He deserted and went home. It is bad to know in your own mind that you are a coward, and it is even more painful to know it is public information. When you are a deserter in the eyes of the world as well as in your own eyes, you do not have much self-respect left. It was as if John had *reject* or *unfit* or *unworthy* stamped on him. Everyone soon knew he was a failure and a disgrace. He was probably pointed at and laughed at as the kid who could not take it. John found himself left with a reputation to live down.

A man is not worth much, however, until he has been beaten to his knees by life and finds he cannot take it. A man never knows much until he knows how weak he is and how little he can do and how much he needs help. Only then is he in a position to know how much he needs God. Only when a man is beaten down to his knees is he in a position to know how much God can do.

p. 38

Barker says further:

Although he had fizzled initially, John Mark later burned with a constant, intense glow. It was he who first gathered up all the reminiscences of Peter and all the eyewitness stories of Jesus he could remember. Today we call that masterpiece of reporting, “The Gospel According to St. Mark.”

Many years after that, even Paul, who had been so disgusted with John Mark when he flinched, wrote to a friend asking him to bring John Mark with him, adding the words, “for he is useful. . . .” Even tough, crusty old Paul willingly admitted in the end that John Mark had found a purpose and was no longer a religious bum.

p. 42

Speaking of **DESERTERS**, Mark was a deserter in the early stages of his life. Now he has gone on to prove himself to be very useful or helpful in service.

What a thrilling thing it is to see a young man, like Mark, who made the choice to desert and then to turn around and dedicate himself in such a way that now his name goes in the record as one who is **“USEFUL [in] SERVICE.”**

I am reminded of what Paul says in:

Philippians 3:13 (TLB)

No, dear brothers, I am still not all I should be but I am bringing all my energies to bear on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead.

Mark’s life could be described in:

2 Timothy 2:21 (DAV)

If therefore, a person cleanse himself from these, he shall be a vessel for honorable use, having been set apart, useful to the master, having been prepared for every good work.

Happiness is a perfume which you can't pour on someone without getting some on yourself.

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

For strength to bear is found in duty alone, and he is blest indeed who learns to make the joy of others cure his own heartache.

—DRAKE

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

THE LORD AND YOU

In her book *Lincoln's Daughters of Mercy*, Marjorie Greenbie tells about Mother Bickerdyke, who worked with General Sherman during the Civil War. She brought relief to thousands of wounded and dying Union soldiers.

Once, when Mother Bickerdyke was giving special attention to a man considered worthless by his comrades, she was asked, "Why do you waste your time on trash like that?" "Because," she replied, "when there's any creature around here so miserable that there's nobody to care for him, he still has two friends in this army. One is God, and the other is me."

Paul certainly wasn't considered worthless by his co-workers, but there were times when he felt alone. Demas had forsaken him; Crescens, Titus, and Tychicus were all away traveling (2 Tim. 4:10, 12). Yet God and one person, Luke, sustained Paul when he stood at his final defense in Rome. As the trial that would lead to his execution got underway, only Luke was with Paul (v. 11) He and the Lord gave Paul the support he needed to maintain a clear witness.

The Lord works through people. With Paul, He used Luke. Some struggling person in your life today may need the Lord—and you! —DJD

*To those in darkest night
Go be a kindly friend;
Pour love and sunshine on their cares
And broken lives you'll mend. —Zimmerman*

**ALL AROUND ARE NEEDS TO MEET:
BE GOD'S HEART AND HANDS AND FEET.**

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Saturday, July 16, 1994)

God Can Use Us

There are many reasons why God shouldn't have called you. But don't worry. You're in good company.

- Moses stuttered.
- David's armor didn't fit.
- John Mark was rejected by Paul.
- Timothy had ulcers.
- Hosea's wife was a prostitute.
- Amos' only training was in the school of fig-tree pruning.
- Jacob was a liar.
- David had an affair.
- Solomon was too rich.
- Jesus was too poor.
- Abraham was too old.
- David was too young.
- Peter was afraid of death.
- Lazarus was dead.
- John was self-righteous.
- Naomi was a widow.
- Paul was a murderer.
- So was Moses.
- Jonah ran from God.
- Miriam was a gossip.
- Gideon and Thomas both doubted.
- Jeremiah was depressed and suicidal.
- Elijah was burned out.
- John the Baptist was a loudmouth.
- Martha was a worry-wart.
- Mary was lazy.
- Samson had long hair.
- Noah got drunk.
- Did I mention that Moses had a short fuse?
- So did Peter, Paul—well, lots of folks did.

But God doesn't require a job interview. He doesn't hire and fire like most bosses, because He's more our Dad than our Boss. He doesn't look at financial gain or loss. He's not prejudiced or partial, not judging, grudging, sassy, or brassy, not deaf to our cry, not blind to our need.

As much as we try, God's gifts are free. We could do wonderful things for wonderful people and still not be . . . Wonderful.

Multiple, 10,000 Sermon Illustrations, (Dallas, Texas Biblical Studies Press) 2000.

(Logos Library System)

Satan says, "You're not worthy."
 Jesus says, "So what? I AM."
 Satan looks back and sees our mistakes.
 God looks back and sees the cross.

The Fourth Dimension, November 1998, p. 5

Multiple, 10,000 Sermon Illustrations, (Dallas, Texas Biblical Studies Press) 2000.

(Logos Library System)

Brokenness is not revival; it is a vital and indispensable step toward it.

—**ARTHUR WALLIS** (1928-)

Deliverance can come to us only by the defeat of our old life. Safety and peace come only after we have been forced to our knees. God rescues us by breaking us, by shattering our strength and wiping out our resistance.

—**A. W. TOZER** (1897-1963)

God can never make us wine if we object to the fingers he uses to crush us with. If God would only use his own fingers and make us broken bread and poured out wine in a special way! But when he uses someone whom we dislike, or some set of circumstances to which we said we would never submit, and makes those the crushers, we object.

—**OSWALD CHAMBERS** (1874-1917)

God creates out of nothing. Therefore until a man is nothing, God can make nothing out of him.

—**MARTIN LUTHER** (1483-1546)

God is a Specialist at making something useful and beautiful out of something broken and confused.

—**CHARLES R. SWINDOLL** (1934-)

God salvages the individual by liquidating him and then raising him again to newness of life.

—**A. W. TOZER** (1897-1963)

(From Quick Verse 6.0)

God will make us broken bread and poured out wine to feed and nourish others.

—OSWALD CHAMBERS (1874-1917)

God will never plant the seed of his life upon the soil of a hard, unbroken spirit. He will only plant that seed where the conviction of his Spirit has brought brokenness, where the soil has been watered with the tears of repentance as well as the tears of joy.

—ALAN REDPATH (1907-1989)

He can give us a crop in one year that will make up for ten.

—D. MARTYN LLOYD-JONES (1899-1981)

How does God take a Christian who lives one-half inch from hell and make him live one-half inch from heaven? It is not easy. There is a price to be paid. The divine Surgeon must be permitted to use his scalpel to cut, cleanse, and break, so healing can take place. In fact, such spiritual surgery is more painful than physical surgery. God doesn't use an anesthetic; he doesn't do his work while we are asleep. God can take any brokenhearted believer and make him or her a radiant, loving person. But when he performs such "heart operations," his children are wide awake.

—ERWIN W. LUTZER (1941-)

How else but through a broken heart may Lord Christ enter in?

—OSCAR WILDE (1854-1900)

Human beings are only bearable when the last defenses of their egos are down; when they stand, helpless and humbled, before the awful circumstances of their being. It is only thus that the point of the cross becomes clear, and the point of the cross is the point of life.

—MALCOLM MUGGERIDGE (1903-1990)

If God is going to bless me, he must condemn and blast out of my being what he cannot bless.

—OSWALD CHAMBERS (1874-1917)

(From Quick Verse 6.0)

If you . . . begin to find that the Holy Spirit is scrutinizing you, let his searchlight go straight down, and he will not only search you, he will put everything right that is wrong; he will make the past as though it had never been.

—OSWALD CHAMBERS (1874-1917)

In love's service only broken hearts will do.

—ROBERT HAROLD SCHULLER (1926-)

It appears as if God were sometimes most unnatural; we ask him to bless our lives and bring benedictions, and what immediately follows turns everything into actual ruin. The reason is that before God can make the heart into a garden of the Lord, he has to plough it, and that will take away a great deal of natural beauty.

—OSWALD CHAMBERS (1874-1917)

Lord, I'm at the end
Of all my resources.
Child, you're just at the beginning of Mine.

—RUTH HARMS CALKIN (1918-)

The only things that are improved by breaking are the hearts of sinners.

—UNKNOWN

We must be broken into life.

—CHARLES E. RAVEN

You fathom the depth of My own heart only to the extent that your heart is broken and your inmost consciousness torn asunder by the pain of grief.

—FRANCES J. ROBERTS

(From Quick Verse 6.0)

Service

But you're gonna have to serve somebody, yes indeed
 You're gonna have to serve somebody,
 Well, it may be the devil or it may be the Lord
 But you're gonna have to serve somebody.

Bob Dylan (1941-), U.S. singer and songwriter. Song lyric.
 "Gotta Serve Somebody" (1979).

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Occupations

A good servant is a real godsend; but truly 'tis a rare bird in the land.

Attributed to: **Martin Luther** (1483-1546), German religious reformer.

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A FLAG OF RAGS

In the final years of our imprisonment, the North Vietnamese moved us from small cells with one or two prisoners to large rooms with as many as 30-40 men to a room. We preferred this situation for the companionship and strength we could draw from our fellow prisoners. In addition to moving us to new quarters, our captors also let us receive packages and letters from home. Many men received word from their families for the first time in several years. The improved conditions were a result of public pressure put on the North Vietnamese by the American public.

In our cell was one Navy officer, Lt. Commander Mike Christian. Over a period of time Mike had gathered bits and pieces of red and white cloth from various packages. Using a piece of bamboo he had fashioned into a needle, Mike sewed a United States flag on the inside of his shirt, one of the blue pajama tops we all wore.

Every night in our cell, Mike would put his shirt on the wall, and we would say the pledge of allegiance. I know that the pledge of allegiance may not be the most important aspect of our day now, but I can tell you that at the time it was the most important aspect of our lives.

This had been going on for some time until one of the guards came in as we were reciting our pledge. They ripped the flag off the way and dragged Mike out. He was beaten for several hours and then thrown back into the cell.

Later that night, as we were settling down to sleep on the concrete slabs that were our beds, I looked over to the spot where the guards had thrown Mike. There, under the solitary light bulb hanging from the ceiling, I saw Mike. Still bloody and his face swollen beyond recognition, Mike was gathering bits and pieces of cloth together. He was sewing a new American flag.

—John McCain. From the files of *Leadership*

(From *Parson's Technology*)

“LUKE ALONE IS WITH ME. PICK UP MARK AND BE BRINGING HIM WITH YOU.”

The **REASON** he asks for Mark:

“FOR HE IS USEFUL TO ME FOR SERVICE.”

Paul is still thinking about ministry in these final hours and days of his life.

Who better than the one who would author the gospel that presents the Lord Jesus Christ as the **PERFECT SERVANT**.

Mark 10:45

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

(Quote Unquote compiled by Lloyd Cory) Wheaton, IL: Victor Books / SP Publications, Inc. Copyright – SP Publications, Inc., 1977.

He who has never failed has never tried.

(EMMETT LECOMPTE)

The greatest failure is the failure to try.

(WILLIAM A. WARD)

No man ever fails until he fails on the inside.

More men fail through lack of purpose than lack of talent.

(BILLY SUNDAY)

People do not inadvertently stumble into failure. They think their way into it.

(JOHN B. JOHNSON)

Failure is the line of least persistence.

(W. A. CLARKE)

p. 108

(God's Little Devotional Book for Men by Honor Books, Inc.) Tulsa, OK:
Honor Books. Copyright - Honor Books, Inc., 1996.

**The strongest
evidence of
love is sacrifice.**

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 3:16

A Christian worker among the underprivileged in London was a true inspiration to a man observing her. When he asked what had inspired her Christian faith, she told him her story. As a young Jew, she had fled the German Gestapo in France during World War II. She knew she was close to being caught after she found refuge in the home of a French Huguenot. A Christian widow soon arrived telling her that she must flee immediately to a new place. The Jewish girl replied, "It's no use, they will find me anyway. They are so close behind." The widow said, "Yes, they will find someone here, but go with these people to safety. I will take your identification papers."

The Jewish woman understood her plan: The Gestapo would think she was a fleeing Jew. She asked, "Why are you doing this?" and the widow responded, "It's the least I can do. Christ has already done that and more for me." Sure enough, the widow was imprisoned in the Jewish girls' place, and within six months she died in a concentration camp.

The Jewish woman may have been able to outrun the Gestapo, but she could not outrun what this woman did for her. Personal sacrifice is the most potent witness and greatest legacy a person can have.
pp. 34-35

(Rainbows: The Book of Hope edited by George W. Humphreys) Allentown, PA: Coslett Publishing. Copyright - A. C. and D. G. Remley, 1946.

His Proxies

Christ has no hands but our hands
To do His work today
He has no feet but our feet
To lead them to His way.

Christ has no tongues but our tongues
To tell men how He died
He has no help but our help
To bring them to His side.

We are the only Bibles
The careless world can read
We are the sinner's gospel
We are the scoffer's creed.

We are the Lord's last message
Given in deed and word
What if the lines are crooked?
What if the type be blurred?

What if our hands are busy
With other work than His?
What if our feet are walking
Where sin's allurements is?

What if our tongues are telling
No word of His dying love
How can we hope to lift men
From the mire to the things above?

Annie Johnson Flint.

p. 165

(Night of Tragedy, Dawning of Light by Dan R. Crawford, with Kevin Galey and Chip Gillette) Colorado Springs, CO: Shaw. Copyright – Dan R. Crawford, 2000.

Peter Marshall, chaplain of the U.S. Senate, died as a young man himself. He made this statement that I often think about and I think about it today with you. “Life is best measured,” he said, “not by its duration but by its donation.”

p. 87

(Quotes for the Journey, Wisdom for the Way compiled by Gordon S. Jackson) Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress. Copyright – Gordon S. Jackson, 2000.

It is part of the discipline of humility that we must not spare our hand where it can perform a service and that we do not assume that our schedule is our own to manage, but allow it to be arranged by God.

—DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

Attempt great things for God. Expect great things from God.

—WILLIAM CAREY

I reckon on you for extreme service, with no complaining on your part and no explanation on mine.

—OSWALD CHAMBERS,

ON GOD WORKING THROUGH US

p. 149

(The Mystery of God’s Will by Charles R. Swindoll) Nashville, TN: Word. Copyright – Charles R. Swindoll, Inc., 1999.

The years that lie behind you, with all their struggles and pains, will in time be remembered only as the way that led to your new life. Bu[t] as long as the new life is not fully yours, your memories will continue to cause you pain. When you keep reliving painful events of the past, you can feel victimized by them.

—HENRI NOUWEN, *The Inner Voice of Love*

p. 53

(God's Little Devotional Book on Success by Honor Books) Tulsa, OK: Honor Books. Copyright - Honor Books, Inc., 1997.

**There is no limit
to the good
a man can do
if he doesn't care
who gets the credit.**

■ ■ ■

*“My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me
and to finish his work.”*

John 4:34

The young people at Shively Christian Church were fiercely competitive with their neighboring church, Shively Baptist, especially in softball. They were also serious about attending the summer Bible camp led by their youth pastor, Dave Stone. After teaching a Bible lesson about Jesus washing His disciples' feet, Pastor Stone divided the kids into groups and challenged them to find a practical way to serve others. “I want you to be Jesus in the city for the next two hours,” he said. At the end of the two hours, the kids met to report on what they had done.

One group had done yard work for an elderly man. Other groups had taken ice cream treats to several widows, visited a church member in the hospital, and sung Christmas carols at a nursing home, even though it was August.

The final group's report made everyone groan. They had gone to the Shively Baptist pastor and asked him to recommend someone who needed help. He sent them to an elderly woman who needed yard work done. She had thanked them for their hard work saying, “You kids at Shively Baptist are always coming to my rescue.”

Pastor Stone interrupted, “I hope you set her straight and told her you were from Shively *Christian*.” “No,” the kids said, “we really didn't think it mattered.”⁹⁷

⁹⁷*The Body*, Charles Colson with Ellen Santilli Vaughn (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1992), pp. 105, 106.
pp. 202-3

(The Complete Book of Zingers by Croft M. Pentz) Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House. Copyright - Croft M. Pentz, 1990.

It's not whether you win or lose, but how you place the blame.

An obstacle is something you see when you take your eyes off the goal.

If you don't learn from your mistakes, there's no sense in making them.
p. 99

(Seize the Day with Dietrich Bonhoeffer by Charles Ringma) Colorado Springs, CO: Piñon Press. Copyright – Charles Ringma, 2000.

What does describe us more fully is that we are made in God's image, and are loved by God and enabled by Him to live life in faith, trust, and obedience. And that living to glorify God and to serve others expresses who we are meant to be.
(May 24)

(Taking Flight: Wisdom for Your Journey by Elisabeth Elliot) Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books. Copyright – Elisabeth Elliot, 1999.

By the grace of God, we can will to do His will. Forget the past. Press toward the goal.
p. 41

(Reflections for Ragamuffins: Daily Devotions from the Writings of Brennan Manning by Brennan Manning) San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco. Copyright – Brennan Manning, 1998.

But living out of the center has taught me that every failure *succeeds in some way*. It provides the opportunity not only to humble the self, but also to be with the failure of others. If your life or mine were an untarnished success story, an unbroken upward spiral toward holiness, we might never come to understand the human heart.
p. 264

(Bits and Pieces by M. B. “Billy” Dunn, 1977)

“To My Christian Friend”

Surely each of us has times
When nothing works and nothing rhymes.
That was me when God brought you in,
To help me deal with all my sin.

Once open the wounds freely flowed,
And all I am and was really showed.
Praise the Lord that you stayed,
Did not judge, but loved and prayed.

How wonderful our God to be so kind,
To give to each of us His mind.
And spread among us gifts so great,
While granting hearts the love and wait.

I love you dear friend, and I see,
Christ’s love abundant in you for me.

(The Book of Texas Wisdom: Common Sense and Uncommon Genius from 101 Great Texans compiled and edited by Criswell Freeman) Nashville, TN: Walnut Grove Press. Copyright - Walnut Grove Press, 1995.

Nobody is perfect. Look
for the good in others.
Forget the rest.

Barbara Bush

p. 35

(The Christian in Complete Armour by William Gurnall) Chicago, IL: Moody Press. Copyright - James S. Bell, Jr., 1994.

On the other hand, you may not be offended by the command at all, but by your own failure to obey perfectly. Although your foot may slip often, yet your heart cleaves to God's commands and will not let you lie where you fell, but you get up again, resolved to watch your step better. Know this, then, that your sincere respect for the commandment is ample evidence of your title to the promise.
(December 30)

When I think of a true servant I think of Timothy and the story that Barker tells in his little book:

Do you remember that memorable scene in Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*? The wagons, loaded with victims, are rumbling to the guillotine. In one of them is a little girl. Next to her is a large and strong man. The girl timidly turns and asks shyly if she can sit by him. During the journey through the streets, she looks up at him and puts her small hand in his big one. She seems to get his calm and confidence by being near him. Finally they come to the place of execution and he lifts her down. She gratefully says to him, "I think you were sent by heaven to me."
pp. 98-99

It's An Honor to Serve

One night before a concert we were having devotions and Rev. Wayne Francis told us about the heroic service of an American serviceman during the Vietnam war. His name is Jeremiah A. Denton, Jr. We heard how he was shot down behind enemy lines and was held captive for seven and a half years. He was tortured and was kept in solitary confinement for years. At the end of the war he was finally released and put on a plane bound for freedom. The plane full of POW's landed at Clark Field in the Philippines and as he stepped from the plane he uttered these words. "We are honored to have had the opportunity to serve our country under difficult circumstances. We are profoundly grateful to our commander-in-chief and to our nation for this day, God bless America." Admiral Denton's devotion to service was a tremendous inspiration that night and it was also the inspiration for this song.

He was just a young man
 When he first heard the call
 Come and join in the battle
 Come and give us your all
 And he rose up to follow
 Leaving all else behind
 And he joined in this song
 When he reached the front lines.

Chorus

It's an honor to serve
 To join in the fight
 To lift up my voice
 And to lay down my life
 Giving glory to God
 Seeking none in return
 It's an honor an honor to serve.

Now the day he was captured
 They locked him in chains
 And though weeks turned to years
 Still his faith stayed the same
 As his body was broken
 His dark hair turned gray
 But each night in his cell
 He would stand up and say.

Chorus

Now one day the war finally came to an end
 And he spoke with his heart as he stood with his men:
 “We are honored to have had the *opportunity to serve our country*
 under difficult circumstances. We are profoundly grateful to our
 commander-in-chief and to our nation for this day . . . God Bless
 America.”

As they lifted the flag at the front of the crowd
 I watched him stand up and bring his hand to his brow
 Oh Lord help me remember what true honor means
 And no matter the cost to stand up and sing.

Chorus #2 (repeat 2 times)

It’s an honor to serve
 To join in the fight
 I will lift up my voice
 I will lay down my life
 Giving glory to God
 Seeking none in return
 It’s an honor an honor to serve.

It’s an honor an honor to serve.

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(The Darkness and the Dawn: Empowered by the Tragedy and Triumph of the Cross by Charles Swindoll) Nashville, TN: Word. Copyright – Charles R. Swindoll, Inc., 2001.

“Why Have You Forsaken Me?”

It was alone the Savior prayed
 In dark Gethsemane;
 Alone He drained the bitter cup
 And suffered there for me.
 It was alone the Savior stood
 In Pilate’s judgment hall;
 Alone the crown of thorns He wore,
 Forsaken thus by all.
 Alone, alone, alone, upon the cross He hung
 Forsaken thus by all.
 Alone upon the cross He hung
 That others He might save;
 Forsaken then by God and man,
 Alone, His life He gave.
 Alone, alone He bore it all alone;
 He gave Himself to save His own,
 He suffered, bled and died, alone, alone.¹

—LATIN, 13TH CENTURY

1. Ben H. Price, *Alone* (circa 1900); 1st, 2nd, 3rd stanzas, and refrain.
 p. 163

v. 12 But Tychicus I sent to Ephesus.

Ephesians 6:21

But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you.

Colossians 4:7

As to all my affairs, Tychicus, our beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow bond-servant in the Lord, will bring you information.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Tychicus, another of Paul's faithful traveling companions . . . and messengers . . . had been **sent . . . to Ephesus**. The reference is cryptic and evidently self-explanatory to Timothy. Perhaps Tychicus delivered the letter; perhaps he was even, by prior arrangement, to relieve Timothy temporarily . . . In any case Tychicus was another of Paul's absent companions.
p. 759

Barker says:

Christopher Morley has a little poem about discovering a powerhouse in the middle of the city while on a walk one night. Morley had walked in the area many times but had never noticed it before. The poet then gives a line or two about how this powerhouse had been quietly present all the time, humming with power without which his city could not operate. The poem then concludes simply, "Some people are like that."

One of those like that is Tychicus. He is one of those people who are there all the time, humming with power, but whom you do not notice. He is one of those upon whom the world depends so much, yet he did nothing to call attention to himself. He was no thundering orator. He was no inspired organizer. He plugged away day by day in a quiet but effective way.
p. 61

Griffiths says:

Notice that even though he is in prison, Paul is still ‘running the mission’, arranging his colleagues’ movements.
p. 216

Hawthorne & Martin say:

As his mission expanded, Paul depended on co-workers not only to further his evangelistic and teaching ministries but also to assist in his writing.
p. 188

Wiersbe says:

Tychicus (2 Tim. 4:12) was a believer from the province of Asia . . . who willingly accompanied Paul and probably ministered as a personal servant to the apostle. He was with Paul during his first imprisonment . . . Paul sent Tychicus to Crete to relieve Titus . . . Now he was sending him to Ephesus to relieve Timothy. What a blessing it is to have people who can replace others! A relief pitcher may not get all the glory, but he may help win the game!
p. 163

Stott says of Tychicus, he is:

Twice described as ‘a beloved brother and faithful minister . . . in the Lord’, he has been sent on several responsible missions before, apparently carrying Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, to the Colossians and to Titus . . . It looks as if he is now being entrusted with the last of all Paul’s letters, this one to Timothy. It may be that Paul also intends him to replace Timothy in Ephesus while the latter is absent visiting Paul in Rome.
p. 119

Larson says:

Paul continued to review his close associates. **Tychicus** he sent to **Ephesus**, to work in the church there. In Colossians 4:7, Paul described him as a “dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant.” Tychicus had previously delivered the Colossian and Ephesian letters.
p. 324

(The Christian in Complete Armour by William Gurnall) Chicago, IL: Moody Press. Copyright - James S. Bell, Jr., 1994. 365 days.

The peace which the Gospel brings to the heart makes a saint ready to wade through any trouble that might meet him in his Christian course. And the man who lives in this peace is the only one who stands shod, prepared for every trial. Only Christ can make a shoe fit the Christian’s foot so he can easily walk a hard path, because He lines it with the peace of the Gospel. Then even when the way is covered with sharp stones, this shoe goes between the boulders and the foot—and obstacles are never much felt.
(September 25)

Barker says:

Tychicus acted as a combination letter-carrier and trouble-shooter. The letters each carry a few words about Tychicus at the close. Paul knew these Christians in Asia Minor would want to have the latest reports on how he was and how the Church was doing elsewhere. Tychicus was to fill them in on all the news.
p. 62

He says finally:

Tychicus’ name has an unusual meaning in Greek. It means “fortunate.” For us, it suggests also that anyone bearing God’s good news and anyone bearing comfort will find himself *fortunate*. Anyone being a comfort finds that God’s presence and power becomes so real that he knows he *is* fortunate! Perhaps more important, how *fortunate* for others when you are a Tychicus, a bearer of good news and a bringer of comfort.
pp. 68-69

v. 13 When you are coming, be bringing the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, also the books, especially the parchments.

Here we come to the **THIRD COMMAND** in this section. We have:

1. He is to **make haste** to come,
2. He is to **“pick up Mark,”** and
3. **“WHEN YOU ARE COMING, BE BRINGING THE CLOAK . . . THE BOOKS . . . [and] THE PARCHMENTS.”**

With winter coming on, the prison was damp and cold. Paul, being old, needed much the warmth from the “CLOAK” which was his.

It is also very instructive to see that he also longs to have his **“BOOKS”** and **“PARCHMENTS”** so that he might study further in the glories of his Savior.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Again little is known of **Carpus** or **the cloak . . . scrolls, or parchments** mentioned here. Such glimpses into the daily life of the apostle are intriguing, but any attempts to suggest what the documents might have contained, for example, are purely speculative. Paul may have needed the cloak because winter was coming on and his prison was cold, but even this is uncertain.

p. 759

Larson says:

The scrolls and parchments were probably the Scriptures. Paul still wanted to study, to learn. Filling his mind with the Word of God was important to him, even at the end of his life. The parchments were apparently of special value, written on vellum rather than the common papyrus.

Paul desires were simple at the close of life. He wanted to be in the presence of friends, to stay warm, and to refresh himself by the Scriptures.
p. 324

Stott says:

Apart from this solitary exception of Luke, however, for various reasons good and bad Paul is alone in prison. He feels it keenly. He longs and asks for three things: first, for people to keep him company; secondly, for a cloak to keep him warm; thirdly, for books and parchments to keep him occupied.
p. 119

He says further:

He did not despise the use of means. Nor should we. When our spirit is lonely, we need friends. When our body is cold, we need clothing. When our mind is bored, we need books. To admit this is not unspiritual; it is human.
p. 121

Griffiths says:

Paul needs human company, bodily warmth and things to read, study and write. It is possible that Luke, having collected material for his gospel and Acts, became also the first compiler of Paul's letters.
p. 216

Milne says:

About Carpus we know nothing beyond this single reference. The leaving of these items at Troas may have been due to Paul's arrest there, and the speed with which he was escorted away.

pp. 184-5

Lea & Griffin say:

Most commentators regard the "scrolls" as papyrus rolls and the "parchments" as an expensive, durable writing material made of animal skin. It is impossible to know the contents of the parchments, but suggested contents include personal documents of Paul, the Old Testament Scriptures, or blank sheets of writing paper. Sentiment often favors viewing them as Old Testament Scriptures.

p. 254

Wilson says:

Paul's request may be aptly compared with that made by William Tyndale from his damp cell to the governor of Vilvorde Castle. He begged for a warmer cap and cloak, a woolen shirt, but 'most of all my Hebrew Bible, Grammar and Vocabulary, that I may spend my time in that pursuit'.

p. 166

Joseph Parker says:

And bring the old skin with thee, the cloke; it gets cold about the time of the year when I expect thee: I like the old skin, it is an old friend of mine; it has stood me in good stead; I do not know that I should care for a new coat: bring the cloke. And the few books: a man like me cannot do without something to read; bring the parchments, the notebooks, the student's memoranda.

p. 156

READ THE BOOK IN 1988

One day I called on a 91-year-old man who lived in a retirement home. I found him dressed in his best suit, resting on his bed, and reading the Bible. When I entered, he continued as though no one else was there. After a few seconds, I said, "That's a good book you're reading." "The best," he replied. Then, recognizing my voice, he lowered his Bible and said, "Brother Paul, I'm reading it through for the fourteenth time, and it's better than ever!"

Martin Luther said, "For several years I have read the Bible through twice in 12 months. It is a great and powerful tree, each word of which is a mighty branch. Each of these branches have I well shaken, so desirous was I to know what each one bore and what it would give me. And the shaking of them has never disappointed me."

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

He who doesn't read good books has no advantage over the person who cannot read them.

—Unknown

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

HE DOES THE REMEMBERING!

**The cloak . . . bring with thee, and the books,
but especially the parchments. 2 Timothy 4:1**

Confined to prison, abandoned by friends, and nearing life's end, the apostle Paul made an unusual threefold request. He asked Timothy to visit him, to retrieve the cloak he had left at Troas, and to bring some books and parchments. It's the latter that strikes me as significant. While Bible students differ as to what was written on these papyrus rolls and skins, the natural explanation is that they were portions of Scripture. No doubt Paul had read them often, but now he wanted again to be reassured by them.

Recently we received a note from Mrs. Lillian Helm, a 91-year-old woman from Citrus Heights, California. I asked her for permission to quote part of her letter. She wrote, "I spend about one hour each day with my Lord, reading my Bible and Christian literature pertaining to the Bible. When people ask me what good all my reading does if I can't remember what I've read, my answer is always the same. I'm in pretty good health, have a roof over my head, and have plenty of food to eat. . . . I also have two sons and one grandson who love me dearly. My cup runneth over. So you see, I am not concerned about my memory. I just do my reading and God does the remembering."

Maybe you find it difficult to retain what you read. Don't let that discourage you from filling your mind with the truth God has revealed in His Word. With each passing year the Holy Spirit will use them to sustain you and shape your thinking. So keep reading God's Word, and you'll discover that He does the remembering. —D.J.D.

*When quiet in my room I sit,
Thy Book be my Companion still;
My joy Thy sayings to repeat,
Muse o'er the records of Thy will. —Wesley*

**A well-read Bible is the sign
of a well-fed soul.**

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Sunday, February 19, year unknown)

BOOK OF FRIENDS

The apostle Paul sat alone in a Roman prison facing his final weeks on earth. The wet cold of the dungeon must have pierced his bones as he penned a letter to his young friend Timothy, urging him to come before winter (4:21). He asked Timothy to bring a cloak with him, which would shield him from the gnawing chill, and to bring the scrolls, and especially the parchments.

The parchments, made of animal skins, may have been copies of parts of the Old Testament. The “books,” made of papyrus, were probably scrolls. Clearly, Paul did not plan to write another weighty theological letter like the book of Romans. Nor was he about to prepare more sermons. He needed those books to warm his heart and to keep his mind alert.

A famous French author has written, “The wise men who have written before our time are travelers who have preceded us in the paths of misfortune, and who reach out to us their hands to invite us to join their society when all others have abandoned us. A good book is a good friend.”

We need to cultivate good reading habits. The Bible, of course, is number one. But God also uses good book friends to encourage our heart and stimulate our mind. —HWR

*Immortal words of truth we've read,
So powerfully penned, so filled with grace,
Will follow us through all our days
And spur us on to win life's race.—DJD*

**A GOOD BOOK—LIKE A GOOD FRIEND—
IS ALWAYS THERE IN YOUR TIME OF NEED.**

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Tuesday, March 29, year unknown)

ALL THINGS NEW**Reading the Bible**

Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare . . .
—ISAIAH 42:9

No matter how early I was up, I would find her in her reading chair, her big Dutch Bible open on her knees. I was staying with Corrie ten Boom in Holland, researching the story of her heroic rescue of Jews under the Nazis. Whatever else was on the schedule, she began each day “seeing what the Bible says.”

Eager to start work, I would grow impatient. “Corrie,” I blurted one morning as thirty minutes, forty-five minutes, an hour went by, “you must *know* what the Bible says!” Hadn’t she told me how all through her childhood her father had read a chapter of Scripture to the family each day? How since then she had read the Bible through again and again? Studied it, marked it, memorized long passages?

“Yes,” she agreed, “I know what the words say for always. But I don’t know what they say *today*.” The Scriptures’ message is new each day, she said, because each day is new. For her, reading the Bible was like opening the morning newspaper. “I wonder sometimes how the ink can be dry on the page.”

Since that time thirty years ago I, too, have read the Bible each morning. And I have found what every Bible reader know: The more often you turn to it, the more immediately it speaks. The lectionary reading yesterday, as I waited for the results of a cardiac stress test, spoke to lingering anxiety about my heart history. *I will praise thee*, I read in Psalm 138: *with my whole heart*. How, I wondered, could the ink be dry?

Father, what will the Bible say today?

(source unknown)

—Elizabeth Sherrill

READING AND REMEMBERING

My elderly aunt was having difficulty with her memory. She tried to recall Scripture verses she had learned earlier in life, but they weren't coming to mind. This bothered her. I told her that God understands our weaknesses. He remembers His promises even when we can't. It's more important that we rest in His faithfulness.

Author Lillian Helm learned that lesson too. At 91 she spent an hour each day reading her Bible and Christian literature. Her friends asked, "What good does all that reading do if you can't remember much of it?" She replied by recounting her blessings and saying, "My cup runneth over. I'm not concerned about my memory. I just do my reading and God does the remembering."

Paul was in prison awaiting execution when he wrote to Timothy, "Bring . . . the books, especially the parchments," (2 Tim. 4:13). He knew the importance of keeping his mind filled with God's truth. All of us need to do that every day of our lives.

But Paul's confidence wasn't in his books. It was in God, who would lovingly care for him and preserve him for His heavenly kingdom (v. 18). That's true for all of us, even if we can no longer read or remember. —DJD

*I'll trust in God's unchanging Word
Till soul and body sever;
For though all things shall pass away,
His Word shall stand forever. —Anon.*

**MEMORY MAY FAIL,
BUT NEVER GOD'S PROMISES.**

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Wednesday, January 3, 1996)

THE START TO A NEW DAY

Psalm 119:101

“Every day in which I do not penetrate more deeply into the knowledge of God’s word in holy scripture is a lost day for me. I can only move forward with certainty upon the firm ground of the word of God.”

—MEDITATING ON THE WORD

The Christian longs to hear God’s Word. For that Word embodies the mind and concerns of a God whom we cannot see, but whom we have encountered by faith. That Word is not only a textbook for Christian living, but reveals the nature and character of the God of grace. Like a letter which is a glimpse into the heart of an absent friend, so the Bible reveals a God who has loved us at the cost of the death of His Son. The disclosure of such a love calls us to a persistent intimacy with this Lover.

Thought

One can get to know the absent other through his or her words.

(August 3)

(Source unknown)

v. 14 Alexander, the coppersmith, did me a great deal of harm; the Lord will pay him back according to his deeds.

Back in verse 10 we read:

“For Demas deserted me.”

Now, down here in verse 14, we read:

“ALEXANDER, THE COPPERSMITH, DID ME A GREAT DEAL OF HARM.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Alexander the metalworker may be the same man named in Acts 19:33-34, or more likely, the person in 1 Timothy 1:20. But since the name Alexander was common, one cannot be certain.

p. 759

1 Timothy 1:20

Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered over to Satan, so that they may be taught not to blaspheme.

Milne says:

Since Paul goes on to speak about his trial appearances in Rome, it may be that this Alexander had something to do with Paul’s arrest or the prosecution against him. Whatever the explanation, we learn from this how severely the Lord allowed his servant Paul to be tested and accused at the hands of evil opponents, even to the very end of his life.

p. 185

Stott says:

Nor do we know what the ‘great harm’ was which he had done to the apostle. A. T. Hanson points out that, literally translated, Alexander ‘informed many evil things against me’ and that ‘the regular word for an informer is connected with this verb’. So some commentators suggest that Alexander was the informer responsible for Paul’s second arrest. If this happened at Troas, it might explain why Timothy, who will pass through Troas on his journey to Rome (13), is warned: ‘beware of him yourself’. But Alexander did more than inform: ‘he strongly opposed our message’. We may be quite sure that it was Paul’s concern for the truth of the message, and not personal pique or vindictiveness, which led him to express his belief (it is a statement according to the best [manuscripts] MSS, not a wish or a prayer): ‘the Lord will requite him for his deeds.’
p. 122

Larson says:

Evidently this man had created difficulty for Paul and was an outright opponent of the gospel. Though we cannot be certain, it is possible that this Alexander is the same person whom Paul “handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme” (1 Tim. 1:20). We can conjecture that he rose to leadership, then wandered from the true faith to become a leader among the false teachers who plagued the Ephesian church.

Paul’s choice of words suggests that this Alexander may have played a leading role in having him arrested. Whatever the specifics of the situation. Alexander caused **great . . . harm**.
pp. 324-5

Barclay says something similar:

We do not know what Alexander had done; but perhaps we can deduce what harm he did. The word that Paul uses for *did* much evil is the Greek verb *endeiknumi*. That verb literally means *to display*; and it was in fact often used for *the laying of information* against a man. Informers were one of the great curses of Rome at this time. They sought to curry favour for themselves and to receive rewards by laying information. And it may well be that Alexander was a renegade Christian, who went to the magistrates with false and slanderous information against Paul. It may be that Alexander turned against Paul and sought to ruin him in the most dishonourable way.
p. 252

Fee says:

These two verses have long been puzzling—as to what they are doing here. But given that one can make good *contextual* sense of almost everything in these letters, and that the concern here is with verse 15 and Timothy himself being **on his guard against him**, the best contextual guess is that the **great deal of harm** done by **Alexander the metalworker** against Paul was to have him arrested. This is further supported by the fact that the verb *endeiknymi* (lit., “show,” “point out,” weakly translated **did**) was often used with the legal sense of “inform against,” and by the note in verse 15 that **he strongly opposed** (same verb as in 3:8) **our message**.
pp. 295-6

Hawthorne & Martin say:

(The AV and NKJV render [these words here] . . . as a prayer for divine retribution, “May the Lord repay him according to his [evil] works.” But the best Greek texts have the verb in the future active indicative, indicating the apostle’s confidence in God’s justice, “the Lord will requite him for his deeds,” rather than a prayer-wish for revenge.)
p. 728

There is:

NO BITTERNESS,

NO SPENT EMOTIONAL ENERGY, and

NO HATRED involved in this statement that Paul is making.

“THE LORD WILL PAY HIM BACK ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS.”

Paul doesn’t need to **PLOT REVENGE**. The Lord will take care of things.

Isaiah 54:17

no weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and this is their vindication from me,” declares the Lord.

Romans 12:17, 19-21

Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. . . . Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. “But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Quinn & Wacker say:

Thus when the apostle thinks of Timothy’s journey, of Troas and Carpus’s home, he thinks of the man who at that point charged him (note the aorist) with many evils . . .

p. 812

Psalm 62:1, 2

My soul finds rest in God alone;
 my salvation comes from him.
 He alone is my rock and my salvation;
 he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.

(Fresh Power: Experiencing the Vast Resources of the Spirit of God by Jim Cymbala with Dean Merrill) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright — Jim Cymbala, 2001.

Opportunity and opposition: The two words start with the same set of letters, and they often travel together. We need never be discouraged when God opens a door to do something for him and we meet opposition almost immediately. This kind of thing happens all the time; it goes with the territory. What did we think Satan would do, anyway—cheer us on?
p. 147

(Grace for the Moment: Inspirational Thoughts for Each Day of the Year by Max Lucado) Nashville, TN: J. Countryman / Thomas Nelson. Copyright – Max Lucado, 2000.

The High Cost of Getting Even

*Do not try to punish others
when they wrong you, but wait for God
to punish them with his anger.*

ROMANS 12:19

Have you ever noticed in the western movies how the bounty hunter travels alone? It's not hard to see why. Who wants to hang out with a guy who settles scores for a living? Who wants to risk getting on his bad side? More than once I've heard a person spew his anger. He thought I was listening, when really I was thinking, *I hope I never get on his list.* Cantankerous sorts, these bounty hunters. Best leave them alone. Hang out with the angry and you might catch a stray bullet. Debt-settling is a lonely occupation. It's also an unhealthy occupation. . . .

If you're out to settle the score, you'll never rest. How can you? For one thing, your enemy may never pay up. As much as you think you deserve an apology, your debtor may not agree. The racist may never repent. The chauvinist may never change. As justified as you are in your question for vengeance, you may never get a penny's worth of justice. And if you do, will it be enough?

The Great House of God

p. 339

Genesis 50:20

You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.

v. 15 And you also be guarding yourself against him for he vigorously opposed our words.

In this final verse we see the Apostle warning Timothy:

“AND YOU [Timothy] ALSO BE GUARDING YOURSELF AGAINST HIM.”

The **REASON** this admonishment is given is found in the last phrase:

“FOR HE VIGOROUSLY OPPOSED OUR WORDS.”

Quinn & Wacker say:

If this is the sense here in Second Timothy, the apostle is indicating that Alexander’s denunciation and preferring charges arose out of a highly charged public confrontation between the apostle, his co-workers, and the Christians of Troas with this coppersmith. Spicq would understand this of the actual legal deposition against Paul. That does not settle the question of Alexander’s own religious persuasion. He could have denounced Paul as a pagan or even as a Jew. He could have been a convert from either paganism or Judaism who went sour and turned against his former confreres and mentors. In any case, he went for the top, rightly perceiving that Paul was the visible leader galvanizing this whole movement into life.
p. 814

Milne says:

Alexander was no ordinary unbeliever, but an outspoken and determined antagonist. Particularly in situations of outright opposition and danger, the servant of Christ must clothe himself with God’s spiritual armour (Eph. 6:10-18), and not be naive, but be constantly on the alert through prayerful dependence on God (Matt. 10:16).
p. 186

Towner says:

Whatever God's opponents might do to impede the gospel or harm us, God has the final say. Fear need not immobilize us.
p. 211

Lenski observes:

When and where was this damage done? Unless it was done right here in Rome a day or two ago, at the time of Paul's first hearing before the imperial court, this matter regarding Alexander would be out of place at this point in Paul's letter. Thus Paul adds the statement that Timothy is to watch out and to guard himself against the man, which means when he and Mark arrive in Rome. Paul adds a little more to cast light on the way in which Alexander damaged him: "for greatly he withstood our own statements." These are the *logoi* or statements made a day or two ago before the court at the time of the hearing.
p. 873

He then says:

. . . this Alexander, who was either the chief and most violent witness, for the prosecution or the complainant and accuser, brought the strongest contradictions, severely and meanly damaging Paul's case in the eyes of the court.
p. 874

Kelly says:

Paul's use of the aorist suggests that he has a specific occasion in mind, and many have inferred from the context that it was at Rome, during his imprisonment, that Alexander displayed his ill-will. Some have suspected that he may even have appeared as a witness for the prosecution.
p. 217

Hendriksen says much the same thing:

No doubt he had helped to bring about an adverse court-decision with respect to the apostle, though we do not know whether the sentence, “Condemned to death” had already been announced or conveyed to the apostle. We *do* know, however, that this sentence was now *certain*, and that Paul knew this. He knew that he was about to die . . . But instead of avenging himself upon Alexander, he leaves the matter of retribution entirely to the Lord . . .

p. 325

He then says finally:

“Forewarned is forearmed.” Let Timothy, in coming to Rome, be constantly on his guard against this wicked Alexander, who will try his utmost to harm the disciple even before the latter has reached his Master. Let him take the necessary precautions so that he will know what to say and what to do if and when he should be confronted with Alexander.

p. 325

Matthew Henry says:

Some who were once Paul’s hearers and admirers did not give him reason to remember them with much pleasure; for one forsook him, and another did him much evil. At the same time he mentions some with pleasure; the badness of some did not make him forget the goodness of others.

p. 1898

Barker has this to say about Timothy:

Throughout these letters Paul keeps encouraging “son” Timothy to “Hold fast,” “Be strong,” “Be not ashamed,” “Be instant in season and out of season.”

The next time you are tempted to go A.W.O.L. from a God-given assignment, read these letters. Like the roll of drums and shriek of bagpipes puts new heart into a Highland regiment, so these messages put new heart into a flagging Christian. These letters are Gods’ orders to would-be spiritual deserters.

pp. 96-97

Barker says finally:

The story has leaked out of East Germany of how a small group of Christians had gathered regularly for prayer. Apparently they were observed and regarded as suspicious for one evening there was a knock at the door. Breathlessly, the group waited. The door crashed open, and two members of the Secret Police strode in. They went around the room taking the names of all present. Then the group was warned not to assemble in the future.

One of the group asked the inspector how many names were on the list. The inspector counted them and snapped, "Nineteen."

"Then you have missed one. There are twenty here."

Hurriedly the inspector went around the room again—one, two, three, and so on. Nineteen names. "All right, who is the twentieth?" he snarled.

"Jesus Christ."

"Aw, He doesn't matter."

He does matter: He matters so much that small groups behind the iron curtain can face failure, discouragement, loneliness—even death. He matters so much that Timothy could face anything.

How much does He matter to you?

pp. 100-101

CONCLUSION:

What lessons did you learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Do you have a reputation of being a person who is available at a time of emergency?

LESSON #2: Is the Lord and what He wants the most important thing in your life?

LESSON #3: Isn't it a comfort that the Lord will never leave us nor forsake us?

LESSON #4: Mark teaches us that having made a mistake does not mean that we cannot finish strong in the accomplishment of the Lord's mission for our lives.

LESSON #5: Are you known as a person who is "useful" in the Lord's service? (verse 11).

LESSON #6: Do you often drop everything and answer urgent requests?

LESSON #7: The choice is dedicate or desert.

LESSON #8: What are the things you would ask for if you knew you did not have long to live?

LESSON #9: Are you careful and concerned about your relationships with others?

LESSON #10: One of the greatest things you can do to help you with the problem of loneliness is to make lots of good friends.

LESSON #11: Are there some people who have done you a “great deal of harm” and you need to let go and let the Lord take care of that situation? (verse 14).

LESSON #12: There will never come a time in your life when you are allowed to cease to serve.

We have been considering together in this passage of Scripture:

Step #11—SERVANTHOOD: May I Hear Well-Done

To those who are going to hear “Well-Done” you are going to find that they are faithful servants to their:

1. **MASTER,**
2. **MATE,** and
3. **MINISTRY.**

Faithful servants to their:

1. **MASTER**

1 Corinthians 4:1

Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

Those who take Step #11 of Servanthood and who will hear “Well-Done” will be faithful servants to their:

2. **MATE**

Ephesians 5:25

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her;

I am reminded of Willie Nelson's song "Little Things Mean a Lot." It would have been real good if he would have followed his own advice in this song that he sings:

Little Things Mean A Lot

Blow her a kiss from across the room.
Say she looks nice when she's not.
Touch her hair as you pass her chair.
Little things mean a lot.

Give her your arm as you cross the street.
Call her at six on the dot.
A line a day when you're far away.
Little things mean a lot.

You don't have to buy her diamonds and pearls,
Champagne, sables, and such.
She doesn't care much for diamonds and pearls,
She'll laugh and say, "Honey, they just cost money."

So give her your hand when she's lost her way.
And give her your shoulder to cry on.
Whether the day is sunny or gray,
Give her your heart to rely on.

Send her the warmth of a secret smile.
To show her you haven't forgot,
That always and ever, for now and forever,
Little things mean a lot.

So give her your hand when she's lost her way.
And give her your shoulder to cry on.
Whether the day is sunny or gray,
Give her your heart to rely on.

Send her the warmth of a secret smile.
To show her you haven't forgot,
That always and ever, for now and forever,
Little things mean a lot.

(From "Born for Trouble" by Willie Nelson. Columbia Records; NY, NY. Copyright - CBS Records Inc., 1990)

Not only being a servant to your Master and to your Mate, but also a servant to others in your:

3. **MINISTRY**

2 Corinthians 4:5

For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake.

I greet the words of George Bernard Shaw when I enter our bathroom at home. They hangs over the towel rack:

This is the true joy in life . . . being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one . . . being a force of Nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy. . . . I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community and as long as I live it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die. For the harder I work the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no brief candle to me. It's a sort of splendid torch which I've got to hold up for the moment and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.

George Bernard Shaw

WHO PACKED YOUR PARACHUTE?

Sometimes in the daily challenges that life gives us, we miss what is really important. We may fail to say hello, please, or thank you, congratulate someone on something wonderful that has happened to them, give a compliment, or just do something nice for no reason.

Charles Plumb, a US Naval Academy graduate, was a jet pilot in Vietnam. After 75 combat missions, his plane was destroyed by a surface-to-air missile. Plumb ejected and parachuted into enemy lands. He was captured and spent 6 years in a communist Vietnamese prison. He survived the ordeal and now lectures on lessons learned from that experience.

One day, when Plumb and his wife were sitting in a restaurant, a man at another table came up and said, “You’re Plumb! You flew jet fighters in Vietnam from the aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk. You were shot down!”

“How in the world did you know that?” asked Plumb.

“I packed your parachute,” the man replied.

Plumb gasped in surprise and gratitude.

“The man pumped his hand and said, “I guess it worked!”

Plumb assured him, “It sure did. If your chute hadn’t worked, I wouldn’t be here today.”

Plumb couldn’t sleep that night, thinking about that man. Plumb says, “I kept wondering what he might have looked like in a Navy uniform: A white hat, a bib in the back, and bell bottom trousers. I wonder how many times I might have seen him and not even said good morning, how are you or anything because, you see, I was a fighter pilot, and he was just a sailor.”

Plumb thought of the many hours the sailor had spent on a long wooden table in the bowels of the ship, carefully weaving the shrouds and folding the silks of each chute, holding in his hands each time the fate of someone he didn’t know. Now, Plumb asks his audience, “Who’s packing your parachute?”

Everyone has someone who provides what they need to make it through the day.

Plumb also points out that he needed many kinds of parachutes when his plane was shot down over enemy territory—he needed his physical parachute, his mental parachute, his emotional parachute, and his spiritual parachute. He called on all these supports before reaching safety. His experience reminds us all to prepare ourselves to weather whatever storms lie ahead. As you go through this week, this month, this year . . . recognize people who pack your parachute!

(Received via e-mail from Mark Skorheim, July 11, 2000)

(The Game and the Glory: An Autobiography by Michelle Akers with Gregg Lewis) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright – Michelle Akers, 2000.

“In the battle, in the game of soccer, there is a high cost for winning.” Akers said. “The feeling afterward—the performance of the team, and the unity and the excitement of a final that is approaching so rapidly—of course, I’m sitting back right now and thinking, ‘Yeah baby, every second, every drop of blood, every scrape, everything has been worth it.’”²

2. Copyright 1999 *Seattle Times* Company.
pp. 14-15

(Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World: The Extraordinary True Story of Shackleton and the Endurance by Jennifer Armstrong) New York, NY: Crown. Copyright – Jennifer M. Armstrong, 1998.

“It was like this,” Shackleton said much later. “The thought of those fellows on Elephant Island kept us going all the time. It might have been different if we’d had only ourselves to think about. You can get so tired in the snow, particularly if you’re hungry, that sleep seems just the best thing life has to give . . . But if you’re a leader, a fellow that other fellows look to, you’ve got to keep going. That was the thought which sailed us through the hurricane and tugged us up and down those mountains . . . and when we got to the whaling station, it was the thought of those comrades which made us so mad with joy that the reaction beats all effort to describe it. We didn’t so much feel that we were safe as that they were saved.”
p. 116

(Undaunted Courage by Stephen E. Ambrose) New York, NY: Simon & Schuster. Copyright - Ambrose-Tubbs, Inc., 1996.

Before closing, Lewis added a paragraph that began with a splendid tribute to his dearest friend and closest companion, followed by a typically generous gesture: “With respect to the exertions and services rendered by that esteemable man Cap. William Clark in the course of [our] late voyage I cannot say too much; if sir any credit be due for the success of the arduous enterprise in which we have been mutually engaged, he is equally with myself entitled to your consideration and that of our common country.”
p. 401

(Rainbows: The Book of Hope edited by George W. Humphreys) Allentown, PA: Coslett Publishing. Copyright - A. C. and D. G. Remley, 1946.

Wreckers

I watched them tearing a building down,
 A gang of men in a busy town,
 With a ho-heave-ho and a lusty yell,
 They swung a beam and the side wall fell.
 I asked the foreman, "Are these men skilled,
 And the men you'd hire if you had to build?"
 He gave a laugh and said, "No, indeed!
 Just common labor is all I need.
 I can easily wreck in a day or two
 What builders have taken a year to do."
 I thought to myself as I went my way,
 Which of these roles have I tried to play?
 Am I a builder who works with care,
 Measure life by the rule and square?
 Am I shaping my deeds to a well-made plan,
 Patiently doing the best I can?
 Or am I a wrecker, who walks the town,
 Content with the labor of tearing down?

G. S. Harp.

p. 162

(God's Most Precious Jewels are Crystallized Tears: True Stories of Women Who Turned Their Misery Into Ministry by Barbara Johnson) Nashville, TN: Word. Copyright – Barbara Johnson, 2001.

Finally, Sheila's hospitalization neared an end. She was ready to leave the healing place, but she did not know where to go in her recovery. "That evening, with tears running down my cheeks, I prayed a very simple but life-changing prayer: 'Father, I stand before You now with empty hands. Whatever You put in my hands, I will welcome, and whatever You take away, I will gladly let it go.'"

p. 164

(Fresh Power: Experiencing the Vast Resources of the Spirit of God by Jim Cymbala with Dean Merrill) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright — Jim Cymbala, 2001.

What he does call for is for us to do *his* work in *his* way by preaching *his* Word under *his* power for *his* glory. I believe that if by his grace we do that, “numbers” will come—not as a goal but as a by-product of God’s blessing.
p. 81

(The Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers and Devotions edited by Arthur Bennett) Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust. Copyright – Banner of Truth Trust, 1975.

May my desires be enlarged and my hopes emboldened,
that I may honour thee by my entire dependency
and the greatness of my expectation.
Do thou be with me, and prepare me for all
the smiles of prosperity, the frowns of adversity,
the losses of substance, the death of friends,
the days of darkness, the changes of life,
and the last great change of all.
May I find thy grace sufficient for all my needs.
p. 116