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THE ONE YEAR® DEVOTIONS FOR
BOYS

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The One Year Devotions for Boys 2

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Table of Contents

JANUARY

1. Heaven
2. Open Wide
3. The Best Answer
4. Practice Makes Perfect
5. The Best Computer
6. Where's God?
7. Your Achilles' Heel
8. One at a Time
9. Sniff
10. The Telltale Prints
11. Going with the Flow
12. The Default Setting
13. X-ray Machine
14. Justin's Family
15. Clocks and People
16. A Home for Doug
17. A True Hero
18. Ears and Actions
19. The Best Judge
20. Just Once Won't Hurt
21. Is It True?
22. Words
23. Eyes of Love
24. Gone from Memory
25. A True Investment
26. Show It
27. For Your Protection
28. Guardrails
29. Lost Notebook
30. The Right Size (Part 1)
31. The Right Size (Part 2)

FEBRUARY

1. The Growth Process
2. A Walrus Family (Part 1)
3. A Walrus Family (Part 2)
4. What's Missing?
5. Reaching the Goal
6. Life-Giving Flood
7. The Picture Puzzle

8. Escape from Death
9. The Winning Losers
10. Ashley and Oliver
11. Aunt Lillian
12. Fish Out of Water
13. Why Wait So Long?
14. Do I Have to Smile?
15. What Shall I Be?
16. Neal's Bargain
17. Rules, Rules, Rules
18. Wong's History
19. Fruit Out of Season
20. Bashful Ben
21. Life's Puzzle
22. The Star
23. Every Step Counts
24. The Things I Remember
25. The Benchwarmer
26. The Whining Sister
27. Walking Home
28. Why Am I Guilty?

MARCH

1. Who Cares?
2. Raised Eyebrows
3. A Long Time
4. It's Greek to Me
5. Matthew's Problem
6. Why?
7. To Sin or Not to Sin
8. Like Andrew and Peter
9. The Rope
10. Never Alone
11. Helping Dad
12. Second Chance
13. Tie a Yellow Ribbon
14. The Dropout
15. A Dirty Mouth
16. Old Enough
17. Worth It All
18. Hymn Meanings
19. What to Do

20. A Dirty House
21. Read It Again
22. Seed Sowing
23. Behind the Scenes
24. Dark Days
25. The Toaster and the Bible
26. Creation and the Truth
27. What Is God Like?
28. Like Desert Plants (Part 1)
29. Like Desert Plants (Part 2)
30. Change of Plans
31. To Save Her Young

APRIL

1. Somebody's Fool
2. One Day with Chirpie
3. The Wrong Side
4. The Sun and the Moon
5. Punishment or Celebration?
6. The Right Answer
7. Disappearing Peas
8. They're Human
9. Older Brother
10. Excuses, Excuses
11. Not a Cowboy
12. The Hopeless Case (Part 1)
13. The Hopeless Case (Part 2)
14. The Hopeless Case (Part 3)
15. Spilled Milk
16. Fence of Protection
17. He's Alive
18. Speak Up
19. The Fad Trap
20. The Easter Picture
21. What You Watch
22. Really Free
23. Captain Midnight
24. No Strings Attached
25. A New Name
26. The Experiment
27. Forgive Me My Sins
28. One of the Gang
29. I Hate Work (Part 1)
30. I Hate Work (Part 2)

MAY

1. Out!
2. Stiff Competition
3. The Mystery Seeds
4. Bird in a Cage
5. All Wet
6. The Good Hiding Place
7. Keep the Fire Burning
8. Quality Counts
9. Grass Huts and Baseball
10. Never Too Young
11. The Wallet
12. Snowcones and Eggs
13. The Dog and the Gate
14. The Procrastinator
15. Don't Forget
16. You Can't Do It
17. Pitching Straight
18. I Wish It Were Mine
19. Baseballs and Bushes
20. The Way You Live
21. The Cover-Up (Part 1)
22. The Cover-Up (Part 2)
23. The Prize
24. A Sneaky Trap
25. Brain Power
26. The Baseball Diamond
27. Hidden Weeds
28. Remember Me
29. All Dressed Up
30. Tidal Wave
31. Dead, but Alive

JUNE

1. Preparation Needed
2. Pay Attention!
3. Helpful Ants
4. Rain, Rain, Rain
5. No!
6. Where Is He? (Part 1)
7. Where Is He? (Part 2)
8. The Storm
9. Before the Sun Sets
10. The Missionary Project (Part 1)

11. The Missionary Project (Part 2)
12. A Lesson in a Cave
13. No Time to Wait (Part 1)
14. No Time to Wait (Part 2)
15. Look for the Opportunities
16. Nothing but the Truth
17. Big Enough
18. Go Ahead—Jump!
19. Rewards
20. Glad to Go to Church
21. Enough Ice Cream
22. Tommy and Old Asaph
23. A Place of Escape
24. Danger! Stay Away!
25. The Boss
26. Arrowheads and Promises
27. God's Light
28. Big Brother
29. Hooked
30. The Fireflies

JULY

1. A Surprising Return
2. Beginning to Fly
3. Brett's Plan
4. A Walk in the Woods
5. Lost in the Woods
6. A Measure of Faith
7. Raspberry Riot
8. High-Flying Sparks
9. Hide and Seek
10. All God's Creatures
11. Visit from a Cousin
12. David's Mean Mommy
13. Every Secret Thing
14. Walking the Plank
15. Welcome
16. Crooked Shingles
17. Salted Leeches
18. Fuel on the Fire
19. The Mime
20. Gazelles and Thoughts
21. Call Waiting
22. Puzzles and Lives
23. Point of View

24. Learning the Hard Way
25. Laddie's Enemy
26. Dangerous Thorns
27. Getting Clean
28. Family Day
29. Ocean of Love
30. Sink or Swim
31. The Way to Grow

AUGUST

1. Dirty Footprints
2. God's Protective Gear
3. The Broken Window
4. Door to Heaven
5. The Fishing Trip
6. More Food, Please!
7. Why Did It Happen?
8. Trapped (Part 1)
9. Trapped (Part 2)
10. The Buried Treasure
11. Dead Man's Reef
12. Jimmy's Gift
13. What to Do about Dad?
14. Good Impression
15. Easy—but Wrong
16. The Open Gate
17. Willing Servant
18. The Broken Train
19. Pass the Salt (Part 1)
20. Pass the Salt (Part 2)
21. The Quiet Times
22. Undeserved Reward
23. Here, There, and Everywhere
24. Cliff Dwellers
25. God at Work
26. A Mighty Weapon
27. Christian Construction
28. Wildfire
29. The Wise Squirrel
30. Troublesome Melon (Part 1)
31. Troublesome Melon (Part 2)

SEPTEMBER

1. Clothes Talk
2. Kick the Can'ts

3. Bearing Fruit
4. Leftovers
5. No Dad
6. Weekend Plans
7. Ready for the Future
8. The Demonstration
9. Making the Team
10. A Losing Game
11. Mine to Share
12. One Little Sacrifice
13. It's Just like Him
14. The Winner
15. The Choice
16. Keeping Healthy
17. On Guard
18. Bad Apples
19. Follow the Rules
20. Repotted to Grow
21. Stop Signs and Christians
22. The Problem Tongue
23. Locked Out
24. Born to Be Me
25. From Bad to Worse
26. The "Fix-It" Kid
27. WWJS
28. All but One
29. Blow It Away
30. Wrinkle Free

OCTOBER

1. Thorny Hedge (Part 1)
2. Thorny Hedge (Part 2)
3. The Lost Job
4. Flash Knows the Way
5. The Unlovable
6. Up, Up, and Away
7. Warning Signals
8. Liver of the Team
9. Story of a Pretzel
10. Right Side Up
11. Better than Chocolate Cake
12. Crab Fishing
13. It Pays to Advertise
14. The Gang (Part 1)
15. The Gang (Part 2)

16. Tree Problems
17. Out to Win
18. A Lesson from the Lawn
19. Warning! Window Here!
20. Out of Balance
21. On Becoming Fossils
22. A Good Rule
23. Change Needed
24. Lost Inheritance (Part 1)
25. Lost Inheritance (Part 2)
26. Like a Badger (Part 1)
27. Like a Badger (Part 2)
28. One of the Flock
29. Mysterious Noises
30. The Bat (Part 1)
31. The Bat (Part 2)

NOVEMBER

1. Saved from the Fire
2. Politics and Prayer
3. Brad Conquers Fear (Part 1)
4. Brad Conquers Fear (Part 2)
5. Remember Me
6. A Big Story
7. Joe and the Yo-Yo
8. Who Is Guilty?
9. Questions
10. The Turnabout (Part 1)
11. The Turnabout (Part 2)
12. Teacher Conference
13. A Bored Friend
14. Would You Steal?
15. A Forgiving Judge
16. Prayer in a Public Place
17. Ready on Time
18. God's Gang
19. Jesus, My Friend
20. Do unto Others
21. Someone to Trust
22. A Disaster Zone
23. Shoes and Salvation
24. Marvelous Marvin
25. A Bad Sickness
26. The Human Race
27. Silent Friend

28. Sorry—but, No
29. Memory Problems
30. The Very Best News

DECEMBER

1. Up the Down Escalator
2. The Inheritance
3. A Horrible Pit!
4. Jason's Treasure
5. Tried and True
6. The Yellow Balloon
7. The Right Clothes
8. Important Rules
9. The Birthday Presents
10. All from God
11. Rags to Riches
12. Anticipation
13. The Happy Home

14. The Strange Rescue
15. On Track
16. The Greatest Engineer
17. The Prayer Closet
18. The Real Jesus
19. If I'd Only Known
20. The Bar of Judgment
21. The Prescription
22. Who Said So?
23. Two Kinds of Treasure
24. A Shared Gift
25. Home at Last
26. Get Real!
27. Faithful in the Least
28. Focus Trouble
29. For Your Own Good (Part 1)
30. For Your Own Good (Part 2)
31. Follow the Shepherd

INDEX OF TOPICS

INDEX OF SCRIPTURE READINGS

INDEX OF MEMORY VERSES

HEAVEN

Read: 1 Corinthians 15:35-44

“Mom, I wish I could explain to little Lindsey about colors,” said Maxwell with a sigh. “This afternoon I mentioned that the sky was so blue, but she couldn’t understand what that meant.”

“I know. Lindsey doesn’t see color because she’s blind,” said Mom. “But her other senses seem to be more keen than ours. For one thing, she recognizes people by their footsteps or voice. We couldn’t do that with very many people!”

Just then Brian burst into the kitchen. “Can I have a cookie, please?” he begged, opening the cookie jar.

“Yes, but just one,” agreed Mom. “What did you learn at Bible club today, Brian?”

“About heaven,” replied Brian, after swallowing a mouthful of cookie. “But I don’t understand it very well.”

“I don’t understand it, either,” said Maxwell. “I can’t quite picture what we’ll be doing there all the time.”

Mom thought hard. “Maxwell,” she said slowly, “remember how difficult—even impossible—it is for Lindsey to understand what colors are? In the same way, it’s impossible for us to understand exactly what heaven is like. It’s a completely different world, and we can’t totally know what it will be like.”

“What if we don’t like it?” asked Brian, only half joking.

Mom smiled. “Do you think Lindsey would hesitate if she had the chance to see?”

“Of course not,” said Maxwell and Brian at the same time.

“But she doesn’t understand what it’s like to be able to see,” Mom told them.

“No, but she knows that sight is something wonderful,” said Maxwell, “even though she doesn’t quite understand it. She knows it’s great because of what we tell her about it.”

“And we know that heaven is going to be wonderful because of the things God tells us about it,” replied Mom. “All our comparisons and descriptions fall far short of the glorious reality of heaven.” *MTF*



HOW ABOUT YOU?

Do you ever wonder and question and argue—and even worry—about heaven and how life there will be different from your life here on earth? Although heaven will certainly be different, be assured that it will be wonderful and far better than life on earth.

MEMORIZE:

“Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.”

1 Corinthians 13:12, NIV

HEAVEN WILL BE
WONDERFUL

“Want me to feed Celina today?” Miguel asked his mother.

“Sure, thanks,” replied Mom, as she handed Miguel a baby spoon and jar of mashed peas.

“Open wide,” Miguel said, dipping the spoon into the baby food jar and putting a spoonful of the peas into Celina’s mouth. Celina spit the green peas back out. “Hey! You’re supposed to eat them!” scolded Miguel. He tried to put another spoonful of peas into her mouth, but she clamped her lips shut and turned her head away.

Mom chuckled. “You can keep offering them to her, but if she won’t accept them, I’m afraid you can’t make her eat them.” She took a jar from the cupboard and handed it to Miguel. “Here, try some carrots instead.”

Miguel held out some carrots to Celina. This time Celina opened her mouth and accepted a spoonful. After that she willingly took some more. “See. They’re good,” said Miguel. “And they’re good for you, too, aren’t they, Mom?”

“Yes, they are,” Mom agreed, “but babies don’t realize that we know what’s good for them, so they don’t always want to accept what we offer.”

Miguel turned to look at his mom. “Our youth pastor said we’re something like that,” Miguel told her. “He said God loves us and knows what’s best for us, and he wants us to believe in Jesus as Savior and to serve him. But God lets us choose whether or not we want to accept him and serve him.”

Mom nodded. “That’s right. Just like Celina decided whether or not to accept the food you offered her, we decide whether or not to accept Jesus and receive the salvation God offers us,” she said. “And after we do accept him, we have to decide whether to faithfully live for him and serve him.” *GJT*



HOW ABOUT YOU?

Have you accepted Jesus as your Savior? Have you decided to serve him all of your life? Or are you turning your head—and heart—away? God loves you and knows it’s best for you to not only have Jesus in your life, but also to spend your life serving him. Why not “open wide”? Decide today to receive him as Savior, and then give your life in service for him.

MEMORIZE:

“Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve.” Joshua 24:15, NIV

DECIDE TO LOVE
AND SERVE JESUS

THE BEST ANSWER

Read: Romans 8:26-28

It hadn't been a good day for Michael. Nothing seemed to be any fun since his best friend, Daniel, had moved away. "Please, dear God," prayed Michael that night, "let Daniel come back and live here again."

"I know you miss Daniel very much," commented Dad as he tucked Michael into bed, "but I don't think his family is going to move back here."

"Yes, they will," Michael said confidently. "I asked God to bring them back, and he'll answer my prayer, won't he?"

"Yes," agreed Dad. "God always answers prayer, but his answer isn't always what we want it to be." After a moment, he asked, "Do you remember the time your puppy ran out the front gate and almost got hit by a car? Why do you suppose he did that?"

"I remember," Michael said. "Kipper came out because he wanted to be where I was."

"If that was what he wanted, why didn't you let him stay outside the fence with you?" asked Dad.

"Because he wouldn't be safe there," Michael answered promptly. "Kipper doesn't know enough to stay on the sidewalk like I do."

Dad nodded. "So even though Kipper wanted to be outside the fence, you knew better," he said. "That's the way God is. His answer to our prayers sometimes has to be 'no' because he knows what's best for us."

"But why wouldn't God want Daniel to come back?" Michael asked. "That couldn't be bad for me."

"But it might not be best for Daniel's family. His father had been out of work until he found a good job in another state," replied Dad. "Instead of praying that Daniel will come back, perhaps you should be asking God to help him and his family adjust to their new home."

Slowly Michael nodded. "And I'll ask God to help me find a new best friend, too," he decided. *KRA*



HOW ABOUT YOU?

Do you think God should answer all your prayers exactly the way you want? If things don't go your way, do you think God doesn't care? That's not true. He does care, and he knows what is best for you. So even when God's answer to your prayer is "no," trust him and believe that his way is best.

MEMORIZE:

"And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them."

Romans 8:28

ACCEPT GOD'S
ANSWER

“Hey, pass the gravy.” Andrew interrupted the conversation at dinner.

Dad frowned. “Didn’t you notice that your mother and I were talking?” he asked. “You interrupted us.”

“Well, sor-ree,” said Andrew, stressing the second syllable of the word. “But pass the gravy. I need some more.”

Mom shook her head. “Whatever happened to saying ‘please?’”

“Okay,” replied Andrew. “*Please* may I have the gravy?” He rolled his eyes. “It’s not like we’re out in a restaurant or anything,” he complained.

“Would you use better manners in a restaurant?” asked Dad.

“Well, yeah,” answered Andrew, “or . . . like . . . if I was at somebody’s house for dinner. You don’t expect me to be all proper and everything around here at home, do you?”

“Actually,” answered Dad, “yes, I do. You seem to think you should respect only people outside your own family—that you need to use good manners only when you’re around other people. But the Bible says you are to honor your parents, and developing good manners is one way of showing honor and respect.”

Andrew stared at his dad. “But . . .”

“Home is also the perfect place for you to learn to do good and make right choices,” added Mom. “Home is where you should be practicing the right way to do things.”

“A football player practices to get in shape for the Super Bowl,” said Dad, “and a figure skater practices to get in shape for the Olympics. In the same way, here at home you should practice doing things right so that in school or in the neighborhood or wherever you are, you’ll be in shape to behave correctly.” He paused. “Do you understand what we’re saying? Do you have any questions?”

Andrew looked thoughtful. After a moment, he grinned. “Yes,” he said. “May I *please* have some more of that delicious gravy?” *BH*



HOW ABOUT YOU?

Does your behavior at home show that you honor your parents? You should be polite, thoughtful, and kind wherever you are, especially at home. That will please your parents, but best of all, it will please God. And it will prepare you to be polite wherever you are.

MEMORIZE:

“Children . . . should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family . . . for this is pleasing to God.” 1 Timothy 5:4, NIV

PRACTICE
GOOD MANNERS
AT HOME

THE BEST COMPUTER

Read: Job 38:4-7; 41:11

Tyler stared at his dad’s computer screen. “A boy in my class—Jared—says we’re smarter than God,” he said. “He says if we can invent computers, we can do anything. I told him we will always need God. Won’t we, Dad?”

“Yes, but I’m afraid lots of people think the way Jared does,” answered Dad. “Tyler, do you think this computer can give us the answer to the question you just asked?”

“Not unless somebody programmed it to answer that question,” Tyler replied. “And the answer would depend on *who* programmed it. The computer can’t think for itself.”

Dad rubbed his chin. “So the computer can’t be any smarter than the person who programs it?”

“Right,” agreed Tyler.

“Do you know when the first computer was built?” asked Dad. Tyler shook his head. “It happened thousands of years ago,” said Dad. “That first computer was built into Adam, and it was called a ‘brain.’ Who programmed it?”

“God did,” answered Tyler.

“Right,” said Dad. “Do you think the human brain could be smarter than the one who programmed it?”

“No,” Tyler said.

“Right again,” said Dad. “You know, Tyler, when the mechanical computer was first invented, people called it an electronic brain. They were copying God’s idea. But God made it better than humans ever will. In fact, the human brain is still much more powerful than any electronic computer.”

“Really?” asked Tyler. He sighed. “I can hardly remember my locker number, but this computer remembers everything.”

“That’s because we humans only use a very small percentage of our brain power,” Dad told him.

“Why is that?” asked Tyler.

Dad looked uncertain. “I don’t know. Maybe God decided we weren’t responsible enough to use it all,” he suggested.

Tyler grinned. “Yeah,” he said. “If we did, maybe more people would get the idea that they were smarter than him.” *HMT*



HOW ABOUT YOU?

Did you know that you own one of the most powerful computers in the world? Your brain is more wonderfully designed than anything humans can create. Nothing has been done that God hasn’t thought of first. People believe they can do anything with computers, but the truth is, they can’t do anything without God. He is—and always will be—the all-powerful and all-knowing God.

PEOPLE CAN’T
OUTSMART GOD

MEMORIZE:

“For apart from me you can do nothing.” John 15:5

Joel lay on the sofa, his bald head a circle against the white pillow. Medical treatments had caused his hair to fall out. His mother looked over at him just as a tear slid down his cheek. “What’s wrong, honey?” she asked. “Not feeling so good today?”

“I’m scared,” replied Joel in a trembling voice. “It seems like God has gone away. Ever since I got sick, it feels as if he isn’t here at all.”

“It may *feel* like that,” Mom said, “but God promises to always be with us. It’s hard sometimes to keep praying and trusting him, but we need to do that.” She sat down beside Joel. “The way you feel isn’t surprising, though,” added Mom. “It reminds me of something that happened to me when I was little.”

“Were you sick, too?” asked Joel.

Mom shook her head. “No. I was with my family on a train trip,” she said. “We stopped in a city, and my daddy got off the train. I remember watching for him to come back, afraid that the train would leave without him. I was so relieved when I saw him walk past the window. But a few minutes later, we started moving, and he wasn’t yet with us. I was terrified because I thought we had left him behind.”

“So did you?” asked Joel.

“No, but it certainly *felt* like it,” said Mom. “Even though my mother kept saying she knew my daddy was on the train, I couldn’t quite believe her. I cried until he walked back into the car. I would have saved myself a lot of worry if I had trusted my mom’s word. And God’s Word is more trustworthy than any person’s. We can believe it when God says he’ll never leave us.”

“Show me where it says that,” said Joel. “I want to read it for myself.” *VEN*



HOW ABOUT YOU?

When bad things happen to you—you get sick, your dad loses his job, your friend moves away, or your family splits up—it may feel as though God has forgotten about you. It may seem like he doesn’t care. But the Bible says he is near to those who know him. Instead of worrying, you can choose to trust that God’s loving presence is near, no matter how you feel.

MEMORIZE:

“God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’ ”

Hebrews 13:5, NIV

GOD IS ALWAYS
NEAR YOU

YOUR ACHILLES' HEEL

Read: Matthew 26:31-35, 69-75

“Mr. Simpson started to tell us a Greek myth about a warrior called Achilles,” David told his folks one evening, “but then the bell rang. He said he’d finish the story tomorrow.”

“Tell it to me, Davie,” begged little Johnny.

“Okay, Johnny—but remember, it’s not a true story,” said David. “Anyway, Achilles was dipped in a magic river when he was a baby, and he became in-in-in . . . invulnerable!” he said triumphantly.

“What does that mean?” asked Johnny.

“It means he couldn’t be harmed,” explained David. “The magic river made Achilles so strong and mighty that no weapon could ever hurt him.” David grinned. “I’d like to be like Achilles, so no one would ever be able to fight me and win!”

“Ah, but Mr. Simpson didn’t finish the story,” Dad reminded David. “Achilles wasn’t as invulnerable as you seem to think.”

“He wasn’t?” asked David.

Dad shook his head. “When his mother dipped him into the river, she held on to him by his heel. Since his heel didn’t touch the water, it wasn’t invulnerable like the rest of his body.”

“Oh, well,” said David, “his heel was only a small spot.”

“True,” said Dad, “but the story says that Achilles died after being shot in the heel by a poisoned arrow. The term *Achilles’ heel* is now used to describe the weak or vulnerable spot in a person’s life.”

“Wow!” exclaimed David. “Too bad his heel wasn’t dipped, too.”

“You know, David, it’s possible for a Christian to think of himself as a *spiritual* Achilles,” said Dad. “We may think we’re so good and honest that Satan can’t touch us. But he always seems to find our weak points—our ‘Achilles’ heel’—and he attacks us there. We need to ask God for his protection and strength in areas where we are weak.” *MTF*



HOW ABOUT YOU?

What’s your “Achilles’ heel”? Is it pride? A tendency to lie? Greed? A hot temper? A desire to be popular? You may pride yourself on being a “good” Christian, but be careful! You also have weaknesses—weak points that Satan loves to take advantage of. Be honest. Ask God to show you your areas of weakness, and to help you guard against temptation in those areas.

MEMORIZE:

“If you think you are standing strong, be careful, for you, too, may fall into the same sin.” 1 Corinthians 10:12

DON'T BE
OVERCONFIDENT

Anthony bit on his pencil as he stared at a page in his math book. “Math’s hard,” he said. “I hope I pass this year.”

Dad looked over Anthony’s shoulder. “Page 117? You still have a ways to go in your book, don’t you?” asked Dad.

Anthony frowned. “Yeah,” he said. “And I’ve looked ahead; the problems only get harder.”

Dad took the pencil out of Anthony’s hand. “You need a study break,” he said, “and I’ve got a dresser to move. How about helping me?”

Anthony nodded and followed Dad to the bedroom. Anthony went to one end of the dresser, and Dad went to the other. They pushed and pulled, but it wouldn’t budge. “What have you got in there?” exclaimed Anthony.

Dad grinned. “It must be your mother’s stuff,” he joked. “Let’s take out the drawers. That should make it easier.” After they removed the drawers, Anthony went to the empty dresser and tried to move it by himself. It was still too heavy. Dad chuckled again and went to help.

Together, Dad and Anthony moved the dresser easily. “When we moved one part at a time and worked together, it wasn’t so tough to move that dresser, was it?” said Dad as Anthony again sat down to work on his math. “You can solve your problem with math the same way. In fact, it’s a good way to tackle all of life’s problems.”

“What do you mean?” asked Anthony.

“Deal with your math one part at a time instead of worrying about the whole year all at once. And don’t tackle it alone—ask God to help you,” said Dad. “Do the same thing when you face problems in life years, or even days, from now. Live one day at a time, and ask God to help you, not only with math, but with all kinds of problems.” *SML*



HOW ABOUT YOU?

Do you have a problem that seems too big to handle? Maybe you have trouble with school-work. Ask God to help you learn what you need to know, little by little. Maybe you need God to help you improve a friendship. For example, you may need to apologize or just be a good listener. Whatever your problem, go to God for help—not next year, but today!

MEMORIZE:

“Give your burdens to the Lord, and he will take care of you.” Psalm 55:22

WITH GOD’S HELP,
SOLVE PROBLEMS
ONE AT A TIME

SNIFF

Read: 2 Corinthians 2:14-18

“Oh, no!” Mom looked up when she heard the wail from upstairs.

“I bet Brianna broke something,” said Tim. “She’s always dropping things.”

“Brianna,” called Mom. “What’s the problem?” There was no reply, so Mom headed up the stairs with Tim close behind. As they reached the top of the stairs, Brianna appeared at Mom’s bedroom door.

“Phew!” exclaimed Tim, sniffing the air. “What’s that smell?”

Brianna’s eyes filled with tears. “I was dusting your room like you asked me to do, Mom, and when I was moving things on the dresser, my hand slipped and knocked over your perfume—that bottle Aunt Carolyn gave you,” she explained. “It didn’t break, but I guess it wasn’t shut tight, and some spilled out. I’m sorry, Mom. I didn’t mean to do it.”

“Never mind,” said Mom gently. “It was an accident.”

Tim held his nose. “Ugh! Perfume! You smell,” he told Brianna.

“I do not!” replied Brianna indignantly.

Tim sniffed again. “You do smell,” he insisted. “Everything smells!”

Mom laughed. “Tim’s right,” she agreed.

“I guess so,” admitted Brianna, “but it’s a nice smell—not a bad one.”

“I hope both you kids will always spread a nice, pleasing fragrance,” said Mom.

Tim looked horrified. “What? Me smell like this? No way!”

Mom laughed. “I’m not talking about the aroma of perfume, Tim,” she said. “I’m talking about the aroma of Christ.”

Brianna and Tim looked puzzled, so Mom explained. “As Christians, we’re called to fill our world with a sweet-smelling fragrance—not with designer-label perfumes, but with the love of Jesus,” she said.

“Uh . . . I still don’t get it,” said Tim.

“When we’re helpful, kind to others, forgiving, loving—in other words, when we live the way Jesus wants us to—we become the ‘fragrance’ of Christ to those around us,” said Mom. *MTF*



HOW ABOUT YOU?

What kind of aroma are you spreading at home, in your school, at the mall, or on the playground? Are you spreading a sweet-smelling aroma by what you do and say? Although some people may criticize and turn away, to others you may be the fragrance that leads them to Christ.

MEMORIZE:

“Our lives are a fragrance presented by Christ to God. But this fragrance is perceived differently by those being saved and by those perishing.”

2 Corinthians 2:15

SPREAD JESUS’
AROMA

Jason looked up as his sister Tara turned a page and showed the picture of Papa Bear to their little sister, Beth. Tara continued to read the story to Beth. “Who’s been eating my porridge?” growled Papa Bear.”

Jason spoke up. “Papa Bear could have found out who ate it if he had lifted fingerprints from his spoon,” he told them. “We learned in school that everybody has a different set of prints. No two are alike—ever. Match the prints and you’ve got the criminal.”

“Yeah, well, that’s nice, Jason. Now let us finish this story,” said Tara.

But Jason grabbed his magnifying glass and held it above Tara’s fingers. “See those ridges?” he asked. “They leave a mark on everything you touch. Investigators use special powders to dust for fingerprints, and the powder sticks to the invisible ridge marks. The investigator carefully brushes away the dust between the ridges and then the print can be photographed and lifted with a print-lifting tape.”

“Jason! We’re not interested in fingerprints right now. We just want to read the story,” said Tara.

“All right, but I’ve been practicing with my Junior Detective kit,” said Jason, “so you’d better keep your fingers off my stuff!”

“Don’t be rude, Jason,” warned Mom, who had come into the room. “I hope you’ll make sure you don’t leave ugly ‘prints’ on people’s lives.”

“What do you mean?” asked Jason.

“Well, the impressions we make on others are something like fingerprints,” said Mom. “People identify us by either the pleasant way we talk and act or by how rude we are. We develop a reputation. And of course, our words and actions should please God.”

“Yeah, Jason,” said Tara. “You better remember that, and . . .” She noticed Mom looking sternly at her. “And I’ll remember it, too,” Tara added. *LJR*



HOW ABOUT YOU?

Do the prints—the impressions—you make on others please both them and God? Make sure the reputation you gain is that of helpfulness, friendliness, and patience.

MEMORIZE:

“Choose a good reputation over great riches, for being held in high esteem is better than having silver or gold.”

Proverbs 22:1

LEAVE GOOD
IMPRESSIONS

Index of Topics

Abilities, unique

April 28

Actions

July 19, September 9, December 13

Adoption

April 25

Anger

January 12, February 10, June 9,
September 29

Appearance

April 19, September 1

Attitudes

January 26, June 3, July 23,
August 17

Believing in Jesus

May 22, 30, June 14, July 30,
August 8, 15, October 7, 24,
December 1, 31

Bible, the

January 13, March 26, December 2, 8

Bible reading and study

January 28, February 18, 21,
March 21, 25, 28, June 2, 26, July 31,
August 11, 26, November 19

Bible memory

February 24, March 9

Boldness

June 6

Body of Christ

October 8

Born again

January 16

Changes

March 30, September 20

Cheating

September 10, November 14

Christian life

August 2, September 21, October 13,
20, November 5

Church

January 20, May 7, June 20,
October 28

Communion

May 28

Complaining

March 29, November 25

Confessing sins

January 24, February 28, March
13, 20, April 5, 27, May 12, 16,
21, July 16, August 3, 14, 30, 31,
September 19, 28, October 18,
November 15, December 20

Consequences

February 23, July 24

Content, being

January 31, December 6

Courage

November 3, December 14

Creation

March 26, May 6, June 12,
November 26, December 16

Death

February 8, 27, March 17, April 2, 17,
July 28, August 7

Devotions

August 6

Disappointment, discouragement

July 8, 22, August 25

Doing right

January 9, 11, 15, October 17,
November 13, December 14

Drugs

July 24

Encouraging others

August 27, September 26

Enemies

July 25

Eternity

May 31, December 12

Evil, hooked by

June 29

Faith

July 6, August 4, October 3, 30,
November 4, December 5

Faithfulness

March 14, June 19

Family

January 14, September 5

Fear

February 27, April 14, June 8,
October 29, November 3, 4

Fighting

June 30, July 18

Following Jesus

April 4, 11, September 13

Forgiving others, forgiveness

March 3, 12, April 15, November 22

Forgiveness of sins

January 24, June 4, August 22,
November 15, December 15

Friendships

March 10, June 9, 24, September 20,
October 14, 15, 26, November 13,
18, 27

Fruit of the Spirit

September 3, 14, October 31

Future

January 21, March 24, June 22

Giving (of money, time, talents)

January 25, April 24, August 12,
September 2, 4, December 9, 19, 24

God's call, answering

July 21

God's control

November 11

God's knowledge

March 7, August 23

God's love

January 23, February 9, March 31,
July 29, October 5

God's names

March 4

God's power

January 5

God's presence

March 10

God's care and protection

April 16, June 23, July 4, August 24,
September 5

God's guidance

June 17, October 19

God's justice

January 19

God's love

June 27

God's wisdom

May 6

Good works

May 29, July 13, August 1,
December 1, 3

Gossip

January 22

Greed

May 18

Habits

October 1, November 24

Health

September 16, October 20

Heaven and hell

January 1, June 7, July 15, 28,
December 12, 25

Helping others

February 3, April 10, May 10,
August 5, 19, October 22

Holy Spirit

February 2

Honesty

April 7, May 17, 19, June 16,
September 14, November 6

Honor

January 4

Hospitality

October 26

Hymns

March 18

Jealousy

June 22

Jesus

January 17, 23, March 1, April 9,
17, 23, August 6, November 19,
December 18

Jesus' return

February 11, May 29, July 1,
November 17

Joy

May 11

Kindness

January 29, February 14, April 3,
May 3, July 2

Listening to God

July 21, August 21

Loving others

February 20, November 20

Lying (see Honesty)

Missions

March 2, 17, May 9, June 10, 11,
November 10, 11

Motives

February 16

Money (see giving)

Obedience

January 18, 27, February 2, 17,
March 25, May 4, August 13,
September 8, November 28,
December 15

Obeying God

May 25

Parents

April 8, July 12, August 13,
November 28

Patience

February 21, 25, March 6, June
13, August 18, September 30,
October 16, December 5

Peace

December 21

People, value of

July 20, September 24

Pets

April 2, July 10

Pleasing God

September 23

Possessions

May 5, December 4, 23

Praise

February 12

Prayer

January 3, February 6, 26, March 2,
23, April 8, 14, July 5, 25, August 18,
October 9, 11, November 2, 16,
December 17, 22

Pride

June 17, July 11

Priorities

May 2

Problems, trials

January 6, 8, June 28, July 4,
August 18, October 16

Promises of God

July 6

Putting God first

October 10, December 28

Quitting
February 25, June 11, October 17,
November 10

Reputation
January 10

Respecting elders
January 4

Rewards
June 19, July 13, November 1

Rules
February 17, August 24, September
8, 19, November 28, December 8, 15

Salvation
January 2, March 27, April 6, 22,
May 1, 11, 14, 16, July 9, 27, 30,
August 4, 8, 15, 22, October 4, 7, 24,
November 9, 23, December 3, 7

Satan, resisting
May 2, 24, August 9, October 31

Self-Control
August 16

Selfishness
September 11, 12

Serving God, others
February 4, March 16, June
10, August 17, September 2,
December 26

Sharing
September 11, December 24

Sin
January 13, March 7, April 26,

May 27, July 26, 27, October 2,
November 1

Sin, turning from
March 19, May 13, July 24, August
28, December 29, 30

Spiritual growth
February 1, 5, May 7, July 31,
October 21

Spiritual food
August 29

Stealing
November 14

Talents
February 22, September 15, October
27, November 7, December 10

Teasing
January 30

Television
April 21, November 8

Temptation
January 7, April 21, June 5,
August 16, 28, October 12

Thanking God, thankfulness
May 15, June 21, November 25,
December 6

Thoughts
July 20, September 10, November 29

Treasure, spiritual
August 10, September 17,
December 4, 11, 23

Trusting God

January 6, March 11, 29, May 26,
June 8, 18, 28, July 14, 22, October 4,
6, November 21

Waiting (see Patience)

Wisdom

March 6

Witnessing

February 13, 19, March 8, 22, April 1,
12, 13, 18, 20, May 20, June 6, 15, 27,
July 17, 27, August 20, September 6,
7, October 15, 25, November 16, 30,
December 13

Words

March 5, 15, August 27, September
22, 27, October 23, November 6

Work

February 7, 15, April 29, 30,
May 8, 23, June 1, 25, July 3, 7,
September 2, 18, 25, November 1, 12,
December 27

Worry

January 6, 8, February 21, March 11,
April 14, August 18, September 17,
October 6

Index of Scripture Readings

- Genesis 1:26-28 *September 16*
Genesis 2:7, 21-23 *November 26*
Genesis 11:1-9 *April 6*
Genesis 41:46-57 *August 29*
Exodus 16:2, 8, 11-12 *December 6*
Exodus 16:14-15 *June 21*
Exodus 20:1-5, 17 *May 18*
Numbers 11:4-6 *June 21*
Numbers 21:5-9 *August 8*
Deuteronomy 4:1-8 *January 15*
Deuteronomy 15:7-11 *December 24*
Deuteronomy 18:18-22 *January 21*
Deuteronomy 31:6-8 *November 3*
Joshua 24:14-16 *January 2*
1 Samuel 3:1-10 *May 10*
1 Samuel 3:1-10 *July 21*
1 Samuel 3:1-10 *August 21*
1 Samuel 7:7-12 *March 18*
1 Samuel 18:1-5 *November 13*
1 Samuel 23:14-18 *February 25*
1 Kings 19:1-3, 9, 14-18 *March 10*
2 Kings 6:11-18 *March 24*
2 Chronicles 34:1-3, 31-33 *March 16*
Job 38:4-7; 41:11 *January 5*
Psalm 1 *June 24*
Psalm 4:3-5 *February 10*
Psalm 5:4-7 *April 7*
Psalm 10:1-4 *June 29*
Psalm 10:12-18 *September 5*
Psalm 17:1-7 *March 15*
Psalm 18:1-3 *August 24*
Psalm 18:28-36 *July 20*
Psalm 19:7-13 *October 19*
Psalm 19:8-11 *December 29*
Psalm 19:12-14 *March 5*
Psalm 19:12-14 *October 23*
Psalm 23 *February 27*
Psalm 23 *December 31*
Psalm 25:1-5 *February 21*
Psalm 25:4-5, 8-10 *January 28*
Psalm 25:4-9, 16-19 *January 24*
Psalm 25:4-10 *June 2*
Psalm 27:1-6 *April 16*
Psalm 32:1-5 *July 16*
Psalm 32:1-5 *August 30*
Psalm 32:1-7 *April 27*
Psalm 33:4-9 *June 12*
Psalm 33:12-22 *October 11*
Psalm 33:13-15 *August 23*
Psalm 34:1-9 *December 14*
Psalm 37:3-8 *July 14*
Psalm 37:3-9 *November 21*
Psalm 37:23-28 *July 22*
Psalm 37:30-31 *March 28*
Psalm 40:1-5 *December 3*
Psalm 51:1-4, 10 *February 23*
Psalm 51:1-4 *May 21*
Psalm 51:1-10 *June 4*
Psalm 66:16-20 *July 5*
Psalm 71:1-5 *June 23*
Psalm 73:3-7, 12-14, 21-28 *June 22*
Psalm 78:2-8 *February 18*
Psalm 78:10-22 *November 25*
Psalm 95:6-11 *May 22*
Psalm 101:2-7 *April 21*
Psalm 103:8-14 *August 22*
Psalm 103:15-19 *August 7*
Psalm 103:17-22 *January 14*
Psalm 104:16-25 *May 6*
Psalm 104:10-14 *July 10*
Psalm 118:5-9 *October 29*
Psalm 119:1-8 *August 26*
Psalm 119:9-16 *March 9*
Psalm 119:9-16 *February 24*
Psalm 119:9-16 *January 13*
Psalm 119:57-64 *September 23*

Psalm 119:65-72 *December 2*
Psalm 119:129-135 *August 11*
Psalm 119:129-136 *October 18*
Psalm 119:165-174 *December 8*
Psalm 122 *June 20*
Psalm 127:1-5 *March 11*
Psalm 138:14-17 *January 31*
Psalm 139:1-3, 23-24 *May 26*
Psalm 139:1-12 *January 6, March 7*
Psalm 139:7-12 *July 9, September 20*
Psalm 139:13-17 *September 24*
Psalm 146:1-2, 10 *February 12*
Psalm 147:10-11 *May 2*
Proverbs 1:1-9 *May 4*
Proverbs 3:5-7 *May 25*
Proverbs 3:5-7, 13 *June 17*
Proverbs 3:9-12 *September 4*
Proverbs 4:14-27 *April 26*
Proverbs 6:6-11 *April 29*
Proverbs 6:20-23 *July 12, September 9*
Proverbs 8:6-9 *November 6*
Proverbs 11:24-28 *February 3*
Proverbs 12:17-22 *May 17*
Proverbs 16:20-24 *August 27*
Proverbs 16:20-32 *September 29*
Proverbs 16:21-24 *September 26*
Proverbs 16:32 *August 16*
Proverbs 18:1-8 *January 22*
Ecclesiastes 3:1-11 *April 2*
Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 *October 28*
Isaiah 40:25-29 *December 16*
Isaiah 43:25 *January 24*
Isaiah 55:1-3, 6-7 *June 14*
Isaiah 55:8-11 *March 29*
Isaiah 55:10-11 *May 20*
Isaiah 55:10-12 *April 13*
Isaiah 58:2-9 *February 16*
Isaiah 61:10-11 *December 7*
Jeremiah 17:9-10 *February 28*
Jeremiah 32:19 *August 23*
Lamentations 3:22-28 *June 13*
Ezekiel 3:4-9 *April 18*

Ezekiel 33:6-11 *June 6*
Ezekiel 33:7-11 *September 7*
Daniel 3:14-18 *October 3*
Daniel 6:6-11, 16-23 *November 16*
Jonah 1:1-4, 15-17 *September 25*
Jonah 2:1, 7-10 *September 25*
Matthew 2:1-11 *December 9*
Matthew 5:3-12 *August 20*
Matthew 5:10-16 *July 17*
Matthew 5:13-16 *August 19, December 13*
Matthew 5:14-16 *June 27, July 31*
Matthew 5:43-48 *January 29*
Matthew 6:1-6 *July 13*
Matthew 6:5-8 *December 17*
Matthew 6:19-21 *August 10*
Matthew 6:19-24 *December 4*
Matthew 6:25-34 *October 10*
Matthew 6:28-33 *April 19*
Matthew 7:13-14, 21-23 *August 15*
Matthew 7:16-20 *July 19*
Matthew 7:24-29 *May 30*
Matthew 9:10-13 *October 5, 14*
Matthew 10:38-42 *June 19*
Matthew 11:28-30 *January 8*
Matthew 12:34-35 *March 28*
Matthew 13:3-8, 18-23 *March 22*
Matthew 13:3-9 *October 2*
Matthew 16:24-27 *December 19*
Matthew 18:11-14 *January 23*
Matthew 18:21-22 *March 12*
Matthew 24:37-44 *May 29*
Matthew 25:14-23 *November 7*
Matthew 25:14-29 *February 4*
Matthew 26:31-35, 69-75 *January 7*
Mark 4:35-41 *June 8*
Mark 7:20-23 *February 28*
Mark 9:17-27 *November 4*
Mark 13:32-37 *November 17*
Mark 14:3-9 *November 5*
Mark 16:1-7 *April 20*
Luke 2:15-20 *December 18*

Luke 2:41-52 *March 6*
 Luke 2:42-62 *October 20*
 Luke 6:27-31 *October 22*
 Luke 6:27-36 *July 25*
 Luke 8:27-36 *November 20*
 Luke 10:29-37 *August 5*
 Luke 12:15-21 *January 25*
 Luke 12:16-21 *December 23*
 Luke 12:37-44 *July 1*
 Luke 15:1-10 *April 5*
 Luke 15:3-10 *May 11*
 Luke 15:11-24 *March 13*
 Luke 16:10-13 *May 5, June 11, December 27*
 Luke 17:1-5 *April 15*
 Luke 17:11-19 *May 15*
 Luke 17:26-30 *October 24*
 Luke 18:9-14 *October 4*
 Luke 19:1-8 *May 12*
 Luke 19:2-10 *August 31*
 Luke 19:12-23 *May 8*
 Luke 23:32-34 *March 3*
 John 1:37-42 *March 8*
 John 3:3 *January 16*
 John 3:14-15 *August 8*
 John 6:9-13 *September 2*
 John 6:28-37 *August 6*
 John 10:1-9 *August 4*
 John 10:11-15 *April 11*
 John 12:24-26 *March 17*
 John 14:1-3; 17:24 *July 15*
 John 14:1-6 *January 16*
 John 14:6 *November 23*
 John 14:13-14 *December 22*
 John 14:27-31 *December 21*
 John 15:1-5, 8 *September 3*
 John 15:9-15 *January 17*
 John 15:12-15 *November 19*
 John 16:7-15 *February 2*
 John 17:17-19 *March 26*
 Acts 3:11-12 *May 1*
 Acts 4:8-12 *November 23*
 Acts 4:10-12 *May 1*
 Acts 4:32-35 *September 11*
 Acts 11:27-30 *August 12*
 Acts 12:5-7, 11-17 *February 6*
 Acts 16:19-25 *June 28*
 Acts 16:22-25 *July 23*
 Acts 28:1-6 *February 8*
 Romans 1:15-17 *November 30*
 Romans 2:1-11 *January 19*
 Romans 3:20-24, 28 *July 30*
 Romans 5:1-6 *July 4*
 Romans 5:6-8 *March 31*
 Romans 6:11-14 *August 16, 28*
 Romans 6:16-23 *November 24*
 Romans 7:21-25 *January 12*
 Romans 8:14-18 *December 11*
 Romans 8:26-28 *January 3*
 Romans 8:33-39 *July 29*
 Romans 8:35-39 *February 9*
 Romans 9:1-3; 10:1 *June 15*
 Romans 10:11-17 *February 13*
 Romans 10:13-15 *October 25*
 Romans 12:3-8 *February 7*
 Romans 12:3-10 *February 22, July 11*
 Romans 12:4-8 *October 27*
 Romans 12:9-18 *October 26*
 Romans 13:1-4 *November 2*
 Romans 13:1-5 *December 15*
 Romans 14:7-13 *May 19*
 Romans 16:19-20 *January 10*
 1 Corinthians 2:11-16 *March 21*
 1 Corinthians 3:5-9 *March 23*
 1 Corinthians 3:5-11 *November 10*
 1 Corinthians 3:8-15 *June 10*
 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 *November 1*
 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 *September 18*
 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19-20 *March 20*
 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 *April 1*
 1 Corinthians 4:1-7 *December 10*
 1 Corinthians 9:16-19 *August 17*
 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 *October 15*

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 *May 23*
 1 Corinthians 10:6-11 *July 24*
 1 Corinthians 10:13 *August 28*
 1 Corinthians 11:13-15 *May 24*
 1 Corinthians 11:23-28 *May 28*
 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 *April 28*
 1 Corinthians 12:14, 20-22, 25
September 15
 1 Corinthians 12:20-27 *October 8*
 1 Corinthians 15:35-44 *January 1*
 1 Corinthians 15:57-58 *April 12*
 1 Corinthians 16:13-14 *April 12*
 2 Corinthians 1:3-8 *September 30*
 2 Corinthians 2:14-18 *January 9*
 2 Corinthians 3:2-6 *October 13*
 2 Corinthians 4:6-9, 14 *December 25*
 2 Corinthians 4:7-16 *October 21*
 2 Corinthians 5:1 *December 25*
 2 Corinthians 5:1, 6-9 *May 31*
 2 Corinthians 9:6-11 *April 24*
 Galatians 5:13-15 *June 30*
 Galatians 5:22-25 *September 14*
 Galatians 6:7-10 *May 3*
 Galatians 6:7-10 *September 12*
 Ephesians 2:1-9 *August 1*
 Ephesians 2:8-9 *April 22, December 7*
 Ephesians 2:13-19 *May 16*
 Ephesians 3:1-3 *November 28*
 Ephesians 4:21-25 *June 16*
 Ephesians 4:22-24 *July 2*
 Ephesians 4:25-32 *June 9,*
September 21
 Ephesians 4:29-32 *April 3*
 Ephesians 4:32 *February 14*
 Ephesians 5:6-16 *November 8*
 Ephesians 5:8-16 *July 8*
 Ephesians 6:1-3 *August 13*
 Ephesians 6:5-8 *November 12*
 Ephesians 6:13-18 *August 2*
 Philippians 1:12-18 *November 11*
 Philippians 2:1-4 *November 27*
 Philippians 2:13-16 *January 26*
 Philippians 3:4-9 *August 14*
 Philippians 3:8-10 *March 27*
 Philippians 3:13-16 *May 23*
 Philippians 4:4-8 *September 17*
 Philippians 4:4-7 *August 18*
 Philippians 4:4-9 *October 9*
 Philippians 4:5-9 *November 29*
 Philippians 4:6-9 *October 6*
 Colossians 2:1-7 *June 26*
 Colossians 3:5 *May 18*
 Colossians 3:5-10 *December 30*
 Colossians 3:12-17 *November 22*
 Colossians 3:22-25 *June 25*
 Colossians 3:23-24 *February 15*
 Colossians 3:23-25 *June 1*
 1 Thessalonians 3:6-9 *May 9*
 1 Thessalonians 4:1-2, 11-12
November 14
 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 *April 17,*
July 28, December 12
 2 Thessalonians 3:7-12 *July 7*
 2 Thessalonians 3:7-13 *April 10*
 2 Thessalonians 3:10-13 *April 30*
 1 Timothy 2:1-3 *April 8*
 1 Timothy 5:1-4 *January 4*
 1 Timothy 6:11-14 *May 13*
 2 Timothy 1:6-12 *September 6*
 2 Timothy 2:1-5 *October 17*
 2 Timothy 2:15-16, 19-22 *March 19*
 2 Timothy 2:19-26 *October 12*
 2 Timothy 2:22-26 *July 18*
 2 Timothy 3:14-17 *February 17,*
March 26
 2 Timothy 4:1-2 *February 19*
 2 Timothy 4:1-8 *February 11*
 Titus 2:11-15 *January 11*
 Titus 3:3-7 *December 1*
 Titus 3:4-7 *April 22*
 Philemon 1:3-7 *March 2*
 Hebrews 2:1-4 *October 7*
 Hebrews 2:9-13 *April 9*
 Hebrews 2:14-18 *March 1*

Hebrews 4:12-16 *June 5*
Hebrews 4:14-16 *April 14*
Hebrews 6:7-12 *October 1*
Hebrews 10:19-25 *January 20*
Hebrews 10:22-25, 35-39 *March 14*
Hebrews 10:23-25 *May 7*
Hebrews 11:1-3 *October 30*
Hebrews 12:1-2 *February 5, April 23*
Hebrews 12:1-3 *July 26*
Hebrews 12:5-11 *September 19*
Hebrews 12:12-15 *May 27*
Hebrews 13:16-21 *September 8*
James 1:1-4 *December 5*
James 1:2-4 *August 25, October 16*
James 1:21-25 *March 25*
James 1:22-25 *January 18*
James 2:8-10 *September 28*
James 3:2, 7-8 *September 27*
James 3:5-10 *September 22*
James 4:1-3 *February 26*
James 4:7-8 *December 28*
James 4:13-15 *May 14, June 7*
James 4:13-16 *March 30*
James 4:13-17 *November 9*
1 Peter 1:6-7 *October 16*
1 Peter 2:9-12 *September 10, November 18*
1 Peter 2:21-23 *January 30*
1 Peter 2:21-25 *September 13*
1 Peter 3:15 *February 19*
1 Peter 4:7-11 *July 3, December 26*
1 Peter 5:8-11 *August 9, October 31*
2 Peter 1:2-4 *July 6*
1 John 1:6-10 *November 15*
1 John 1:9-10 *August 3*
1 John 2:1 *August 3, November 15*
1 John 2:3-6 *February 1, April 4*
1 John 2:15-17 *September 1*
1 John 4:7-11 *April 25, June 3*
1 John 4:9-10 *March 31*
1 John 4:15-19 *June 18*
1 John 4:16-21 *February 20*
1 John 5:1-5 *January 27*
1 John 5:4-5 *October 30*
Revelation 20:11-15 *December 20*
Revelation 21:10, 22-27 *July 27*
Revelation 22:12-21 *March 4*

Index of Memory Verses

Genesis 1:1 *December 16*
Genesis 1:27 *November 26*
Genesis 18:25 *January 19*
Genesis 28:15 *September 20*
Exodus 20:15 *November 14*
Deuteronomy 4:2 *January 15*
Deuteronomy 31:6 *November 3*
Joshua 4:6-7 *March 18*
Joshua 24:15 *January 2*
1 Samuel 2:11 *May 10*
1 Samuel 3:10 *July 21*
2 Samuel 24:24 *August 12*
Job 10:8 *September 24*
Job 28:28 *March 19*
Psalm 1:1 *June 24*
Psalm 4:5 *July 14*
Psalm 5:6 *April 7*
Psalm 7:1 *November 21*
Psalm 18:2 *August 24*
Psalm 19:11 *October 19*
Psalm 19:14 *March 5, September 27*
Psalm 23:1 *December 31*
Psalm 23:4 *February 27*
Psalm 25:4 *June 2*
Psalm 25:5 *February 21*
Psalm 31:14-15 *April 2*
Psalm 32:5 *May 21*
Psalm 33:12 *October 11*
Psalm 34:15 *December 14*
Psalm 37:7 *August 18*
Psalm 37:38-39 *June 22*
Psalm 38:18 *July 16*
Psalm 39:1 *September 22*
Psalm 40:2 *December 3*
Psalm 40:8 *February 16*
Psalm 46:1 *June 23*
Psalm 46:10 *August 21*
Psalm 51:2 *July 27*
Psalm 55:17 *November 16*
Psalm 55:22 *January 8*
Psalm 66:18 *July 5*
Psalm 68:5 *September 5*
Psalm 68:20 *February 8*
Psalm 69:5 *August 30*
Psalm 101:3 *April 21*
Psalm 103:10 *August 22*
Psalm 104:24 *May 6*
Psalm 107:29 *June 8*
Psalm 116:15 *August 7*
Psalm 119:11 *February 24*
Psalm 119:16 *March 9, August 29*
Psalm 119:72 *December 2*
Psalm 119:130 *October 18*
Psalm 119:133 *August 11*
Psalm 119:168 *December 8*
Psalm 122:1 *June 20*
Psalm 127:2 *March 11*
Psalm 139:14 *September 16*
Psalm 141:3 *March 15*
Psalm 143:10 *May 26*
Psalm 147:8 *March 29*
Proverbs 1:5 *March 6*
Proverbs 3:7 *June 17*
Proverbs 4:14 *April 26*
Proverbs 4:26-27 *January 28*
Proverbs 6:20 *July 12, September 9*
Proverbs 9:10 *May 25*
Proverbs 11:30 *March 22*
Proverbs 12:10 *July 10*
Proverbs 12:22 *May 17, June 16*
Proverbs 13:13 *May 4*
Proverbs 15:3 *August 23*
Proverbs 15:19 *October 1*
Proverbs 16:7 *November 11*
Proverbs 16:9 *March 30*
Proverbs 16:20 *June 28*

Proverbs 16:24 *September 26*
Proverbs 17:20 *November 6*
Proverbs 18:8 *January 22*
Proverbs 18:9 *September 12*
Proverbs 19:11 *September 29*
Proverbs 19:17 *February 3*
Proverbs 20:7 *January 14*
Proverbs 20:11 *July 19*
Proverbs 21:31 *October 29*
Proverbs 22:1 *January 10*
Proverbs 22:6 *February 17*
Proverbs 22:28 *February 18*
Proverbs 24:10 *October 17*
Proverbs 25:25 *May 9*
Proverbs 25:28 *August 16*
Proverbs 27:1 *May 14*
Proverbs 27:17 *November 13*
Proverbs 28:13 *May 27, September 19*
Ecclesiastes 4:9 *October 28*
Ecclesiastes 9:10 *April 29*
Isaiah 29:15 *March 7*
Isaiah 43:7 *January 31*
Isaiah 43:12 *April 12*
Isaiah 55:6 *June 14*
Isaiah 55:11 *April 13, May 20*
Isaiah 64:6 *August 1*
Jeremiah 1:7 *April 18*
Jeremiah 10:6 *March 4*
Jeremiah 13:23 *October 23*
Jeremiah 17:10 *February 28*
Jeremiah 31:34 *January 24*
Daniel 3:17-18 *October 3*
Matthew 4:19 *March 8*
Matthew 5:13 *July 17, August 20*
Matthew 5:16 *June 27, July 8*
Matthew 5:44 *July 25*
Matthew 6:6 *July 13, December 17*
Matthew 6:20 *August 10*
Matthew 6:21 *December 4*
Matthew 6:31 *April 19*
Matthew 6:33 *September 4, October 10*
Matthew 7:12 *October 22, November 20*
Matthew 7:14 *August 15*
Matthew 7:20 *September 14*
Matthew 7:24 *March 25*
Matthew 9:13 *October 14*
Matthew 10:8 *September 11, December 9*
Matthew 12:34 *March 28*
Matthew 13:23 *October 2*
Matthew 16:27 *June 19*
Matthew 24:44 *May 29, July 1*
Matthew 25:46 *June 7*
Matthew 28:6 *April 20*
Mark 8:36 *December 23*
Mark 9:24 *November 4*
Mark 9:50 *August 19*
Luke 2:52 *October 20*
Luke 9:24 *March 17*
Luke 10:27 *August 5*
Luke 12:15 *May 18*
Luke 12:40 *November 17*
Luke 15:10 *April 5, May 11*
Luke 15:18 *March 13*
Luke 16:10 *February 4, May 8*
Luke 16:11 *May 5*
Luke 18:13 *October 4*
Luke 19:8 *August 31*
Luke 19:10 *July 9*
John 1:12 *January 16*
John 3:15 *August 8*
John 6:35 *August 6*
John 6:37 *August 14*
John 10:9 *August 4*
John 10:11 *January 23, April 11*
John 11:25 *April 17*
John 13:35 *June 3*
John 14:2 *July 15*
John 14:3 *December 12*
John 14:14 *December 22*
John 14:27 *December 21*
John 15:5 *January 5*
John 15:13 *January 17*
John 16:13 *February 2*

Acts 4:12 *April 6, November 23*
Acts 4:20 *June 6*
Acts 16:31 *May 1, July 30*
Acts 20:35 *December 24*
Romans 1:16 *November 30*
Romans 5:8 *March 31*
Romans 6:12 *August 28*
Romans 8:28 *January 3, July 22*
Romans 8:38-39 *February 9*
Romans 10:12 *December 11*
Romans 10:14 *February 13, June 15*
Romans 12:3 *July 11*
Romans 12:5 *October 8, November 18*
Romans 12:6 *February 22*
Romans 12:13 *October 26*
Romans 12:15 *November 27*
Romans 12:20 *January 29*
Romans 13:1 *December 15*
Romans 14:7 *May 19*
Romans 15:4 *July 24*
1 Corinthians 3:7 *March 23*
1 Corinthians 3:9 *June 10, November 10*
1 Corinthians 3:11 *May 30*
1 Corinthians 3:13 *November 1*
1 Corinthians 4:2 *December 27*
1 Corinthians 4:7 *December 10*
1 Corinthians 4:10 *April 1*
1 Corinthians 4:14 *December 29*
1 Corinthians 9:22 *October 15*
1 Corinthians 10:12 *January 7*
1 Corinthians 10:13 *May 13, June 5*
1 Corinthians 10:31 *July 3, September 2*
1 Corinthians 11:26 *May 28*
1 Corinthians 12:22 *September 15*
1 Corinthians 13:12 *January 1*
1 Corinthians 15:57 *January 12*
1 Corinthians 15:58 *June 11, September 25*
1 Corinthians 16:13 *September 23*
2 Corinthians 2:15 *January 9*
2 Corinthians 3:3 *October 13*
2 Corinthians 4:16 *October 21*
2 Corinthians 4:17 *December 25*
2 Corinthians 5:7 *October 30*
2 Corinthians 5:8 *May 31*
2 Corinthians 5:17 *July 2, December 13*
2 Corinthians 6:2 *November 9*
2 Corinthians 6:16 *March 20*
2 Corinthians 8:21 *September 10*
2 Corinthians 9:7 *April 24*
2 Corinthians 9:8 *July 23*
2 Corinthians 10:5 *November 29*
2 Corinthians 10:12 *April 28*
Galatians 5:1 *November 24*
Galatians 5:13 *August 17*
Galatians 5:15 *June 30*
Galatians 5:22-23 *September 3*
Galatians 6:7 *February 23, May 3*
Ephesians 2:8-9 *April 22*
Ephesians 2:13 *May 16*
Ephesians 4:11-12 *February 7*
Ephesians 4:26 *February 10, June 9*
Ephesians 4:32 *March 3, April 3*
Ephesians 5:11 *November 8*
Ephesians 5:20 *May 15*
Ephesians 6:7 *November 12*
Ephesians 6:11 *August 2*
Philippians 1:3-4 *March 2*
Philippians 2:13 *January 26*
Philippians 2:14 *November 25*
Philippians 3:9 *December 7*
Philippians 3:10 *March 27*
Philippians 3:14 *February 5, May 23*
Philippians 4:6 *April 14*
Philippians 4:7 *September 17*
Philippians 4:13 *July 20*
Colossians 2:3 *June 26*
Colossians 3:2 *September 18*
Colossians 3:13 *March 12, November 22*
Colossians 3:17 *September 1, November 7*

Colossians 3:20 *August 13, November 28*
Colossians 3:23 *June 1, June 25*
1 Thessalonians 4:11 *July 7*
1 Thessalonians 4:13 *July 28*
1 Thessalonians 5:17 *October 9*
1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 *February 26*
1 Thessalonians 5:22 *June 29*
2 Thessalonians 3:3 *April 16*
2 Thessalonians 3:10 *April 10, April 30*
1 Timothy 1:15 *December 18*
1 Timothy 2:1-2 *April 8, November 2*
1 Timothy 2:5 *December 20*
1 Timothy 4:12 *March 16*
1 Timothy 4:14 *October 27*
1 Timothy 5:4 *January 4*
1 Timothy 6:8 *June 21*
1 Timothy 6:11 *June 13*
1 Timothy 6:18 *January 25*
2 Timothy 1:8 *September 6*
2 Timothy 2:19 *October 24*
2 Timothy 2:24 *February 14, July 18*
2 Timothy 2:26 *October 12*
2 Timothy 3:16 *March 26*
2 Timothy 4:2 *February 19*
2 Timothy 4:5 *September 30*
2 Timothy 4:7 *February 11, March 14*
Titus 2:12 *January 11, November 5*
Titus 3:5 *December 1*
Philemon 1:6 *October 25*
Hebrews 1:1-2 *January 31*
Hebrews 2:3 *October 7*
Hebrews 2:17 *March 1*
Hebrews 3:13 *August 27*
Hebrews 3:15 *May 22*
Hebrews 4:12 *January 13, August 26*
Hebrews 6:12 *February 25*
Hebrews 9:27 *September 7*

Hebrews 10:25 *January 20, May 7*
Hebrews 11:3 *June 12*
Hebrews 12:1 *July 26, December 30*
Hebrews 12:2 *March 21*
Hebrews 12:2 *April 23*
Hebrews 12:11 *August 25*
Hebrews 13:5 *January 6, March 10, December 6*
Hebrews 13:17 *September 8*
James 1:3 *October 16, December 5*
James 1:8 *December 28*
James 1:22 *January 18*
James 2:10 *September 28*
James 2:18 *September 21*
James 4:7 *May 24, August 9*
James 5:16 *February 6, May 12*
1 Peter 1:7 *July 4*
1 Peter 1:13 *May 2*
1 Peter 2:9 *February 12*
1 Peter 2:21 *April 4, September 13*
1 Peter 2:23 *January 30*
1 Peter 3:15 *February 15*
1 Peter 4:8 *April 15*
1 Peter 4:10 *December 26*
1 Peter 5:7 *April 9, October 6*
2 Peter 1:4 *July 6*
2 Peter 3:18 *February 1, July 31*
1 John 1:3 *November 19*
1 John 1:7 *June 4*
1 John 1:9 *April 27, August 3, November 15*
1 John 4:4 *March 24, October 31*
1 John 4:8 *October 5*
1 John 4:18 *June 18*
1 John 4:19 *April 25*
1 John 4:21 *February 20*
1 John 5:3 *January 27*
Jude 21 *July 29*
Revelation 22:12 *December 19*