

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

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OCTOBER 10 - 14, 2022

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Sermon Series

Oct 2 - Nov 20

MONDAY

Read **2 Timothy. 3:10-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21**

This week's devotions will be focused on missions and specifically on the subject of the distribution of Bibles in restricted countries. The Bible, God's inspired Word, is essential for spiritual growth and discipleship. It is *"useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness so that the [believer] may be thoroughly equipped for every good work"* (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). In many restricted countries, Bibles are not allowed. How can a new believer grow without a Bible?

"Bibles had been banned throughout China for nearly three decades, and many believers who owned a copy of God's word during the Cultural Revolution had been afraid to reveal it, as being found with a Bible could result in their arrest and the grim possibility of many years in prison. As a result, Bibles were placed inside airtight canisters and buried in the ground, while others were skillfully concealed inside the wall panels or rafters of homes and barns. ... the lack of Bibles slowed down the advance of God's kingdom, and threatened to derail it completely." (Paul Hattaway)

"Believers ... yearned and prayed for a day when they could once again access God's word without fear of reprisals. Christian radio broadcasters from Hong Kong and the Philippines, knowing the acute shortage of Bibles in China, would read at dictation speed portions of Scriptures for the listeners to hand-copy. These hand-copied pages were circulated

among the churches. Christians would memorize a portion before swapping their page with someone who possessed another page or two of the precious Scriptures. (Hattaway)

Contrast the above descriptions of the scarcity of Bibles in China with the abundance of Bibles in the U.S. My wife and I together probably possess ten to fifteen Bibles in our home. How many do you have in your home? How often are you using yours? How much do you prize it? It is a treasured gift from the Lord to help us grow strong in our faith.

QUESTIONS

Are you using this precious gift, the Bible? What would you do if someday Bibles were banned in the U.S.? The way our country is going, that day might come.

PRAYERS

For Living Room International

Living Room Ministries is currently expanding its clinical services to include ICU, surgery, and maternity. Please pray for our team to have wisdom and knowledge and compassion in the care we provide to our patients.

TUESDAY

Read **John 5:36-40; Luke 24:25-27**

The Old Testament points us to Christ: *“These are the Scriptures that testify about me”* (John 5:39). On the Emmaus Road Jesus showed two of His followers how all the Scriptures spoke of Him: *“And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself”* (Luke 24:27).

Our Bible is so valuable. From Genesis to Revelation, we see the thread of God’s plan for our salvation through the blood of Christ interwoven throughout biblical history. Imagine if we did not have our Bibles. What would we know about God and His plan for us?

There are many Christians who do not have Bibles. How can they grow as young believers? Many Christian organizations have recognized this need and have made great efforts to print and distribute Bibles to those groups who do not have them.

In China in the late 1970s, many couriers brought Bibles into China from neighboring countries. They started by carrying only a few Bibles inside their bags. This grew into dozens of travelers hauling hundreds of Bibles across the border from Hong Kong each day. However, the need for Bibles was so great that their efforts were akin to trying to douse a forest fire with a garden hose.

One organization came up with a risky plan to deliver one million Bibles into China in a single day. This bold delivery was called the Project Pearl. After years of planning, they launched out from Hong Kong aboard a tugboat on June 1981, pulling a barge containing one million Chinese Bibles. With thousands of Chinese Christians waiting on a beach in Southern China, their precious cargo was unloaded. About one percent of the Bibles ended up being confiscated by authorities; the remainder was successfully delivered to astonished leaders throughout China. (Hattaway)

QUESTIONS

Wow! What a feat! What a humongous effort to deliver Bibles to God's people! What efforts are you willing to make so that more people can hear the Gospel?

PRAYERS

For Living Room International

Pray for Living Room's Kimbilio Hospice as we daily show up to care for the sick and dying. May Jesus be honored in all that we do.

WEDNESDAY

Read **Acts 17:10-12**

The Bereans “*received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true*” (Acts 17:11). Notice they received the Word with great excitement and studied it every day. Many of the Bereans came to faith as a result of their diligent efforts. The Scriptures was used to verify the truth and moved them to faith. Study of the Scriptures can result in changed lives.

In Vietnam a seventeen-year-old youth in despair, ready to commit suicide, was given a New Testament. He took it home, read it, was convicted, and was saved. Subsequently, he led his father and family to the Lord. In time, he became a pastor, Pastor Mark (pseudo name).

In Vietnam in 1975 all religious materials were banned and Bibles were confiscated when the Communists came to power. The Communists removed the hardcovers of the Bibles and sold the thin pages as paper to roll cigarettes. It was reported that one man was converted because he read the pages of the Bible before making cigarettes.

One day, Pastor Mark found a store that sold Bibles with covers removed so that its pages could be sold for rolling cigarettes. The pastor bought these coverless Bibles, made new covers, and gave them away.

Pastor Mark was fully convinced of the power of God's Word to change lives and felt called by God to work in Bible distribution. Over the years he has been active in translating the Bible into tribal languages and distributing them. A few months ago, they distributed 4,000 Vietnamese Bibles in the Mekong Delta area. One pastor living in a remote area cried when he received six hundred Bibles. For many years, he had led people to Christ but had no Bible to give them. Pastor Mark and the recipient pastor cried together as they thanked God for this great blessing and for the work of Ethnos Asia Ministries in helping to make these Bibles available. (*Prayer Focus*)

QUESTIONS

The Bereans eagerly studied the Scriptures every day. How much time are you willing to spend? How eager are you?

PRAYERS

For Living Room International

Please pray for our entire Living Room team that we will not grow tired of doing good. May we continue to grow in compassion and mercy!

THURSDAY

Read **1 Timothy 4:11-14; Acts 18:24-28**

The Scriptures have great value in giving its readers a firm foundation in the faith and great boldness in sharing it. Therefore, Paul urged Timothy, *“Devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture”* (1 Timothy 4:13). Apollos, because he knew well the Scriptures, was able to vigorously refute the Jews in public debate and prove from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ (Acts 18:28).

Knowing that the Scriptures can be powerfully used by believers, Ethnos Asia makes special efforts to get it into the hands of believers in restricted countries. For instance, one of the Ethnos Asia workers used a truck loaded with cases of beer, the favorite beer of the locals, to hide Bibles underneath the beer. When he had to pass through border checkpoints, he would give a case of beer to the local soldiers at the checkpoint, and then they would wave him through.

On one occasion I traveled under the auspices of Ethnos Asia with a mission team from the U.S. to visit a restricted country. Individual members of the team were given the opportunity to carry into the country local-language Bibles in their personal luggage. The Bibles were gift-wrapped so that if questioned by custom officials, the bearer would reply that these are gifts for friends. We were successful in delivering the Bibles.

On another occasion, I was with an Ethnos Asia mission team carrying Bibles into another restricted country. At the airport baggage pick-up area, the moving carousel that allowed travelers to identify and pick up their bags broke with a loud noise as it was operating. This resulted in a lot of confusion with people scrambling to find their bags. In the midst of the mix-up, custom officials did not inspect the bags of travelers exiting the airport. The team was thankful that their Bibles passed through without any inspection.

QUESTIONS

Since the Scriptures can empower believers with great boldness, all possible efforts are made to provide it to believers. You also can be greatly moved by your time in the Scriptures. Do you have a scheduled time for meditating on it?

PRAYERS

For Living Room International

Living Room Ministries has the privilege to care for those who are often overlooked and have trouble accessing care. Pray for God's provision and favor to continue.

FRIDAY

Read **Joshua 1:6-9; Psalm 1:1-3**

The Holy Spirit uses extended meditation on the Scriptures to produce obedience and spiritual success in the heart of the believer (Joshua 1:8). This person will be like a tree planted by a stream and producing abundant fruit. He will be successful in all his endeavors (Psalm 1:2, 3).

Extended meditation would be like a cow chewing the cud. The cow eats a bit of food and then chews on it much of the day. This is a picture of the Christian who reads the Bible in the morning and then spends much of the day thinking about its meaning and application to his own life. When a believer spends extended time meditating on the Word, he will bear much spiritual fruit. Therefore, every believer needs to have a Bible and needs to spend ample time pondering its application to one's own life. How can they be fruitful if they do not have a copy of the Bible?

There are many young believers in restricted countries where Bibles are not readily available. Ethnos Asia seeks to print and deliver Bibles to those areas. I was told by a Laotian pastor that a woman in Laos, one of the countries with severest restrictions against Christians, prayed for two years to have a Bible. When Ethnos Asia workers were able to deliver a Bible to her, she rejoiced with great joy. But paradoxically, she was unable to read. Why would she want a Bible if she could not read? She asked her children and grandchildren to read the Bible to her.

Then, she would ask them questions concerning the text. In this way in time, her whole family became believers. Wow! God used a person who could not read the Bible to lead her whole family to the Lord.

QUESTIONS

You probably have several Bibles and have no problem reading it. How are you using it? It has the potential to make you into a fruitful and successful Christian. Are you utilizing its potential power? Thank the Lord for organizations that provide Bibles to believers in restricted countries.

PRAYERS

For Living Room International

Please pray for healing to come for our Living Room patients. We desire for lives to be restored and the hope of Jesus to be on display!



Sources

- Paul Hattaway, *Shandong: Inside the Greatest Christian Revival in History* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Publishing, 2022).
- Pastor Mark, “The Power of God’s Word,” *Prayer Focus*, Issue #305, Ethnos Asia Ministries, September 2022.

