

# Through The Bible In One Year

## The Adventure of Many Lifetimes

Unpublished Work, December 2005, David W. Shockey.

## Daily Devotional Companion

### Week 21

**Day 141.** Read 1 Samuel 29.1–31.13; John 11.54–12.19;  
Psalm 118.1-18; and Proverbs 15.24-26.

### Thoughts & Questions For Reflection:

**Samuel:** Everything possible had gone wrong...horribly wrong...so that his own men are plotting to stone him. An enemy raiding party had destroyed their town and captured their families while David led the fighting men to go up with the Philistine army against Israel. David and his men themselves had fled to the Philistines for refuge when Saul sought to put them to death. The Philistine commander ordered him and his band to fight alongside them. An enemy of an enemy must be a friend, right? Not in David's case. How relieved he must have been to be ordered back from the fighting. David even acts displeased when told to stay behind. But then they find their town destroyed and deserted. David and his men responded by weeping so loud and long they could not weep any more. The men went further: they were ready to stone David to death. In the time of deepest turmoil, the Word says, 'David found strength in his God.' David turns to another man of God and inquires of God, through his spiritual friend, what he should do. And David does what God tells him. He pursues until half his fighting force falls behind, exhausted. He attacks a larger force, surprising the unsuspecting enemy, as they celebrated their conquest. He recaptures all the people taken and reaps the spoils of the enemy raiding party's conquests. On the way back, he meets the men who stayed behind. They had not shared in the risks, but they will share in the rewards. David's heart is like the Lord's.

**Questions:** 1. Where do I turn for strength when everything goes wrong? 2. How do I inquire of God to learn what I should do in a tough situation? Who among God's people helps me discern what course God wants me to take? 3. Am I generous like David, and like God, toward others who don't bear the brunt of the work with me? Do I freely share the rewards, including the accolades, for accomplishments, or do I do so grudgingly?

**John:** Jesus no longer went about publicly. It was no longer safe. Orders were out from the religious authorities to arrest him if anyone found out where he was. His time had not yet come to be crucified; and if he went about publicly, that might precipitate his death before the right time. At a banquet given by friends in his honor, his hostess, Mary, anoints his feet with costly perfume and wipes them with her hair. The room is filled with fragrance, but one of the disciple's minds is filled with bitter thoughts. 'The ointment

could have been sold for a lot of money and the money given to the poor,' his lips say; but his heart is thinking of himself. He kept the pocketbook, and took from it freely for himself. It's no longer safe for Jesus. This very disciple will betray him in a matter of days. Betrayal will come from others as well. Many others. Crowds welcome Jesus when he comes into Jerusalem. 'Blessed is the one coming in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming King!' The divine drama of God's great redemption is coming to a climax. Scripture proclaimed centuries before what is now coming to pass: 'Your king is coming to you, humbly, seated on a donkey.' No royal charger or carriage. No warhorse. A donkey. Soon all the cries of 'Hosanna!'—which means 'Save now!'—will change to 'crucify him!' And by being crucified, he will become the agent of God's salvation available to all, even the ones who deny or betray him. **Questions:** 1. How do I discern when it is right to speak publicly for Christ to someone, and when is it right to keep quiet and wait for the opportune time? 2. Do I ever say one thing about my faith, and then turn around and do something contrary? How do I deny or betray Jesus? 3. Do I take time, from time to time, to 'anoint' Jesus with my love personally in private prayer, telling him how much I love him? Do I worship and adore him publicly with others, as Mary did before the banquet guests?

**Prayer:** Lord, why do I hesitate to show how much I love you? How can I have the reckless love of Mary, to lavish my love on you in public, flagrantly, extravagantly, unconcerned about what others might think? Or even in private, to personally fall at your feet, to touch you with my love, as she did with her hair? Lord, I love you more than I may say or show. Lord, lead me to say and show my love for you, more and more. May the fragrance of my love for you anoint you in this moment and surround you from the rising of the sun to its setting every day. Amen.

**Day 142.** Read 2 Samuel 1.1–2.11; John 12.20.50;  
Psalm 118.19-29; and Proverbs 15.27-28.

## Thoughts & Questions For Reflection:

**Samuel:** Even though it means safety for him and his family, David takes no pleasure in the death of the one who sought his own death. Instead, he uses the musical gifts God gave him to create an eloquent song of lament for Saul and his son, Jonathan. He even commanded all his own followers to learn and sing it. In another magnanimous gesture, David sends his condolences to Saul's kindred who recovered his body and buried it, and commends them for their daring act of kindness. Faithful to God's leadings, David inquires of the Lord where he should go next. At God's bidding, he makes Hebron his home. There his own tribe of Judah comes and anoints him as their king. But Abner, the commander of Saul's army who had survived the defeat, had taken another son of Saul and made him king over the rest of Israel. The scene is set for division and civil war in Israel. God's plan, revealed when he first sent Samuel to anoint David as king of all Israel, still awaits its fulfillment. **Questions:** 1. When disaster or difficulty happen to people that

trouble me, do I rejoice or feel compassion? What does this reveal about my character and spirit? 2. Do I seek God's guidance for my decisions day-by-day? Who helps me discern courses of action to take when the decision-making is difficult?

**John:** 'We would like to see Jesus.' These foreigners first approached Philip, who has a Greek name, because he shared at least somewhat their heritage and culture. There was affinity. Philip went to Andrew, and together they approach Jesus. 'The hour has come!' Jesus responds. Now God is drawing even the nations to himself through Jesus' teaching. Predicting his crucifixion and believing it to be the turning point of God's whole plan of redemption, Jesus proclaims: 'I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.' All people. People of every race and culture, every continent throughout the world. Everyone is welcome and accepted at the foot of the cross. But despite the miraculous signs he has done already, there is conflict and confusion. More than four centuries earlier, through the prophet, Isaiah, God had predicted the disbelief that met Jesus, just as he had prophesied Christ's actual cross. But many did believe, even people of prominence. Like Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night, the powerful or important people who believed in Jesus kept it quiet. They were afraid they would be put out of the religious community for following Jesus. If someone loses their life for faithfully following Jesus and sharing the Good News of new life available through faith in him, they will live eternally. But whoever goes their own way, and seeks to preserve their own life through their own means, will lose it. Everyone will be judged. Jesus won't judge anyone. The Word he has spoken will be everyone's judge, because it is the Father's Word, not his own.

**Questions:** 1. How am I 'losing my life' for Jesus and the Gospel? Am I truly committed to Jesus to such a degree that I spend my being for him and his work? Or am I giving up only part of my life to him and reserving others parts for myself? 2. Who among my acquaintances still does not believe and still needs a relationship with Jesus? How can I 'lift up' Jesus and his love for them through my words and actions so they are drawn to Jesus and can share eternal life? 3. Do I sometimes hesitate to commend Jesus or even mention my relationship with Jesus? What am I afraid of?

**Prayer:** Lord, you laid down your life on the cross for me and everyone I know. I will never look into the eyes of someone whom you do not want to live with you forever. That is why you went to the cross; so that when you were lifted up in such suffering, willingly endured, all people would see the passionate love you have for them and for all. Lord, may my every word and act this day commend you to everyone I meet. May everyone around me see you lifted up in my attentive listening, my caring responses, my compassionate, servant actions. And as I lift you up in word and deed, may they be drawn to love you and live with you in faith forever. Amen.

**Day 143.** Read 2 Samuel 2.12–3.39; John 13.1-30;  
Psalm 119.1-16; and Proverbs 15.29-30.

## Thoughts & Questions For Reflection:

**Samuel:** The war went on for years. The worst kind of war—civil war between kindred. All were children of Israel. As David's side grew stronger and stronger, Saul's descendants declined; until finally his son made a fatal blunder. He insulted Abner, the proud commander of Saul's army. Bitterly, he swore an oath to turn the whole kingdom over to David. A man of action from first to last, he quickly followed through on his promise. But on his way back from the parley, David's own army commander—and cousin—murdered the unsuspecting Abner, without David's knowledge. The whole peace agreement is in danger. To demonstrate his innocence, David himself walked in the funeral procession and mourned for Abner. David fasted and even refused food, invoking a curse on himself in an oath if he broke it. David's transparent character and honesty convinced—and pleased—the people. **Questions:** 1. When conflict has developed, am I willing and eager to make peace, or do I tend to hold a grudge? 2. Do I allow my true feelings to show to others, as David did?

**John:** The whole world was tilting - turning upside down for Peter and the other disciples. Whatever is Jesus thinking? The crisis is coming. The time for action is here. So Jesus leaps into action. He takes off his cloak, grabs a basin of water and a towel, and washes his disciples' feet. In that day and that dusty climate, it was the custom to show hospitality by washing the guests' feet. The work was done by the lowest person present—a slave, servant, or the youngest, if they couldn't afford servants. Not the Master. None of the disciples would stoop so low, and so the feet of all went unwashed. Until Jesus bends low with the basin. Peter protests, but Jesus sweeps his ignorance aside. 'If I don't wash you, you have no part in me! I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done. If I, your master, have washed your feet, so you also should wash one another's. The great one is the one who serves...who spends their life for others, because they love as I do...even the one who is unclean...who betrays.' Jesus washes all their feet: impetuous Peter, who will deny three times he even knows Jesus; the others who will all forsake him and flee; and even Judas, who will betray him with a kiss. To show a special sign of love for Judas...and to fulfill the prophecy in scripture...Jesus dips a piece of bread and feeds Judas. Judas gets up and goes to do his own appointed work. The plan of God is unfolding. **Questions:** 1. Have I allowed Jesus to "wash" me? That is, have I truly accepted Christ's sacrificial death for me and committed myself to follow him, as shown by being baptized into Christ's own death and resurrection? 2. How is my own foot washing (serving others) going? Am I serving as Christ served, loving as Christ loved, even the proud or undeserving? 2. Do I accept Christ's feeding me in his Supper? Do I truly draw my strength from him?

**Prayer:** The incessant war goes on without and within. Everywhere around me people scramble to be served and not to serve. In myself, I am no different, Lord. I wait for someone else to take the first step to serve. I look for my own benefit and fail even to recognize opportunities to stoop and serve. Lord, wash me and make me new. Truly new. Form in me the new nature of the perfect child of God, Jesus your Son. Remind me day by day that I have been washed...not with water only but with his blood that

truly cleanses and renews the nature within me. And let me seek in every situation the basin of water and the way in which I can wash others with your love. Amen.

**Day 144.** Read 2 Samuel 4.1-6.23; John 13.31-14.14;  
Psalm 119.17-32; and Proverbs 15.31-32.

## Thoughts & Questions For Reflection:

**Samuel:** Suddenly all the problems of the past are resolved and life opens up into a very pleasant place. The civil war ends with the death of the opposing son of Saul treacherously slain by two subordinates. David, rather than rewarding them, orders them executed, showing that he had nothing to do with their actions, nor approved of them. All Israel comes to make David king over the whole nation. The elders and leaders make a compact with David, anointing him king. How about a new royal city for the new king—a new capital for the nation? The heavily-defended fortress of Zion falls to David's forces and becomes the City of David. There are still many enemies. The Philistines wage relentless war against Israel. Before every battle, David inquires of God not only whether to fight but also how. God is leading Israel through David, his instrument. David desires most of all that God be the center of the nation in Zion physically. He brings back the Ark of the Covenant, so holy that when a man reaches out to touch it to stop it from falling he is killed instantly. David is deeply shocked...and humbled by the realization of how holy and powerful God truly is. The Bible story says simply, "David was afraid of the Lord and said, 'How can the ark of God come to me?'" Despite all the success, David still sees himself as he really is: a sinner in need of God's grace. More carefully, to the fanfare of trumpets, he brings the ark into Jerusalem, attended by the priests appointed by God to be handling the holy things. David himself, though king, strips down to his linen undergarment and leaps and dances in joy before the ark. Others may scoff, even his wife; but his whole heart is wrapped in love for the Lord. **Questions:** 1. In those periods when it seems everything is going right in my life, do I tend to draw even closer to God, or to forget God in all the excitement and success? 2. Do I inquire of God as David did, before every important decision, to discern the proper course? 3. Have I experienced the holiness of God and, consequently, my own unworthiness by comparison? How does God's graciousness and compassion become even greater when I truly begin to comprehend his holiness and, also, his love for me personally? How does that awareness change the way I act toward God and especially toward other people?

**John:** If you were to die tomorrow, what would you do tonight? Jesus calls his closest followers to share supper together. He talks with them intimately...and directly. "I will not be with you much longer." Shock and disbelief, tinged with deep sorrow, are the response. "Where will you go?" Peter asks, and Jesus simply responds, "Where you cannot follow." Jesus has a path to walk which no one else can walk, a mission that is his alone. But if he walks this way, then the way will be opened up for everyone who wants to follow. He will

become the Way. He makes an astounding claim, that on anyone else's lips would be a lie: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through me." In what might seem, to those who don't know who he is, to be the uttermost example of vanity the world has witnessed, he gives a new Commandment, as once God gave the commandments to Moses. 'Love one another; as I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know you are my followers, if you love one another so.' That is why he can make the most amazing claim of all to them: 'Anyone who puts their faith in me will do the works I do, and even greater works, because I am going to the Father.' Greater works than Jesus, God's Son? Anything the believer asks for in his name, according to his heart's desire and for his honor, Jesus will do. Anything. It is his promise, and it is in his power. **Questions:** 1. How do I love others as Jesus loves me? 2. What 'greater works' am I doing for Jesus, as I open myself totally to his service and allow him to work in and through me as he promised? How is Jesus using me to accomplish his salvation purposes in my situation in life?

**Prayer:** Oh Lord, teach me to dance to the music of your love for me! Why can't I strip away all the pride and pretense just to dance before you? Why can't I lose my Self in my love for you, to just be before you, seeking not my Self but your pleasure and delight? I think that would delight you most, to see me dancing before you with delight. Strip away the stony Self inside that stands aloof, off in the corner, squelching the joyous, childlike, free spirit that would dance unselfconsciously before you. Keep playing your sweet music for me, until you teach me to dance. Make my whole life a dance for you, my Beloved; and let my every movement bring joy to your heart. Amen.

**Day 145.** Read 2 Samuel 7.1–8.18; John 14.15-31;  
Psalm 119.33-48; and Proverbs 15.33.

## Thoughts & Questions For Reflection:

**Samuel:** What do you do when you have succeeded in your personal goals in life? Imagine rising from shepherd to sovereign! Answer: deepen your spiritual relationship with God. David, now king, has rest from all his enemies. He lives in a luxurious palace. What can he do for God, to show his gratitude? Why not build him a luxurious house to live in, too? David's royal chaplain and prophet, Nathan, responds, "Great idea, boss!" But God has a different plan, totally. "Will you build me a house? When did I ever ask you—or anyone—for a house?" Then God reveals a part of his plan: "I will build a house for you...a dynasty...and One will come from you who will rule a kingdom that will never end." Solomon, his physical son, will build God a physical house—a temple—where God will be known and worshipped. But it will take another Son of David, one dying on a cross and rising on the third day afterwards, to build him a new temple, a new house, his own mystical, spiritual body, the Church, all who love and believe and follow him. In this

House he will dwell. He will live in his people. **Questions:** 1. How has God given me 'rest' from all my enemies by sending the Son of David to die and rise for me? 2. How will I use my resources and abilities to build God's kingdom, as David desired to do in his time? What important things do I want to do for God before I go on to life eternal with him? 3. In what ways does God want to shower his blessings upon me, so he builds his kingdom through me and my actions? Who can help me discern what God intends, as Nathan helped David?

**John:** Love and obedience sound so inconsistent with one another. Like oil and water, how can they ever mix? Love knows no constraint, suffers no compulsion of any kind, and obedience is all about constraint placed on the self. "Anyone who loves me," Jesus says, "will obey my teaching." Love does what the Beloved commands. Is it compulsion to command? Not on love's lips. It is only the compulsion of love to one being freely bound to obedience by the bond of love they deeply desire. Anyone who follows Jesus is freely bound... and bound to be free. For Jesus, in the same breath, promises, "My Father will love anyone who loves and obeys me, and we will come and make our home with her or him." This is the promise: living in intimate relationship. Love. This is why Jesus can say, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you, not as the world gives. Don't let your hearts be troubled, and don't be afraid." He goes away—he died on a cross, he lay in the tomb, he rose and ascended to the Father—so that he and the Father—the Living God—can come and live in you, and so that I can be 'in Jesus' in full, loving relationship with the Father. Don't you love such a God? Don't you want to obey such a God, who loves you so? So go ahead, love. And obey. No obedience, no peace. Know obedience—the obedience of loving Christ—and know peace. **Questions:** 1. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being a forest fire inferno and 1 being a pilot light on a stove, where would I rate my love for God right now? Is it getting hotter or cooler? Why? What can "turn up the temperature"? 2. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being 'right away' and 1 being 'maybe someday,' how quick and complete am I to obey God when he asks me to do something or make a change in my life? Why? What would make me more obedient to God? 3. How does it change my attitude and actions to realize Jesus' promise that he and the Father want to take up residence in me and have me as part of their love for one another?

**Prayer:** Speak, Lord, your servant is listening. And sometimes, I even obey. It's my love that is the problem, as you know better than I do. Command me to love more, and give what you command—that kind of selfless love that only you give. The world does not know that love, or live that love; and I love too much this loveless world. Let me love with such a timeless love that I leap to obedience the moment I hear your voice...the voice of the One I love. Make my obedient heart your home, and rule it however you wish. Only then will I know peace...only if you command...and I obey...out of love. Amen.

**Day 146.** Read 2 Samuel 9.1–11.27; John 15.1-27;

Psalm 119.49-64; and Proverbs 16.1-3.

## Thoughts & Questions For Reflection:

**Samuel:** What do you do with potential problems, pretenders to your throne? How about reward them richly by lavishing your favor on them? David does. He seeks out any survivors of Saul, his former master and sovereign who sought his life. Anyone else might have done so out of practicality...to eliminate any possible future threat of revenge or uprising against his own rule. Not the man after God's own heart. David seeks out the only surviving grandson of Saul and invites him to share intimate meal fellowship at the king's own table. Another king might have balked, if only because the man was crippled. Not much of a pleasing presence when the king is entertaining important people. He is welcome to David's table, however. He is a man after God's own heart. Mostly. There is another part of his own heart that is a problem. Success is corrupting David. At the time when kings go out to fight against the enemies that threaten the realm, David stays behind. The king is dethroned not from enemies around him but by the desires of his own heart. First, the desire...coveting. Then, like dominoes: adultery, lying and, finally, murder. From the man after God's own heart. The king dethrones himself...and the whole kingdom will suffer the consequences of his fall. And most of all—the heart hurt the most—was God's. 'The thing David did displeased...hurt...God. **Questions:** 1. Do I tend to be most conscious of God and concerned to follow him when things are going poorly or well? Why? 2. How and why does falling in one area of my life always affect other areas...or lead to other failures? 3. Why do I do things that hurt God, even though I know how much God loves me? How does it affect my attitudes and actions to know that, like David, God loves me still, even though I fail and fall?

**John:** Ouch! Okay, Jesus, you are the vine, and I am the branch, but why do you have to prune me? Why do you have to cut to "the quick," that deep place, below the dead wood, where there is life? Oh, that's the point. Life. So I will bear more fruit. That means more life flowing in me. That means more life flowing through me. What's my alternative? Oh. The compost heap. The burn pile. That's what happens to dead wood. Even that makes room for new life...removing the dead wood so the sunlight shows into the orchard more. What a promise you give: if I remain in you and your words remain in me, I will bear much fruit. And bearing much fruit is what gives glory to God and demonstrates true discipleship. Cut away, God, however much it hurts. I want it not to hurt at all, but you know best. If there were another way...a better way...you would take it...but it is only by the way of death...of cutting away...of the cross...that life comes. You no longer call me your servant; you call me friend. You chose me and appointed me to bear fruit...fruit that will last eternally. You are the vine, and I am your branch. Bear fruit in me, of your new character formed within me, and of people touched deeply with your love, turned into your friends, too. Cut away, my Friend. My true Friend, cut in whatever way you choose! **Questions:** 1. Why is it a spiritual law and truth that I grow most and bear most fruit for God through the difficult times and experiences of my life and not the pleasant ones? 2. How is God 'pruning' me now? What does God seem to be leading me through in order

to lead me to the next level of faith and fruitfulness for him? 3. How does knowing that Jesus looks on me as his friend, and not his servant, change my attitudes and actions towards him? Towards others?

**Prayer:** Lord, I like the easy times. I like the sunrises on the misty mountains and the spectacular sunsets by the seashore. Why can't I live in picture- postcard land? Instead, you offer me the cross. What kind of friend are you? That unsettling surprise demand. That neighbor who is anything but neighborly. The 'loved one' who is anything but loving...or lovable. That worker who I can't seem to work things out with. I just can't. But that's okay. You never said I could. You only said you would...you would work things out, if I allow you. In fact, you promised. You are the vine. I am but the branch. I need your life to flow to me. Without you, I can do nothing. Without you, I am, quite literally, toast, a useless branch only worth burning. But not to you. Not in you. You call me your friend; and because you say it, it is true. In you I will bear fruit...despite myself. In you, I will bear much fruit. In you I will do what I long to do most in my heart of hearts, give glory to the God who sent you to the cross for me, sowing you like a dead seed in the soil, so new life may sprout... for me... in me. You be the vine, Lord; and with you loving me so, I will be your branch, letting you have your way with me. Amen.

**Day 147.** Read 2 Samuel 12.1-31; John 16.1-33;  
Psalm 119.65-80; and Proverbs 16.4-5.

## Thoughts & Questions For Reflection:

**Samuel:** Question: how do you correct the king, caught in a deadly error, who can order you killed? Answer: carefully, especially if you are sent by God, because God wants the erroneous back on the road to relationship with him. Nathan, the prophet, resorts to entrapment in order to free David from his deadly course. A king is supposed to judge and to judge justly. Nathan sets the king up to become his own judge. And it works. David repents. He doesn't plead or excuse; he simply admits, "I have sinned." In that instant, David is again 'a man after God's own hear,' as before. "The Lord has taken away your sin," Nathan replies. That quick? Has taken it away? Perfect past tense of the verb to be, as in gone and forgotten? Coveting? Adultery? Lying? Murder? Yes. Such is the forgiveness of God. Oh, there are consequences to come. God is holy and just, and so is the universe he created. For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction, in the spiritual as well as the physical world. There are consequences to come for David himself from those most affected by his misdeeds, his own family, in fact. 'You always hurt those you love,' and they will hurt you in return. There are consequences for the kingdom—his area of influence given him by God. But not the ultimate consequence of being cut off from God. With God, forgiveness is really real. Really. **Questions:** 1. When I am in the

wrong, do I readily admit it or tend to deny, explain, or excuse it? Why? 2. Who has suffered most by my wrongdoings? How have consequences come back upon me personally from my misdeeds? 3. When I turn to God in repentance, trusting in the forgiveness God gives me because of Christ's cross, do I truly trust my sin is forgiven, or do I find myself wondering? Do I 'hedge my bets' by trying to do good deeds thinking to earn or deserve God's favor, instead of trusting in Christ alone?

**John:** Good grief! For my sake? Good that you are going away? You're leaving me alone...good...for me? So the Holy Spirit will come? Give up a real, physical presence I can see, touch, and hear...for a spirit? Not a spirit...The Spirit. The Spirit who convicts the world...throws it in crisp, clear relief through the Light the Spirit alone can bring to bear...of sin and righteousness. The Spirit who guides us into all Truth. Not just a truth or some truth, but All Truth. The Spirit who will speak not his own words but exactly what he hears from the Father and the Son. And guide me into the Truth. The night before he 'went away' by dying on the cross, to rise again, and 'go away' to the Father when he ascended on high, Jesus said: 'You will weep and mourn while the world rejoices, but your grief will turn to joy.' Good grief! That's exactly it, good grief. Don't worry when the world rejects you or assaults you. Good grief! "In this world you will have trouble" Jesus promises, "But take heart because I have overcome the world!" By his good grief. By his humble coming and his horrific cross. By his glorious resurrection and more glorious ascension. Go away, Jesus, so I will see you, not with my eyes of flesh, but with the eyes the Spirit alone can create. Come, Holy Spirit, bring on the good grief! **Questions:** 1. Why is it so much harder to walk by faith than by physical sight? Why is it so much better? 2. How does the Spirit keep God's promise to guide me into all truth? What do his Word, the fellowship-relationships with other believers, praying, worshipping, serving, sharing the faith have to do with the Spirit's guiding me into all truth? 3. When I am feeling sorry for myself and complaining about Jesus leaving me all alone to do some task that seems hard, how can the Spirit transform that bad grief into 'good grief'—that is, increase my faith and trust in Jesus even though he is not experientially present to me at the moment?

**Prayer:** I want you present all the time, for my sake, Lord, more than for yours. I would like to live every moment always knowing you are near...not by faith...but by sense. By hearing, if it must be. Best by sight. But I know you have your own purposes. You have your own being. No, you are Being. That's why I want you near, not giving your attention to someone somewhere else. Yet, you trust me to be on my own...to make decisions and do deeds on my own...because you have sent your Spirit to live within me and act through me. If it is better for me, than let me live always in your Spirit, by faith, for that is what it means. I have your Word. I have your living presence within other believers. I meet you in bread and wine, your true body and blood, in worship where you consent to be present. But not visible. Not audible. Hidden, seen and heard only by your Spirit. Guide me into this truth, Holy Spirit. Guide me into all Truth...into life lived through faith in the One who is the Way, The Truth and The Life, O Holy Spirit. Amen.

# Through The Bible In One Year: Week 21

## Sunday Worship Lessons

First Lesson (Old Testament): 2 Samuel 6.12-22

Psalm: 119.41-48

Second (New Testament) Lesson: John 16.5-15, 20-22, 33.

Theme: Dancing Before God

### Sunday Scripture Selection and Theme Explanation:

The love of God—the active love which God directs towards people—leads to love in people, in response. Chosen and called because of God’s own decision and not his deserving, delivered from enemies and death on many occasions, blessed abundantly beyond believing, David desires to show his gratitude and love for God by bringing the Ark of the Covenant ‘home’ to Jerusalem. Wrapped in love, David strips off his royal robes and the restrained dignity customary in the Middle East and dances before the Ark in his linen undergarment, making himself quite a sight for the people. His own wife upbraids him, but he simply replies, “It was before the Lord.” It was for God alone he was dancing, not for human benefit. Jesus, the night before he died—for God’s ‘benefit,’ in the sense of out of obedience to God’s will alone—promised that by going away believers would be better off, because the Holy Spirit would come and live in them. The Holy Spirit would guide them into all Truth. Life for the faithful is to be lived like a dance before the One who loves us and whom we love. Even though not visible to the physical eye, the eyes of faith know that it is before God that all our actions and words are done...out of joyful, loving response for God’s first loving and redeeming us.