

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

SEPTEMBER 21 - 25, 2020

Above All

8.30 - 11.22

BOOK OF COLOSSIANS



MONDAY

Colossians 1:29 – 2:1

*“To this end I strenuously **contend** with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me. I want you to know how hard I am **contending** for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally.”*
(Colossians 1:29-2:1)

Paul contends for the church in Colossae and in Laodicea, some of whom he has met and some he has never met. So, he prays for them and clearly loves them. Paul plants churches, and this is how he plants and waters them—by writing them this letter as the Holy Spirit instructs him.

We too contend for people and for God’s kingdom to come and His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. More specifically, we have contended for our marriages, for the health of our spouse, for the souls of our children, and for others when they seem lost. After all, someone contended for us. And more than that, God contends for us.

Once I was heartsick over an Air Force buddy who turned to God only to turn away a week later. I was moved to fast one week for him. I contended for him. At that same time, I was reading a book about being specific in prayer. So I “gave it a shot.” I prayed, “Let Yale get so bored that he takes down his Phillips New Testament and opens it and reads something so exciting that he has to share it with me. Exactly one week later, the following Sunday, there’s a knock on my barracks room door. It’s Yale with his New Testament open, and he wants to share a verse with me.

This was the verse: *“It is not that you have chosen Me; but it is I who have chosen you. I have appointed you to go and bear fruit that will be lasting; so that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give it to you”* (John 15:16, Phillips). My friend Yale was saying that he was going to be “lasting fruit.” And that is what happened. Now 55 years later, Yale is a retired pastor, father of 4 daughters, grandfather, and great-grandfather.

And look at all the lasting fruit that has come from Paul’s contending. Let us contend for God’s purposes by making His priorities our priorities.

QUESTIONS

To contend means “to expend energies to realize a desired outcome.”
What are you contending for?

PRAYERS FOR CHI ALPHA SAN DIEGO, BRANDON AND KENDRA KERTSON

Pray for the mental health of college students. We know COVID-19 is taking a toll on our nation’s mental health and that college students are already susceptible to mental health issues. Pray for opportunities to share the healing power of Jesus and tools to help students.

TUESDAY

Genesis 18:16-33; John 10:27; Revelation 3:20

*“My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of **complete understanding**, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely Christ.”*
(Colossians 2:2)

Complete understanding between two people requires conversation. When no one else will have a conversation with us, God will. He is always available for that. And He wants to hear about anything and everything. Sometimes it may feel like a one-way conversation, which is better than no conversation. And believe me—**He is listening** and He hears everything, even when we don't hear what He is saying to us.

One of the best ways to get to know God and to experience Him is to have a conversational relationship with Him (Jesus and/or the Holy Spirit).

One of the most famous conversations in the Bible occurred in Genesis between Abraham and God. The subject of the conversation was God's upcoming judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah where Abraham's nephew Lot was living. *“Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”* (Genesis 18:25 NKJV) Abraham asked God? Did the question mean that Abraham thought he was more righteous than God? Probably not. It was a rhetorical question. But, at the same time, it was a bold question.

Haven't we felt like asking God that same question (Surely You will do the right thing, Lord, right?) at some point in our lives?

The youth pastor of the church my wife and I grew up in introduced us to the idea of "conversational Bible study." In this approach, as I read along in the Bible [at a slow pace], I ask the Lord questions about the meaning and implications for us. I make comments like: "Wow, I really like this" or "Huh, I don't understand this" or "Sorry, but I don't like what I'm reading here." Make your Bible reading a conversation with God today.

QUESTIONS

What will you have a conversation with God about today?

PRAYERS FOR CHI ALPHA SAN DIEGO, BRANDON AND KENDRA KERTSON

Pray for the creativity of the Chi Alpha staff team at San Diego State to reach new students in an online setting in which students don't really want to be online any more than they have to since they are required to be online for school. Pray for open doors and divine connections.

WEDNESDAY

John 5:39; Romans 10:17; 2 Chronicles 20; 2 Kings 19

"All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Jesus."
(Colossians 2:3)

Want to make friends with Jesus? To make His acquaintance, the Bible is a good book to investigate. It contains His biography and His teachings. It is inspired by the Holy Spirit, so it reads like a love letter to us.

If we want to know Jesus, we can start by talking to Him. What was He like? What is He like? What was He about? What is He about? How do we find out? Jesus Himself said the Scriptures testify of Him (John 5:39). And He was continually quoting from the Scriptures to make His points. He said, for example, that *"man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God"* (Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4).

Paul said God is able to do abundantly beyond what we could ever ask or think (Ephesians 3:20). And yet we have a limited view of God. How are we going to expand our view of God to truly know Him? One way is through the reading, studying, and meditating on the stories and words of Scripture.

Sometimes the circumstances of life threaten to overwhelm us. In the Old Testament, opposing armies amassed against kings of Judah on two different occasions. What did Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah do? The Bible records what they did. Each sought God

and God delivered both of them—one by telling the army to sing in worship; the other, by causing the opposing army to mysteriously retreat (2 Chronicles 20:1-30; 2 Kings 19:10-36).

The Bible says in seven places that God is not a respecter of persons (Romans 2:13). In other words, what God has done for others, He will do for us. But sometimes our faith seems insufficient in the face of what we are going through. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17).

QUESTIONS

What are you facing right now? Pray, then wait and see how God answers. Meditate on the Scriptures to know God better and appropriate a faith large enough to face your circumstances with God in your corner.

PRAYERS FOR CHI ALPHA SAN DIEGO, BRANDON AND KENDRA KERTSON

Pray for the two staff couples who are preparing to pioneer new Chi Alphas: Isaac and Daniela Shoulderblade, who are going to Southern New England in 2021, and Jeff and Kelsey Chalko-Mique, who will pioneer Chi Alpha in Hawaii in 2022. Pray for new laborers to be raised up in their place in San Diego.

THURSDAY

Psalm 119:9; 1 Corinthians 10:1-11; Jude 1:23

“I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments.” (Colossians 2:4)

None of us wants to be deceived or swayed from the truth or stray from God’s path for us. Paul didn’t want this for the church at Colossae. Jesus doesn’t want this for His people, which is why He sent us the Holy Spirit. It’s why Paul wrote his letters to the churches. Paul says it’s one reason the Scriptures were published—for our benefit and learning—so we wouldn’t have to learn the hard way.

David was a “man after God’s own heart.” He regularly sought God’s counsel and guidance. And when David did not do this—when he sinned against the Lord and against Uriah—and Nathan pointed it out, David repented from his sin. All of this is for our example and learning.

Sampson was gifted with great strength. And the gifts of God are “without repentance.” But Sampson did not continually seek God’s guidance—maybe not at all. His pride led to his fall (Proverbs 16:18). But even this is an example to us, as it may have been to David, to learn from the mistakes of others, to seek God’s counsel as a guiding principle in our lives.

Growing up as a young adult in church, we had regular Christian Endeavor (C.E.) meetings every Sunday evening. At the close of each meeting, we would say the benediction prayer together: “Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, oh Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.”

A similar prayer is found in Psalm 139:23-24: “Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

Paul urges us “to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is our true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Then we will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will” (Romans 12:1-2). Seek God’s counsel and guidance today.

QUESTIONS

What have we allowed into our lives that does not conform with the kingdom of God? What have we not brought before God for His review? “[It’s] the little foxes that ruin the vineyards,” Solomon wrote (Song of Solomon 2:15).

PRAYERS FOR CHI ALPHA SAN DIEGO, BRANDON AND KENDRA KERTSON

With COVID-19 and justice issues at the forefront of our nation’s mind, Chi Alpha San Diego has begun to partner with several other student groups on campus who work in areas of social justice. Pray for strategic partnerships that would further the gospel and God’s kingdom on our campus and in our world.

FRIDAY

Genesis 18:16-33; John 10:27; Revelation 3:20

“For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how disciplined you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.” (Colossians 2:5)

Jesus had an unwavering faith in His Father. He believed His Father for even the most difficult things. And we can, too. Paul saw this faith in the Colossian church. And God saw this faith in Job, which, according to the introduction to the book of Job, is what got Job in trouble.

God asked Satan if he had seen anyone as faithful as His servant Job. Satan said, “Sure, and why not? You treat him so well.” God replied, “Even if I let you treat him badly, he will not budge in his faith in Me. I believe in Job.” So Job lost his children and his possessions. His wife turned on him. His friends assumed Job had done something wrong and offensive for God to have sent all these misfortunes to him.

True, Job did question God. But Job knew his Redeemer was alive (Job 19:25). And Job said, “*When I have been tried, I will come forth as gold*” (Job 23:10). And Job did “*come forth as gold*” in the end. And so did the Colossian church (Colossians 2:5). And so will we, if we stay the course.

G. Campbell Morgan, in his book *The Answers of Jesus to Job*, posited James 1:12 as Jesus’ answer to Job’s questions and the answer to our questions. Job’s question—and often our question—is: “Why is this happening to me?”

God's answer to the question is: *"Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the **crown of life** that the Lord has promised to those who love Him"* (James 1:12).

G. Campbell Morgan believed the "**crown of life**" to be the crowning moment of a person's life or the reason God made you and me. In other words, if we persevere in our faith like Jesus and Job did, we will realize the purpose for which God made us.

QUESTIONS

How is your faith today? Hang in there now and for the foreseeable future. Call on the Holy Spirit to help you and others receive the crown of life.

PRAYERS FOR CHI ALPHA SAN DIEGO, BRANDON AND KENDRA KERTSON

Pray for our campus presidents and boards, as well as the directors of Chi Alpha San Diego, Brandon and Kendra Kertson, as they navigate the daily changes that this time brings. Pray for peace and discernment of the Holy Spirit to do the safe, yet strategic thing in this time.

Sources:

- G. Campbell Morgan, *The Answers of Jesus to Job* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 1973).

