

Joy's Corner...

GOD'S INCREDIBLE LOVE

God is not sorry He made you. He has plans for you. Silently, tell Him your story. He can read your mind. Remember, God created your brain.

The crush of noise, the silence of solitude, the pain of your body or emotions, even honest guilt, is prison enough. In some ways, we all have a touch of prison-life. The truth is that God specializes in being close to people in jail.

No matter WHERE you are or what you have done, God really does have plans for you. "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jer. 29:11, NIV).

Jesus stands at the door of your heart just waiting to hear you say, "Come in. You are welcome in my heart." JOY and PEACE walk in with Him. They accompany the presence of the Lord—no matter where you are, even if you are in prison. Jesus is GOD'S INCREDIBLE LOVE. John 3:16 (NIV) says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." Whoever means YOU.

Eugene Peterson's The Message puts it this way: "This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life" (John 3:16, TM).

John 3:17 (TM) goes on to assure us: "God didn't go to all the trouble of sending his Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. He came to help, to put the world right again."

But, you may be wondering, "what about my crimes—and my sins? Well, just let Him into your heart. Tell him your story. He knows how to forgive. Actually He did that already at the cross. In 1 John 1:9, His promise is this:

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Jesus is ALWAYS at the door of your heart, waiting to come in. He assures us: "...lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matt. 28:20).

In time, JOY will shine on your face; PEACE will grow in your heart. You really can live in His plan of LOVE right where you are, right now.

"MOM LEARNS"

Betty B.

The first time our son Mike went to Junior Camp he was nine years old. It was the first time ever to be away from home alone and he wanted his older brothers to know he was "just as big as they are!"

When he got home the first thing he showed me was a small plastic trophy he had earned by being the fastest mini-bike rider in the races! He never knew how my heart nearly stopped when he told me that! I wondered just what "was the matter with those people at that camp anyhow". allowing my little boy to ride a mini-bike at his age!

But, life being what it is, and boys being what they are, and our Papa being what he was, that was only the beginning of the "bikes" for this family, and I'm not talking about "bicycles!"

Well, one day little Mike decided that Mama should have a lesson in riding his 75 CC motorcycle. The other boys had tried again and again to get me to ride their larger bikes, but I am a coward at heart regarding some things, and right then, it was motorcycles! But little Mike was already practicing his salesmanship qualities; he finally talked me into trying it.

Across the road where the cows were pastured in the hay field seemed the ideal place to begin. He gave me the short course on the handy items called the "Clutch, gas pedal (which was on the handlebars of all places) and the pegs (?)"

“Hmm, doesn’t seem too complicated.” I thought. Yeah, right!

So I began creeping along barely keeping it upright when Mike yelled, “Give it a little gas.” OK, I can do that. So, with a little more gas I was soon nearly “cruising” on this cute little machine. Mike was running alongside yelling instructions, encouragement, and for all I know praying that Mom wouldn’t wreck his new motorcycle!

I seemed to be going along quite nicely when a slight rise in the ground as I approached the apple orchard threatened to kill the motor and it began to sputter. Again I heard my son yell, “Give it some more gas”, So-- I did. Plenty more!

In much less time that it takes to tell it, the bike was flipping nicely in the air one way and I was flipping another way, and with a loud thud! I found myself lying on the ground with a little green motorcycle lying_right beside me!

“Mama, Mama, are you all right?” my son was screaming. Who knows! I am in shock! “How did this happen to me” I wonder? Things were going so nicely!

Well, that little dickens, when he was sure I was still in one piece, picked up the little motorcycle and gravely announced, “Mama you have to get right back on it now, or you won’t ever want to ride again.” He was quite right! I didn’t want to ride it again, ever! He was also right about getting “right back on”, and though I shook like a leaf. I did as my son commanded. And that was the beginning of many pleasant times riding together after I got my own “bike”.

The point here is, no matter how many times you may fall, in whatever may come your way in life... get back up! Keep trying! Remember the four P’s. Patience, practice, perseverance and PRAYER!

Listening to Learn

By Meg Bucher

“My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.” - James 1:19-21 NLT

Silence is: “the absence of any sound or noise; stillness ...the state or fact of being silent; muteness ...absence or omission of mention, comment, or expressed concern.” The silent treatment has turned into ghosting. To ghost someone is to “suddenly end all contact with a person without explanation, especially in a romantic relationship.”

James says, in the verse above, “be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.” Anger is a necessary emotion, but the way we handle it is important. James tells us why: “human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.” Then, he says, “humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.” In other words ... **listen.** Tempers are lost and people are ghosted because we are disobedient to the Word planted in us. The Holy Spirit is faithful to convict us when we’re about to cross the line in anger ... but it’s our choice to listen. Paul wrote to the Ephesians,

“Don’t sin by letting anger control you. Don’t let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil.” - Ephesians 4:26-27 NLT

God created us to need each other. No where in Scripture does it say we have the right to give someone the silent treatment, ignore a brother or sister, or ghost someone out of anger.

Intersecting Faith and Life:

“Love prospers when a fault is forgiven, but dwelling on it separates close friends.” - Proverbs 17:9 NLT

Matthew recorded a conversation between Peter and Jesus:

“Then Peter came to him and asked, ‘Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?’ ‘No, not seven times,’ Jesus replied, ‘but seventy times seven.’” - Matthew 18:21-22 NLT

The Bible equips us with steps to repair relationships. God is faithful to place people in our lives purposefully. When we have responded in anger, and wreck a relationship, there are three things Scripture tells us to do:

1. Own our behavior.

“If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back. But if you are unsuccessful, take one or two other with you and go back again, so that everything you say may be confirmed by two or three witnesses. If the person still refuses to listen, take your case to the church. Then if he or she won’t accept the church’s decision, treat that person as a pagan or a corrupt tax collector.” - Matthew 18:15-17 NLT

2. Apologize.

Hurt people, hurt people. We can have forward loving compassion for others who are hurting by choosing to walk the road of forgiveness before we receive an apology. However, when we are responsible for hurting another person, it’s important to acknowledge the hurt we have caused, whether or not it was intentional. James wrote,

“Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.” - James 5:16 NLT

3. Lead with Love.

“Always forgiven, never loved less.” It’s a phrase I have said to my daughters over and over, and taught to communicate to their friends as well. Jesus’ command on how many times we are to forgive someone in the verses above ([Matthew 18:21-22](#)) allow us to safely assume He means, *always* forgive. Why? Because we are always forgiven.

“But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins ...” - 1 John 1:9 NLT

There is nothing we can do to outrun the love of God. The Bible says, “...nothing can ever separate us from God’s love.” - Romans 8:38 NLT

Learning to listen is hard. We are by nature very offend-able. Though it may seem easiest to ghost someone out of our lives, the truth is they were put there on purpose. Cutting them out only robs us of the reason they were there in the first place. Instead of running from the inevitably difficulty that is *relationships with other people* ...let’s aim to stay, and learn to listen.

How Can You Grow a Generous Heart

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

2 Corinthians 9:6-7

A man was walking one day when he heard a woman screaming hysterically. He looked over to see she was kneeling in front of her child. He was able to get the woman to calm down enough to discover the boy had swallowed a coin and couldn't breathe. So the man picked him up by his ankles, gave him a few shakes, and a quarter dropped to the ground.

"Thank you, sir!" the woman said. "You seemed to know just what to do to get the coin out. Are you a doctor?"

"No ma'am," replied the man, "I work for the IRS."

Many people today would identify with that little boy...and not just when it comes to paying taxes. Many feel like when they go to church, their pastor is trying to shake every last coin out of their pockets. And at the same time, many pastors feel that's what they have to do to get people to give!

But what if there was a better way...an attitude of generosity that didn't make giving feel like coercion or robbery? There is, and it's having a biblical idea of what money and giving is all about. You see, the resources we have are ultimately God's anyway. So whether you're a pastor or a churchgoer, it's not your money!

Giving is best done with that kind of humble attitude on both the giver's and receiver's part. So give graciously...and receive humbly. That's how you grow a generous heart in you and others!

Prayer Challenge:

Ask God to give you the right attitude toward giving to His Kingdom purposes.

Questions for Thought:

Why do you think so many people have such a hard time accepting biblical instruction on giving? How do you personally feel when you're asked to give money to a good cause?

AN AMAZING FACT....

Armadillos are among the strangest of God's creatures. Like their cousins, the anteaters, armadillos have a very long, sticky tongue to slurp up bugs as quickly as possible. They are also equipped with strong claws to tear open ant nests and to dig a burrow 15 feet long in which to bear their young. Unlike other mammals, the female armadillo always bears four young, which are always the same sex.

Some female armadillos have been known to give birth up to two years after they were captured! These "virgin births" are a result of the female's amazing ability to delay implantation of the fertilized egg. Armadillos are good swimmers, but because their heavy shell makes them sink they must swallow air to become more buoyant. If necessary, they can hold their breath for up to six minutes, and can even travel underwater, walking along the bottom of streams and ponds like a lobster.

The nine-banded armadillo is 29 to 36 inches long including the tail; it usually weighs 8 to 17 pounds. Armadillos make timid pets, partly because they sleep an average of 18 hours per day and only come out at twilight or when it's very cloudy because their eyes are sensitive to light. But some still say they can be housebroken and make good pets.

Generally, armadillos struggle in their coexistence with man. The greatest cause of death is automobiles. But most armadillos seen dead on the road weren't hit by the wheels. They have a habit of jumping straight up into the air when they are frightened. This increases their mortality rate on the road. Unfortunately, armadillos are also ideal creatures for many types of medical research. Their low body temperature causes them to have a very weak immune system. Because of this trait they are used in leprosy research because they are the

only animal besides humans that can get leprosy. In fact, some people have been known to contract leprosy from eating armadillos.

Perhaps this is one of the reasons the Bible says we shouldn't eat unclean animals. Many people mistakenly believe that Jesus abolished the health laws, but they were given for a purpose. There is a solid scientific basis behind each of these laws. God, who gave us life, wants to protect our health.

KEY BIBLE TEXT

"Nevertheless these shall ye not eat of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the hoof: as the camel, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you."

Leviticus 11:4

With God at Dawn

God Provides a Way of Escape

Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. Isaiah 53:10.

It is the mystery of God in the flesh, God in Christ, and divinity in humanity. Christ bowed down in unparalleled humility, that in His exaltation to the throne of God, He might also exalt those who believe in Him, to a seat with Him upon His throne. All who look upon Jesus in faith that the wounds and bruises that sin has made will be healed in Him, shall be made whole.

The themes of redemption are momentous themes, and only those who are spiritually minded can discern their depth and significance.... Faith and prayer are necessary in order that we may behold the deep things of

God. Our minds are so bound about with narrow ideas, that we catch but limited views of the experience it is our privilege to have. How little do we comprehend what is meant by the prayer of the apostle, when he says, "That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge...." Jesus beheld the human race, ignorant, apostate from God, standing under the penalty of the broken law; and He came to bring deliverance, to offer a complete pardon, signed by the Majesty of heaven. If man will accept this pardon, he may be saved; if he rejects it, he will be lost.

Jesus' Great Compassion

By Emma Danzey

Matthew 14:12-16 says, "John's disciples came and took his body and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus. When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, 'This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.' Jesus replied, 'They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.'"

When Jesus heard what had happened, He withdrew.

Have you ever gotten really difficult news and just needed a minute alone? Jesus had been

told by his closest friends that his cousin John the Baptist had been killed. This was a rough day in the life of Christ. His family member, friend, and front runner had been beheaded in prison for his ministry. Although this did not come as a surprise to Jesus, He knew this day would come, what we read here reveals to us a lot about Christ's heart and His perfect deity and humanity.

We see such authentic humanity in Jesus mourning his cousin. He stopped what he was doing and began to go to a place of solitude to grieve this loss. As he got onto a boat, he landed at the shoreline, only to find a large crowd. What would the King of Heaven do? He just lost a loved one, but the people in front of Him needed Him greatly. This is where we see His perfect deity.

He had compassion on them and healed their sick.

Right then, when Jesus saw the crowd, it says that He had compassion on them. In the moment of needing compassion and comfort Himself, we see Jesus have compassion upon others. This is not humanly normal, this is not a natural response. He could have easily claimed exhaustion, turned his boat in a different direction, or ignored them, but no, we see Jesus have compassion on them and heal their sick.

“They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.”

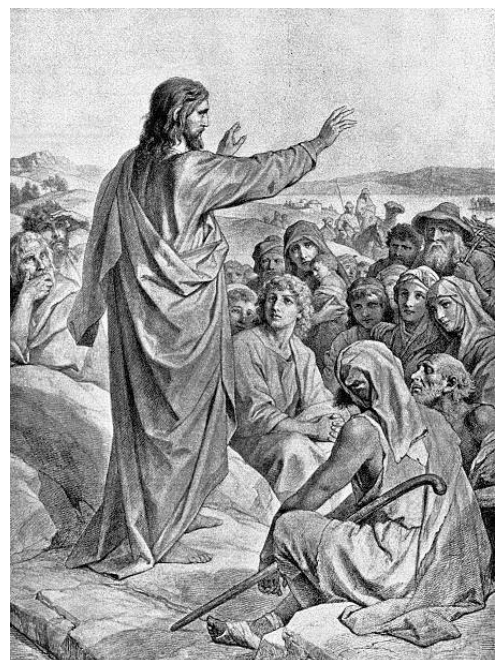
The disciples came to Jesus in the evening and tried to get Him to get away from the people. They told Him that it was getting late. They told Him to send the crowds away so that they could buy food. Perhaps they had genuine worry and concern for Jesus and wanted Him to have space to weep and grieve? Maybe they themselves were wanting a break? They could have also just been selfishly tired and wanting some alone time. Whatever their reasoning, it was not good enough for Christ to overlook the

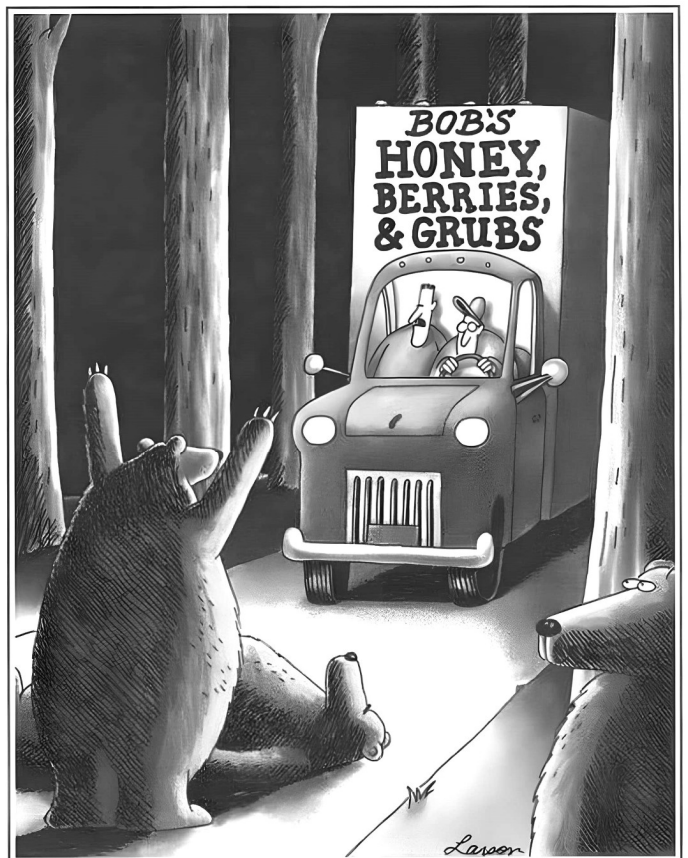
need of the people to eat. Jesus responded that the people did not need to go away, that the disciples needed to give them something to eat. Jesus refines us in this way as well. There are times when it would be much easier to ignore the needs of others in front of us, but He calls us to act and to show His love to them.

Following this comment, Jesus asked His disciples what they had to offer. There were five loaves of bread and two fish. Jesus direct the people where to sit, blessed the food and miraculously there was enough to feed everyone there including 12 baskets left over, one for each of the disciples. (Matthew 14:17-21) Following Jesus is not convenient, comfortable, or always easy, but there is great reward and provision when we say, “yes” to Him.

Intersecting Faith and Life:

How do you feel comforted knowing that Jesus had such a heart for His cousin, John the Baptist? What speaks to you personally about how Jesus had compassion on the crowd in the midst of His own personal grief? How do you see Christ's perfect deity in the way He pressed into the need of the 5000 over His own?

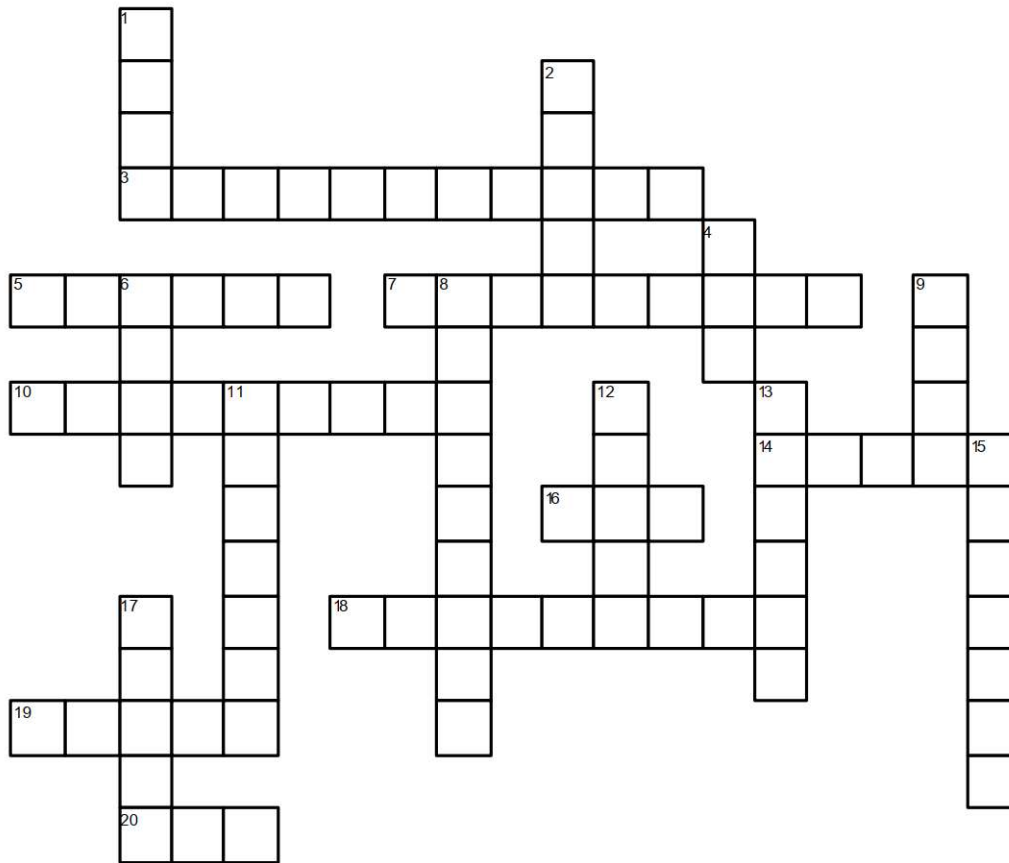




"Just stay in the cab, Vern ... maybe that bear's hurt and maybe he ain't."

DAVID'S FALL AND REPENTANCE

2 Samuel 11 - 12

**ACROSS**

- 3 When David and his army attacked and captured Rabbah, he forced them to work at _____. (2 Sa. 12:29-31)
- 5 David's sin was that he had Uriah _____. (2 Sa. 12:9)
- 7 Who was the wife of Uriah? (2 Sa. 11:3)
- 10 In what city was David's home? (2 Sa. 11:1)
- 14 What did David feel in his heart when Nathan told him the event of a rich man taking the poor man's lamb? (2 Sa. 12:5)
- 16 David fell into _____ when he committed adultery with Bathsheba and had Uriah killed. (2 Sa. 12:13)
- 18 Who did David take to be his wife? (2 Sa. 11:27)
- 19 When David and his army attacked and captured Rabbah, what did he take from the head of their king? (2 Sa. 12:29-30)
- 20 Even though the Lord forgave David's sin, the Lord still said your son will _____. (2 Sa. 12:4)

DOWN

- 1 Who did David send to fight against Ammon and Rabbah, while he (David) stayed in Jerusalem? (2 Sa. 11:1-2)
- 2 Who was the husband of Bathsheba? (2 Sa. 11:3)
- 4 Did the Lord forgive David his sin against the Lord? (2 Sa. 12:13)
- 6 Who sent the prophet Nathan to David to confront him of his sin? (2 Sa. 12:1)
- 8 Upon whom did David's army make war? (2 Sa. 11:1)
- 9 Where was David when his army made war with the Ammonites? (2 Sa. 11:1-2)
- 11 What was the name of the second son of David and Bathsheba? (2 Sa. 12:24)
- 12 Who did David have killed? (2 Sa. 11:14-15)
- 13 What man did the Lord send to David? (2 Sa. 12:1)
- 15 Who was the man who took the poor man's lamb? (2 Sa. 12:4) two words
- 17 Since David had an affair with Bathsheba and had Uriah killed, the prophet Nathan said that the _____ will never depart from David's house. (2 Sa. 12:10)

Puzzle answers....



ANOTHER RESOURCE FOR YOU

United Prison Ministries International

1. The Holy Bible-- King James Version
2. What the Bible Says-- Bible study lessons
3. Bible Answers-- A study guide for the Bible
4. Bible Dictionary
5. Bible Questions Answered

Answers to your Bible Questions, also available in Spanish. These items are free of charge in limited quantities. You may request two (2) items each time.

Send your request to:
 United Prison Ministries
 P.O. Box 8
 Verbena, AL 36901-0008

***** By Beholding Book Center *****

We have a limited number of free books available.



(substitution possible)

LIMIT TWO PER ORDER PLEASE

SIGNS 24-05
 FINDING THE TRUE GOD

MORE THAN A CARPENTER
 JOSH McDOWELL

REVELATION, THE 5th GOSPEL
 ELIZABETH VIERA TALBOT

MAKE US ONE
 (REMOVING BARRIERS, BUILDING BRIDGES)
 DELBERT W. BAKER

PASSION OF THE AGES
 E.G. WHITE

GOD FOR US ACCORDING TO JOHN
 JAMES W. GILLEY

ANGELS ON EARTH
 GUIDEPOST

May God richly bless you as you study His word and plan for your life's journey