

2018 WEEKLY EMAILS from Rev. Mike Jones containing personal news and the weekly devotions published by numerous newspapers.

LESSON FOR LIVING Vol 29 Num 01 January 3, 2018

LESSON FOR LIVING Vol 29 Num 02 January 10, 2018

LESSON FOR LIVING Vol 29 Num 03 January 17, 2018

LESSON FOR LIVING Vol 29 Num 04 January 24, 2018

LESSON FOR LIVING Vol 29 Num 05 January 31, 2018

LESSON FOR LIVING Vol 29 Num 06 February 07, 2018

LESSON FOR LIVING Vol 29 Num 07 February 14, 2018

LESSON FOR LIVING Vol 29 Num 08 February 21, 2018

## LESSON FOR LIVING Vol 29 Num 01 January 3, 2018

### Greetings:

Our family from Maine left today to try to beat the storm that is supposed to “sock” New England Thursday. We enjoyed their stay. Paula is doing some cleaning before going to care for her dad Saturday.

Paula and I both have colds and we hope this “unwanted guest” will leave soon. We ended the year with several family related deaths and sicknesses. Thankful for the hope and help that is ours in Christ.

Expecting two inches of snow in SC and two feet of snow in Maine. Guess which state will be the most impacted by snow fall!! Stay warm and be blessed.

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### DEVOTION for Wednesday, January 3, 2018 BRING YOUR CHILDREN TO CHURCH

Now that you've given your children presents for a moment; consider giving them principles for a lifetime. They will get these life principles from somewhere. I think you should make sure they get them from the Word of God. Here are 4 reasons you should make it a priority to expose your family to sound Bible Teaching each week.

1. GOD COMMANDS IT- “And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up” (Deut 6:6-7).

2. IT HELPS BUILD A RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD - “That from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (II Tim 3:15).

3. IT INSTILLS A SPIRITUAL HERITAGE IN THE CHILD- “When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also” (II Tim 1:5).

4. JESUS LIKES CHILDREN IN CHURCH! “Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the Kingdom of heaven” (Matt 19:14).

Don't just give your Children food, clothes, and toys. Give them Principles that will last for a life time- “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Prov 22:6).

### Lessons for Living for Tuesday, January 09, 2018 WHEN GOD IS WITH US

Having “God with us” is more than a cradle and a cross. It means God is with us in life!

When we WORK and WITNESS for Him- (Mat 28:19-20) “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, even unto the end of the world.” What a joy to know that I do not have to do the work of God alone. One of the great truths I have learned in life is that I can do all things with Christ to strengthen me.

When we WORSHIP Him- (Mat 18:20) “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, THERE AM I IN THE MIDST of them”. Church is not just a group of people meeting together to

discuss matters of common interest; it is a Holy place where we meet a Holy God and learn of His will for our life. Church is a place to fellowship with God and His family.

Finally, and this is such a comfort, God is with us when we WALK through the Valley of the shadow of death- (Psa 23:4) "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for THOU ART WITH ME; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

Make sure God is with you today.

## **LESSON FOR LIVING Vol 29 Num 02 January 10, 2018**

### **Greetings:**

Breathing difficulties meant we had to admit Paula's dad to the hospital Sunday. We are not sure when he will be able to return home. Pray for the family as they work together to care for him while he is hospitalized and afterward.

Prayers are appreciated as I speak at the Effingham Presbyterian Church Sunday at 10:30am. My week has been busy- hope yours is blessed!

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DEVOTION for Wednesday, January 10, 2018

FREEDOM FUNDAMENTALS

One of the messiest times in the Bible was when "Every man did that which was right in his own sight" and individual freedom turned into collective chaos. In our present PC Society where "someone" (no one seems to know who) constantly changes the definition of what is right or wrong it is important to recognize freedom fundamentals.

Freedom carries Consequences. I have the freedom to jump off a building if I so desire but the sudden stop is a killer! Every action has an equal and opposite reaction. Freedom without awareness of consequences is dangerous.

Freedom requires Responsibility. I have the freedom to swing my arm any way I want; but my freedom ends at your nose! Freedom without responsibility becomes anarchy and chaos. Laws and Government were instituted to ensure men assumed responsibility for their Freedom.

Freedom should be combined with Consideration. I have the Freedom to go a week without bathing but it would be very inconsiderate to those around me. That is why the golden rule is still, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you".

Freedom to give up your Freedom could be your most important freedom. The strings on a fiddle only find their music when they surrender their Freedom for the purpose of their life. Jesus taught that if we become servants to Him we would be "free indeed". It sounds like bondage but, in reality, it is the heart freedom that allows our life to be music instead of a mess.

Lessons for Living for Tuesday, January 16, 2018 NOT KNOWING GOD

Why don't you know what you need to know about God? Why do you know more about dancing cats, disastrous stunt crashes, or divorcing celebrities than you know about the God of the universe? Why do you think that simply knowing there is a God is all you need to know about God?

Did you know that not desiring to know about God can have moral altering consequences? ("And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;" Romans 1:28).

Did you know that if you do not want to receive God's truth then God may take away your ability to know the truth? ("And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12).

Why do you have time and energy to spend hours searching the web for a bargain or a boasting point ("I know something you do not know!") but you can never find time to search the scriptures and learn about God's plan and personality? A thousand years from now, which do you think will be most important?

## **LESSON FOR LIVING Vol 29 Num 03 January 17, 2018**

### **Greetings:**

After a difficult week we brought Paula's dad home Monday under Hospice care to see if he can regain strength and recover from his flu and pneumonia. His weak condition means we must double up right now on care givers who stay with him. Paula is helping her sister, Shirley, this week.

Busy preparing end of year reports for conference and state meeting. Also trying to catch up from being gone most of last week helping Paula with her dad in the hospital.

Supposed to snow again. Glad I got milk and bread yesterday-lol.

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### DEVOTION for Wednesday, January 17, 2018 THE METHUSELAH BRIDGE

Did you know that Methuselah is the "bridge" between Adam and Noah; between God's creation of the earth and His "destruction" of the earth by the flood? According to the generational records in Genesis chapter five, there were 1,056 years from the creation of Adam until the birth of Noah. Adam was 687 years old when Methuselah was born and he lived another 243 years after Methuselah was born.

Methuselah was 369 years old when Noah was born and he lived another 600 years. All of this simply shows that Methuselah had the opportunity to spend a lot of time in his early life talking with Adam and then he had a lot of time to talk with Noah in his later life. This means Methuselah got the story of Creation "straight from the horse's mouth" (Adam) and was then able to share that story directly to Noah.

The practice of "passing along" God's word and His works should continue even today. Paul told Timothy: "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2). It is amazing the impact personal experience and proven application can have on a listener.

Methuselah died the year of the flood as the Bible's oldest man (969 years old). But he did more than exist for many years; he became a great belief bridge builder. Go and do thou likewise.

### Lessons for Living for Tuesday, January 23, 2018 HEARERS

Sometimes what you heard is not what you heard! Several times during my ministry I have been berated by someone about a statement I made that I did not make. One time the person and I listened

to the entire audio copy of the sermon and even though the person did not hear the statement attributed to me he still remained firm in his belief that I had said it!

The Bible identifies many kinds of "Hearers": (1) Deaf Hearers ("ears to hear, and hear not" Ezekiel 12:2), (2) Dull Hearers [Think husband reading his paper while his wife talks about her day] ("For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing" Matthew 13:15), (3) Distracted Hearers ("these hear the word and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful". Mark 4:18-19), and (4) Deflected Hearers [In one ear and out the other] ("they by the way side when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts." Mark 4:15).

The simple truth is that people often hear what they want to hear or expect to hear. Remember that this week when you are building your faith as a "Divine" Hearer ("So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" Romans 10:17.) but you only hear God say, "Neither do I condemn you" and tune out the "Now go and sin no more".

## **LESSON FOR LIVING Vol 29 Num 04 January 24, 2018**

### **Greetings:**

Paula is home for a few days for some rest and to take care of several needed work items at home. Mr. Bill seems to be improving on a "good day, bad day" basis.

SC Conference Annual Meeting is Thursday night and all day Friday at Camp Branch FWB Church, Scranton.

We continue to hear good reports about God's blessings on the work in India.

Thank you for your prayers and support. Pray you have a GREAT week.

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DEVOTION for Wednesday, January 24, 2018

BORN AGAIN BENEFITS

When a person is "Born Again" a wonderful life changing process begins. First of all a Born Again person changes from someone dead in trespasses and sin into a new creature who has been "quickened" (given life) by God. The wrath of God against the sins committed by this person has been appeased by the death of Christ and this person is now Justified (Just as if they had never sinned) before God.

But Justification is just the beginning. When a person is Born Again by faith in Christ the Holy Spirit moves into this person and begins to instruct them in how to walk with Christ in a new holy life (Sanctification). The ways and wishes of God become increasingly clear and dear to this child of God as he devotes himself to serving God and daily denies his own sinful selfish ways.

All of this will one day end gloriously when this Born Again child of God is brought into the very presence of God where they will receive a new body and live in a heavenly home. We call this Glorification because all the trials and troubles are over and these believers in Christ now live in the purity and peace of God's glory.

So a Christian is someone who has escaped the penalty of sin, is escaping the power of sin, and will one day escape the very presence of sin. He is now justified by the blood of Christ, is being sanctified by the Spirit of God, and will one day be glorified in the very presence of God. Good stuff being a Christian. I am glad I am one.

Lessons for Living for Tuesday, January 30, 2018 SOUL HEALING

“I said, LORD, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee.” (Psalms 41:4)

Amazingly, this is the only place in the entire Bible where the phrase “heal my soul” is found. The word “soul” as used in the Bible means “the living part of a person” and refers to the fact that when God created man He “formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Genesis 2:7). The soul is the eternal part of man that exists even after his fleshly body has ceased to function.

In light of the fact that the eternal abode of the soul is either a place of painful punishment or perpetual pleasure, it should be obvious why people would want God to “save their soul”. You do not have to be a rocket scientist to realize that Heaven is much better than the alternative!

But why would a person cry for God to “heal their soul”? According to the rest of this verse the Psalmist had sinned against God which brought “sickness” to his soul. Now he is asking for forgiveness and cleansing by God so his soul could return to health and happiness.

If life has lost its joy and you seem to simply exist from day to day it may be you, like the Psalmist, need to cry out to God, “Heal my soul”. Life is good when your soul is “well”.

## **LESSON FOR LIVING Vol 29 Num 05 January 31, 2018**

### **Greetings:**

Working on websites and finishing up end of year financial reports (MinisterMinistry and SCFOI present and past financial reports are now available on their websites). Paula back to stay with her dad for a week beginning Saturday.

My heart is in India today as we pray for Binita Guha (wife of Pastor Evan Guha) as she struggles to survive after the premature birth of their child. Trusting in God’s power and leaning on God’s strength.

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DEVOTION for Wednesday, January 31, 2018 SATAN’S STRATEGY (This was what was submitted for publication in the Morning New today but again someone forgot to change the article!!!!)

Knowing Satan’s Strategy can be the difference between an abysmal existence and an abundant life. When we first encounter Satan in the Bible he is a sneaky snake using the “divide and deceive” strategy to defeat Eve. Later he deployed the discord strategy to split the Church by encouraging Christians to join him as an accuser of the brethren (Re 12:10). He also uses the doubt strategy to produce powerless people by appearing as an angel of light preaching compromise and confusion (2Cor 11:14). Satan has a plan and it never makes you better.

Satan’s strategy to defeat people today is to make them lukewarm “believers”. Satan does not mind if a person believes in God as long as they do not act on that belief (Even demons believe in God: “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble” James 2:19). Satan does not object if you reverence and respect God as long as you serve the gods of this world (“They feared the LORD, and served their own gods,” 2 Kings 17:33). Satan is not opposed to loaning you to God on Sunday as long as you are back serving him on Monday.

From the beginning Satan has had a strategy to trick you as a snake in order to devour you as a lion. Satan is the bad man with the bad plan and you need to be aware of that.

Lessons for Living for Tuesday, February 6, 2018 FAVOR OF THE LORD

The Phrase “favor of the Lord” is found only three times in scripture: About Wisdom ( “Whoso findeth me (wisdom) findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD” Proverbs 8:35), about Walking correctly with God (“A good man obtaineth favour of the LORD: but a man of wicked devices will he condemn” Proverbs 12:2), and about finding a good Wife (“Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD” Proverbs 18:22).

Today is my 48<sup>th</sup> anniversary and time to celebrate the “favor of the Lord” shown to me in giving me the lovely Princess Paula to be my wife. Being married to a preacher means she has listened to the same sermons, heard the same jokes, and tolerated (with a smile) constantly being used in illustrations.

She has endured not having a home to call her own (We've always lived in parsonages). She has moved from state to state as God's plan unfolded in my life and ministry. And she graciously accepted always being expected to be a little better, and do a little more, because she was the Preacher's wife.

She is a diamond among jewels, a Princess among ladies, and favor from the Lord to someone as unworthy as her husband. She is indeed a good thing; and it would be a good thing to let your “good thing” know you think she is a good thing also.

## **LESSON FOR LIVING Vol 29 Num 06 February 07, 2018**

### **Greetings:**

Continue to pray for Pastor Evan / Binita Guha, their new born baby, and the many sick in India (and America!). A fund has been established to help Pastor Evan with this great financial burden. Gifts can be sent to the address below designated to Evan Guha Fund. Thanks.

I realize more and more than I am a nobody trying to tell everybody about somebody who can prepare anybody for a heavenly body. And my goal remains to do that a million times a month!

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DEVOTION for Wednesday, February 7, 2018      WORDS

Words are important. They can inspire, insult, or instruct. They can stir deep emotions, encourage or discourage, and even reveal your inner being (“Those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart” Matthew 15:18).

No wonder the Bible declares “Death and life are in the power of the tongue” (Prov. 18:21). And warns us that Words have eternal consequences (“Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment” Mat 12:36).

Realizing this we should pray for our words to be GUARDED (“Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips” Psa 141:3), GRACIOUS (“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers” Eph 4:29), and FEW (“In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise” Prov 10:19).

Your words display the reality of your religion (“If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain” James 1:26). So pray for



the Lord to give you the right words at the right time (“The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary” Isa 50:4).

Remember words matter before you Tweet, Facebook, or otherwise engage in social media; “For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” Mat 12:37.

Lessons for Living for Tuesday, February 13, 2018 Peace with Problems

The problem with problems is that sometimes we let the problems become the problem. Problems are a common and persistent situation (“Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble” Job 14:1) so we need to come to peace with our problems (“I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content” Philippians 4:11) before the problem become a greater problem.

In order to come to peace with problems you should first of all “Call Out” (Pray and ask God for wisdom, guidance, and strength). Praying about problems allows you to join with God in seeing and solving the situation.

Next you should “Cull Out” your problems by learning to differentiate between normal problems and people problems (Do not attack the sale’s clerk because you had a flat tire). You have to “shrug off” normal problems (“I saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all” Ecclesiastes 9:11) and “love off” or “leave off” people problems.

Finally, you should “Chill Out” about your problems (Walk by faith believing you and God can deal with any situation). God will never leave you or forsake you. You will have a problem of a problem if you forget that!

## **LESSON FOR LIVING Vol 29 Num 07 February 14, 2018**

### **Greetings:**

Hope to finish mailing the 2018 India Calendar this week (awaiting some mailing tube parts) and do several other tasks. A lot of unexpected situations are sucking up time but nothing ever surprises God.

Pray for sister-in-law, Bonnie, with back surgery and continue to pray for Evan, Binita, and new baby, Ryan. Numerous other preachers and friends are also sick.

Have a great Valentine’s Day!

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DEVOTION for Wednesday, February 14, 2018 PRINCESS PAULA LOVE

While riding with my wife recently, I asked her to share with me four words which she thought best described “Love”. Her answer was so good until I wanted to share it with you. According to Princess Paula Love is: (You know she is a preacher’s wife when she illiterates her points!).

1) Truthful- Love means you are honest with one another. God did not pretend we were perfect so He could love us (“God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” Romans 5:8). Being truthful turns a romance into a relationship enabling the years to draw you together instead of wedge you apart.

2) Trustful- Love means you can depend on one another. Your mate can trust your word when you are together and your actions when you are apart.



3) Thoughtful- Love thinks of the other. It is not self-centered or self-satisfying (I try to never get a cup of coffee without asking my wife if she wants a cup). Love knows the “little foxes spoil the vine” and in the same way the little things can make or break a relationship.

4) Tender- Love is not heavy handed and controlling. It does not treat the person loved as a slave or a child but with respect and sensitivity.

Real Love is the greatest gift God has given man. May you experience and express that gift this week.

Lessons for Living for Tuesday, February 20, 2018 LOVE'S CHARACTER

Love is the character of God and the characteristic of His followers. Love is the foundation stone for God's commandments (Love God above all and love your neighbor as yourself-Matt 22:35-40). Love is so important until without it your good works are meaningless music (1Cor 13:1) and your claims about a relationship with God are worthless words (“He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love” 1 John 4:8).

But what does Love really mean? Is it simply an emotional high you feel about a project or a person? Is it a romantic relationship that is “more than sex”? What is the meaning and characteristics of real Love and how do we experience and demonstrate this genuine love?

Genuine Love loves without first being loved (“God commended his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” Romans 5:8). Genuine Love is willing to sacrifice everything for the object of its love (John 3:16). And genuine Love is a “walk” as well as a talk- (“let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth” 1 John 3:18).

Love makes hard choices (“whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth” Hebrews 12:6) and permanent commitments (“I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee” Jeremiah 31:3). Love changes how you see and serve others because genuine Love reaches the very core of your being. May you experience and express that kind of love this week.

## **LESSON FOR LIVING Vol 29 Num 08 February 21, 2018**

### **Greetings:**

Not sure if I will be able to attend the SCFWB State Meeting in Spartanburg this year. I have a medical appointment on Thursday that may take most of the day and I am not sure I will be able to focus well enough to drive to Spartanburg Thursday night.

Looking forward to speaking at 11am @Grace FWBC, Lake City this Sunday. Great Church with great people.

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DEVOTION for Wednesday, February 21, 2018 INSOMNIAC GOD

There are several “not thought of as good” characteristics of God which are seldom mentioned by preachers. God is Jealous- “Thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God:” (Exodus 34:14). God gets angry- “God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day” (Psalms 7:11).

Another seldom mentioned characteristic is that God is an “insomniac”- “God will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither

slumber nor sleep” (Psalms 121:3-4). This means we will never lift a prayer need to Heaven and find a “do not disturb, taking a nap” sign on Heaven’s door!

Since we know God is an insomniac this means we should not be one (“It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep” Psalms 127:2). Knowing God holds my breath in His hands (Dan 5:23) and my wellbeing in His heart (Jer 29:11) makes my sleep a lot more peaceful.

I’m glad God is an insomniac. I am also glad our “insomniac God” sometimes suffers memory loss- “I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more” (Hebrews 8:12). Past not remembered and never forgotten in the present; that is a comforting comforter to curl up with at night.

Lessons for Living for Tuesday, February 27, 2018 LIGHT SIGHT

A blind man does not need more light; he needs sight! Lighting more candles will not make a blind man see. Taking a blind man to marvelous vistas of beauty or showing him magnificent works of art will not give the blind man sight. It is not a light problem; it is a sight problem.

Jesus could cure physical blindness. I cannot. My “job” is to help people get spiritual sight by telling them Jesus is the Light of the world and they can walk in that light.

Some people cannot see because they will not see (“This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light” John 3:19). These people must see the benefit of sight.

Some people cannot see because they are wearing blindfolds (“He that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes” 1 John 2:11). These people must remove the obstruction to sight.

But all people must believe coming to the light will give them sight (“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” John 8:12).

People need to be told they are not doomed to the destruction and despair of darkness. They can get sight and walk in the light- and we get to tell them that good news. Glory!