

August 1

The psalmist of the Sixty-second Psalm says that his soul waits in silence for God alone. His salvation and his hope come from God. Only God is his rock, salvation, and fortress. His deliverance and his hope rest only in God. Some people place their confidence in the wealth or high class that they have; others have confidence in their lack of those things. Having or not having those things is a delusion; it is light as a breath compared to God. Others place their confidence in their ability to extort or rob people; these are vain hopes. The writer of the psalm says that if riches should increase, a person should not set his or her heart on them. On what is our confidence based? Is it on our class status or the wealth we have? Is it on some ability, mental or physical, that we have? Or is it based solely on God? The psalmist says that we should trust in him at all times because power and steadfast love belong to God. Do we trust him at all times?

In the Sixty-third Psalm the psalmist says that he seeks God because his soul thirsts for him; his existence in flesh is like being in a dry and waterless land. He says that God's steadfast love is better than life, so he praises God. His soul is satisfied with God like it is a rich feast, and this gives him joy. He thinks about God while on his bed and meditates about him in the middle of the night. Do we thirst for God? Do we find joy in him like a rich feast? Do we meditate on God and what he has done for us? Or are our thoughts about this earthly life and the things of this world?

The book of Hebrews says that like a good father God disciplines his children. Discipline is of two kinds: there is discipline that serves as a correction when one does wrong; there is also a discipline that builds up endurance and character. God uses trouble in our life to teach both kinds of discipline. We respected our parents when they disciplined us; we should also respect God. God disciplines us for our good so that we can share his holiness. Although there is initial pain, it yields a peaceful fruit of righteousness. How do we react to God's discipline in our lives?

August 2

The psalmist in the Sixty-ninth Psalm feels like he is almost drowning. He describes his life as being in deep waters with no foothold. He is waiting for relief from God, but it seems slow in coming. Does God's answering prayer ever seem slow to you? People accuse the psalmist of wrongdoing that he did not do; it seems they hate him without cause. They want him to return items that he did not steal. Have you ever been accused of doing wrong that you did not do? The problem is that the people who do wrong claim that they did not do it. It becomes hard for people to believe the innocent person because of the lies of the guilty. The psalmist asks God not to let those who hope in him be put to shame because of his life; he doesn't want those who seek God to be dishonored because of him. Do we realize that our reputation, whether true or false, affects others who follow God? People tend to group like-minded people together and generalize their opinion of the group from the worst case. The ninth verse of the psalm is applied to Jesus in the New Testament. It says that zeal for God's house has consumed the person, and the ones who insult God now turn their insults on him. Jesus was upset when he found that God's temple courtyards had been turned into a marketplace, and he drove those who bought and sold out of the temple grounds. That loss of income was part of the reason Jewish leaders wanted him dead. They insulted him as he hung on the cross. Do we realize the humiliation that Jesus went through on the cross for us? More than that, there was pain and dehydration from blood loss. The psalm says that they gave him vinegar to drink to quench his thirst. So it was that when Jesus cried out, "I thirst," the soldiers put a sponge of cheap sour vinegar wine on a hyssop stick and held it to his mouth. It was hardly the hydration he needed. The psalmist says he responds to God's salvation with thanksgiving. Do we give God thanks for our salvation through Jesus?

The book of Hebrews lists three kinds of sacrifices that followers of Jesus can make today: the sacrifice of praise to God and confession of his name, the sacrifice of doing good, and the sacrifice of sharing what we have. Do we offer these sacrifices to God? He is worthy of them.

August 3

The Seventy-second Psalm is a prayer for the king. The psalm says that the king delivers the needy, the poor, and those who have no helper when they call on him. He has pity on the weak and the needy and saves their lives. He redeems them from oppression and violence. These are the marks of a good leader. A poor leader uses his position to advance and enrich himself. A good leader is concerned about others. One doesn't have to be a king to be a good leader. Are we concerned about those who are weak, needy, poor, and without helpers? Do we try to rescue them from those who would oppress them?

The psalmist in the Seventy-third Psalm says that he had almost stumbled and slipped; this was because he was envious of the life and prosperity of the arrogantly wicked. There are wicked people who seem to get away with their wickedness without bad consequences. They are proud and threaten other people. Those impressed by their wealth praise them. They think that God doesn't see what they are doing. The psalmist says that looking at them, he felt like he had kept his heart clean in vain. He then realized that if he kept talking like this, he would be untrue to the children. He was trying to understand why the wicked were not punished. Then he went into God's sanctuary; that is when he realized what the outcome of their lives would be. They would be destroyed and disappear. He realized that his soul had been embittered by his thoughts; this had made him act wrongly toward God. But he prized his relationship with God. He says that he has no one else in heaven, and there is nothing on earth that he desires more than God. Do we look at those who live wickedly and sometimes desire their lifestyle? Are we envious of them? Do we let our thoughts about them hurt our relationship with God? Is he our primary desire on this earth?

James writes that every good gift comes from God. Among those gifts is his word by which we are born anew. The implanted word has the power to save our souls, but it must be done and not just heard. Do we listen to God's word? Do we also do what it says to do?

August 4

The author of the Seventy-fourth Psalm calls on God to save the nation from its enemies. He knows that God has the power to do so because God is the Creator. God is the one who made the day and the night. He made the sun and all the lights in the night sky. He made the natural boundaries of the earth and created summer and winter. Do we pray to God as the Creator of the world? Do we realize the power that he has shown in creating it? Do we ask him to show his power once again?

The psalmist of the Seventy-seventh Psalm cries aloud to God in his time of trouble. He seeks for God's help day and night. He does not tire of stretching out his hand to God for help. When he meditates on God, he remembers the days of old. He wonders why God no longer answers him. It seems to him that God has spurned him and forgotten his steadfast love. He thinks that God is angry with him. He meditates on God's mighty deeds of old. He tells God that he is great and holy; he is the God who works wonders. God redeemed his people, not by paying a ransom price for them, but by using his strong arm. In the same way, Jesus has redeemed us. The redemption price, his blood, was not paid to the devil or anyone else. Rather, sometimes the one who goes in to save a captive pays the price of losing his life. That was the case with Jesus. His blood had to be shed so that he might with a strong arm overcome death, the fear of which was Satan's tool. When we think of what God has done for us through Christ's redemption, do we praise him for being great and holy? Do we meditate on God's works? Do we sometimes think that God has forgotten us when he doesn't answer our prayers right away? Do we tire of approaching him in prayer?

James writes that true faith is shown by a person's works. There is a kind of belief that doesn't move one to action; the demons have that kind of belief. Abraham showed his faith when he started to sacrifice Isaac. Rahab showed her faith when she hid the spies. A faith that does not evidence itself in works is a dead faith. What kind of faith do we have? Is it mere belief that doesn't move us, or a faith that works through love?

August 5

The Seventy-eighth Psalm speaks of God's mighty deeds. The psalmist says that he will not hide them from the children. The Law of Moses commanded the ancestors to teach their children what God had done so that those children would teach their children who had not yet been born the same thing. That way the children would learn to trust in God when they heard of all his works for them. Do we tell our children about God and all his mighty works? Do we tell them what he has done for us in our lives? The psalmist says that the people of Ephraim did not keep the commandment to teach their children. They forgot about the miracles that he had performed in Egypt to free them from slavery. They did not share the stories of how he split the Red Sea for them to cross, how he led them with a cloud through the wilderness, and how he caused water to come out of a rock to quench their thirst. They also did not share the stories about how the ancestors had rebelled against God and sinned. In spite of that he provided them with food in the wilderness: the manna from heaven and the quails that flew in. God forgave their sins, but they sinned again and again, forgetting all the powerful works he had done in Egypt to free them. Do we forget what God has done for us in Jesus? It is his nature to offer forgiveness to us because of our fleshly nature. Do we take advantage of this forgiveness and sin again and again? God rejected those in the Old Testament who continued in lives of sin. Do we suppose that he will accept us if we continue to do the same?

James writes that there are two kinds of wisdom in the world. There is an earthly kind of wisdom that comes from demons; it is not spiritual and never rises above the level of the human soul. It leads to jealousy, selfish ambition, confusion, and all sorts of bad behavior. There is also a kind of wisdom that comes from heaven above; it is pure, peaceful, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality or hypocrisy. That wisdom leads to good conduct and a gentleness even in the face of opposition. It allows those who have it to lead peaceful lives. What kind of wisdom do we practice? Is it the wisdom of this world or the wisdom from God? Do our lives show this wisdom?

August 6

In the Eighty-first Psalm God says he spoke to the people of Israel giving them commandments. However, the people would not listen to his voice nor submit to him. So he gave them up to their own stubborn hearts; the result was that they followed their own counsel instead of listening to God. It didn't end well. Do we listen to what God says? If we don't like what he says, do we follow our own counsel?

In the Eighty-second Psalm God speaks to the judges of Israel. He is upset with them because they judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked. What he wants them to do is to give justice to the weak and to the orphan; he wants them to maintain the rights of the lowly and the destitute. Further, he wants them to rescue the weak and needy from the wicked. There are people of power and wealth who use those things to take advantage of people with lesser means. Someone has to stand up for those who are oppressed. Are we the sort of people who stand up for the oppressed? Or do we join in the oppression to advance ourselves?

The psalmist in the Eighty-fourth Psalm finds joy in being in God's house of worship. He says that those who live there singing God's praise are happy. For him a day in God's courtyard is better than a thousand spent elsewhere. Are we happy to go to a house of worship and praise God? Do we love to sing his praises? Or do we think that church is a real drag and would rather find something else to do?

When we are not pleased with what other people are doing, we sometimes find ourselves speaking against them. James warns that we should not speak evil of other people. Sometimes we are willing to render a judgment against those we disagree with. James says our job is to do God's law, not to judge according to it. There is, he says, only one lawgiver and judge; that one is God who has the power both to save and destroy. Do we put ourselves in the place of God? James says that if we see someone wandering from the truth, our job is to restore them to God. Do we find it easier to talk against them than talk to them?

August 7

The psalmist in the Eighty-fifth Psalm says that God will speak peace to his people. He is faithful to those who turn to him with their hearts. He gives salvation to those who fear him. He gives good to the land, and righteousness goes before him to make a pathway for his feet. Is this our view of God? Or do we see him as a vengeful God who is waiting for an excuse to destroy us? He will bless us if we live for him.

In the same way, the psalmist of the Eighty-sixth Psalm says that God is good and forgiving; he abounds in steadfast love to all who call upon him. The psalmist says that God is great and does wondrous things; he is the only God. So he wants God to teach him his ways so that he can walk in God's truth. He wants a heart that is undivided so that he can revere God's name. He thanks God with his whole heart and glorifies his name always. Do we want God to teach us his ways? Are we interested in walking in his truth? Do we search the scriptures to find out his ways, or are we just passively waiting for him to miraculously put his ways in our head? Do we want a heart that is devoted to him, or do we divide our loyalties between God and something else? Do we thank God and glorify his name?

The apostle Peter wrote to the followers of Jesus in what is now the modern country of Turkey (or Türkiye) that God had chosen them and destined them to obey Jesus and have his blood sprinkled on them. Do we see ourselves as God's chosen people? Do we see our destiny as obeying Jesus? If that is our destiny, do we fulfill it by the way we live? Do we thank him for that cleansing blood? By God's mercy we have been born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus. Do we have the hope that we too will rise from the dead just like Jesus did? That inheritance is the fulfillment of our salvation; it will be revealed to us in the last time at Jesus' second coming. Peter says to set our hope on this grace that Christ will bring when he is revealed. That is why he calls us to be a holy people. Are we looking forward to Christ's return? In the meantime, are we living the holy lives that he expects of us?

August 8

The Ninetieth Psalm was traditionally composed by Moses. He says that God is not time-bound like humans are. A thousand years to God when it has passed is like yesterday or merely like a watch in the night (three or four hours). But humans live seventy years, or maybe eighty years if they are strong. Their span of life is filled with toil and trouble and then it is gone. Thus we should learn to count our days so that we may gain a wise heart. The psalm asks God to give us his steadfast love so that we can rejoice and be glad all the days of our lives. Do we realize that God is not time-bound like we are? Do we count our days to realize the shortness of our lives? Do we ask God for his steadfast love so that we can be happy throughout our days?

The Ninety-first Psalm speaks of God's care for those who trust in him. The devil quotes from it in his temptation of Jesus. The psalm says that God commands his angels to guard a person in all his ways. They will carry a person on their hands to keep him or her from hitting a foot on a stone. The devil suggested to Jesus that this means Jesus could jump off of a high point in the temple complex and the angels would break his fall. But when the devil quotes the verses, he leaves out the words "in all your ways" and substitutes the word "and" there. Jumping off the temple was not one of the things that Jesus came to do; it was not one of his ways. The devil was twisting the scripture to make it into a sort of dare. Jesus countered this temptation by quoting the scripture from Deuteronomy that one must not tempt God. Are we guilty of twisting the scripture to make it say what we want it to say? If someone else twists a scripture by misquoting it, do we know God's word enough to catch the mistake? Do we, like the Bereans, search the scriptures to see if what we are being told is true? Do we refuse to take dares? When we are tempted, do we, like Jesus, quote scripture to counter the temptation?

The apostle Peter says that when Jesus was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he didn't threaten those harming him. Do we counter bad language from others with bad language of our own?



August 9

The Ninety-fourth Psalm asks God to take vengeance on the wicked. They boast with arrogant words as they afflict God's people. They get away with murder as they kill those without power: widows, orphans, and foreigners. They say that God does not see them. Do we sometimes hide our sins, thinking that God cannot see us when we sin? But the psalmist says that such thinking is foolish. The one who made the eyes and ears can both see and hear. He knows the thoughts of everyone; to him they are merely an empty breath. Do we realize that God knows what we are thinking? The psalmist says that God will help us against the wicked. In times when we feel like we are slipping, God's steadfast love will hold us up. When we have many cares of our hearts, God's consolations will cheer up our souls. Do we go to God in times of anxiety and worry? We should turn to him in prayer.

The Ninety-fifth Psalm has given rise to at least two modern praise songs in English. But the psalm takes a dramatic shift from praise at the beginning to a call for repentance at the end. Those latter verses are quoted in the book of Hebrews. The admonition is to listen to the voice of God "today" and not harden their hearts as their ancestors did in the wilderness after the exodus from Egypt. They continually put God to the test even though they had seen his works in Egypt and at the Red Sea. God put up with their going astray from him, but he didn't like it. He said they would not enter his rest. Does our praise of God lead to following his ways? Do we praise him but need a call to repentance? Do we look to the ways of our ancestors for guidance or to the words of God? Do we harden our hearts so that we ignore God's ways?

The Ninety-sixth Psalm says to sing a new song to the Lord and declare his glory to the nations. His marvelous works should be told to all the peoples. They should be told that God is the King. Many of them still worship idols, but he is the one who is their Creator, so he is the one to be honored and glorified. Do we share the story of his works, especially through Jesus, with all the nations to God's glory? If not, why not?

August 10

The Ninety-eighth Psalm ends by saying that the hills should sing together for joy because the Lord is coming to judge the earth. He is going to judge the world with righteousness and the people in it with equity. Do we realize that one day Jesus will return, and when the dead are raised, all people will face the last judgment? Are we getting ready for that judgment? It will be both righteous and equal.

In speaking of Moses, Aaron, and Samuel, the Ninety-ninth Psalm says that God answered them when they cried out to the Lord because they kept his decrees and statutes. God forgave them when they sinned, but he also took vengeance on them when they did wrong. There were earthly consequences to their sins that were not taken away when God forgave them. Do we realize that our sins have consequences here in this life that God does not take away? They are learning experiences.

The psalmist of the Hundred-first Psalm says that he will walk with integrity of heart within his house. Further, he will not set anything that is base before his eyes. There are many base things in this world today that with media technology invade our houses. Are we careful to avoid them? Do we realize how they affect us?

The writer of the Hundred-second Psalm wants the attributes of God to be recorded for a generation yet to come so that people who haven't been born yet can come to praise the Lord. The scriptures tell us about God even though we were not born when they were written. Do we believe what they say about God? Or do we dismiss them as being old-fogyish?

The apostle Peter writes that we should glorify God if we suffer for being a Christian. The word Christian in scripture was initially applied by other people to the followers of Jesus. It was an insult and a charge; only later did people apply it to themselves. Do others call us Christians? The question is sometimes asked, "If you were charged with being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?"

August 11

The Hundred-second Psalm says that the heavens and earth were made by God. However, they will wear out and perish; God who made them will endure. His years have no end. Do we realize that this world is temporary? There will be a time when the eternal God will call it to an end. Do we live for this world, or for the next? Where is our treasure?

The Hundred-third Psalm says that God forgives our sins and heals our diseases. He provides justice for the oppressed. This is true even though we may sometimes think that God is slow about doing so. He works healing and justice in his own good time. The psalmist says that God is merciful and gracious; he is slow to get angry and he abounds in steadfast love. He doesn't always accuse us when we sin, and when he is angry with us, he doesn't remain angry forever. Further, he doesn't repay us with the punishment that our sins deserve. Rather, he removes our transgressions as far away as the east is from the west. He has steadfast love and compassion for those who fear him because he knows that we are made from dust and our lives here are temporary. Is this our view of God? Does it cause us to bless God like the psalmist does?

The Hundred-fourth Psalm says that God is very great. He is clothed in honor, majesty, and light. He is the one who stretched out the heavens. He makes the clouds, the wind, fire and flame to be his servants. When people sinned, he brought water on the world higher than the mountains. He causes the plants to grow and feeds the wild animals. God made all these things by his wisdom. Have you noticed the complexity of this universe? That it happened by random defies statistical probability. Truly it took great wisdom to design all that is in the world. Do we appreciate this world's complexity? Do we see God's greatness in it?

The apostle Peter lays out a way that we will never fall away from God. It involves growing and adding virtues: faith, excellence, knowledge, self-control, endurance, reverence, brotherly love, and love. Do we strive to add these things to our lives? Or are we growing weaker?

August 12

The Hundred-sixth Psalm tells the history of the exodus from Egypt and the wandering in the wilderness. The psalm says that the ancestors did not consider God's wonderful works that he showed them in Egypt; instead, they rebelled against him at the Red Sea. Yet he saved them, not because they were righteous, but for his own name's sake. He split the waters and saved them from the Egyptian army to show his power. It was only after he brought the water back on the pursuing army that they believed and sang his praise. Do we forget what God has done for us in the past? Do we have to see his works over and over again to believe in him and praise him? The psalm continues with the story, telling how they once again forgot the works that he had done for them. They then put God to the test, wanting to know if he could save them again. Do we put God to the test? Do we need sight rather than faith? The Israelites became jealous of Moses and Aaron in the wilderness and challenged their leadership. Do we become jealous of fellow disciples who seem to have gifts that we wish we had? At Mount Horeb they made a golden image of a calf to worship and angered God so much that he wanted to destroy them. But Moses pleaded with God and turned away his wrath. Do we intercede for other Christians when we see them do something wrong? Or do we just gripe about what they have done?

The apostle Peter wrote that in the last days people would scoff at the idea of Jesus' second coming. They would follow their own lusts and ask, "Where is the promise of his coming?" They would say that nothing has changed since the beginning of creation. They choose to ignore the fact that God brought a great flood upon the earth that destroyed it and changed the face of the earth. Even today, people say there never was a great flood. They suppose that great canyons were formed by rivers over millions of years rather than by an onrush of water. But Peter says that just as God once destroyed that wicked world with water, the present earth is being reserved to be destroyed by fire at the time of the day of judgment. Do we believe that the day of judgment of all people is coming when this world will be destroyed?

August 13

The Hundred-sixth Psalm says that when the Israelites took possession of the land of Canaan, they did not destroy the pagan native people there. Instead, they mingled with them and learned to do the things that the pagans did. They even worshiped idols and sacrificed their sons and daughters to these false gods! How often does it happen that the influencers of evil seem to prevail over the influencers of good? When God's people start acting like the people around them, God is not pleased, and the consequences of the evil come back on them. By whom are we influenced? Is it by those who follow God's will? Or do we want to be just like all the people around us? God calls us to be holy like him.

The Hundred-seventh Psalm says that people who have been redeemed by the Lord should say so. Do we share the story of our redemption with others? The psalm tells of how God helps those in various kinds of trouble: people lost in the wilderness, people in prison, people who are ill, and sailors in a storm at sea. It speaks of those who are sick because of their sinful ways. Do we realize that God gives us commands that help to keep us healthy? When we go our own way, illness often follows. The psalm says that the sick often do not feel like eating and find themselves near to the point of death. When they finally cry out to God for help, he will heal their illness. Then they should thank the Lord for his steadfast love and tell others of what he has done for them, even putting it in a joyful song. Do we thank God and tell of his healing when we recover from illness? He is the great physician.

The apostle Peter writes that God's time scale is not like ours: with him one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years are like one day. Some people might consider God slow about keeping his promises, but Peter says that God is being patient with us, giving people time to repent. But make no mistake, the day of the Lord when he destroys this world will come. Peter asks what sort of people we then ought to be with lives of holiness and reverence. Are we looking forward to that final day? Are we living holy and reverent lives as a result?

August 14

The psalmist of the Hundred-ninth Psalm describes his adversary who was accusing him, even while he prayed for this adversary. Jesus says to pray for our enemies. Do we pray for those who oppose us? The psalmist says of his adversary that he loved to curse and did not like blessing. He wore cursing as a coat. The apostle Paul says that we should not use profane language. Do we guard our tongues to keep profanity, obscenity, and cussing out of our mouths? Such language does not build up. It sometimes has a boomerang effect that comes back on those who use it. We should strive to build up others with what we say. We are called by God to do that.

The Hundred-tenth Psalm contains two verses that the New Testament applies to Jesus. When Jesus was being challenged by the Jewish leaders, he asked them what the first verse of this psalm means: "The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.'" Jesus asked his opponents how the Messiah could be both David's son and David's Lord at the same time. They had no answer. Jesus, descended from David, was thus his son, and yet as the eternal Word of God become flesh, he was David's Lord. Having risen from the dead and ascended to heaven, he now sits at the Father's right hand. Do we believe that Jesus was both descended from David and the eternal Word of God become flesh? If not, we will be his enemies. The writer of the book of Hebrews applies the fourth verse of the psalm to Jesus. He is a priest after the order of Melchizedek (or in the Hebrew Melikh-zedek, that is, king of righteousness). Jesus belonged to the tribe of Judah; Aaronic priests had to belong to the tribe of Levi. So he could not be a priest like Aaron, but he could be a high priest for us like Melikh-zedek the king of Salem who blessed Abraham. Since the Scriptures do not mention Melikh-zedek's death, Jesus who rose from the dead is like him in that he continues to be a priest forever. Jesus is both our righteous king and high priest. As high priest he offered himself on the cross. Do we believe that Jesus is our king and our high priest? Do we thank him for his sacrifice for our sins?

August 15

The Hundred-twelfth Psalm says that the righteous are not afraid of evil news; their hearts are firm and steady, being secure in the Lord. There is much evil in this world, and some of it is directed toward righteous people on a personal level. Jesus says not to be afraid of those who can kill the body; rather, fear the One who has the power to cast both body and soul into hell. He is talking about fearing God. Jesus died and rose again to take away the fear of death. What are we afraid of? Is it the bad things that are reported on the news? Is it some person who is opposed to us? Or is it God who calls us to live a righteous life?

The Hundred-fifteenth Psalm says unwise people worship idols of silver and gold which are the works of human hands. Idols' mouths, eyes, ears, noses, hands, feet, and throats are all useless. It is useless to trust in them. One needs to trust in the Lord instead. The apostle Paul writes that greed is a kind of idolatry. Perhaps that is a more dangerous kind of idolatry for many of us. We are bombarded with advertising telling us about things that we just have to have. Where is our trust? Is it in God or in the things that we think we possess? Sometimes they possess us.

The Hundred-sixteenth Psalm talks about how the Lord answered the prayers of one who was seriously ill to the point of death. Because of this, the psalmist loves the Lord; he says that the Lord is gracious, righteous, and merciful. He also says that he kept the faith even when he knew that he was afflicted. When we are sick, do we question God? Or do we keep the faith? The psalmist asks what he can give God in return for his healing. He says that he will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD. Further, he will pay his vows to God in the presence of all the people. Do we let others know how God has answered our prayers?

The apostle John writes that if we live our lives in God's light, we will have fellowship with one another, and the blood of his Son Jesus will keep cleansing us from all sin. Is our Christian walk in God's light?

August 16

The Hundred-eighteenth Psalm says it is better to take refuge in the Lord than putting our confidence and trust in mortal humans, even if they are princes. There is not much trust in princes in today's world, but they have been replaced with presidents and prime ministers. They ask for our trust to solve our problems, but to be honest, our real problems are spiritual, and they cannot solve those. God, on the other hand, can solve them. Who do we put our trust in? Is it the leaders of the countries? Or is the God who holds them in his hand?

The Hundred-nineteenth Psalm is the longest psalm in the book of Psalms. It is an acrostic psalm. The first eight verses in the Hebrew all begin with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet "aleph." The next eight verses all begin with the second letter "beth," and so on through all twenty-two letters of the alphabet. Every verse has some relationship to God's law. Verse 9 asks how young people can keep their way pure. The answer is to guard their way according to God's word. Do we guard our ways according to God's word, even if we are no longer young? Verse 11 says that the psalmist stores up God's word like a treasure in his heart. He does this so that he will not sin against God. What do we have stored up in our hearts? Is it God's word or is it the things of this world? If the latter, do we wonder why we have trouble because of sin? The psalmist talks about meditation several times. He says he meditates on God's statutes, on his wondrous works, on his decrees, and on his law. His meditation on the law lasts all day long. It is not enough just to read God's word. We need to meditate on it in order to make it a part of our lives. Do we meditate on God's laws found within his word? The psalmist asks God to turn his heart to his decrees and not to selfish gain; he wants him to turn his eyes from looking at vain things. He asks God to give him understanding that he might know his decrees and keep his law. Do we ask God to turn our hearts and eyes away from vanities so that we may understand and do his will? Verse 105 says that God's word is a lamp to the psalmist's feet and a light to his path. Do we travel in this world by the light of God's word?



August 17

The psalmist in the long Hundred-nineteenth Psalm says that he awakes during the night to meditate on God's promises. Do we think about and meditate during the night on what God has promised? Verse 166 says that the psalmist hopes for God's salvation and fulfills his commandments. The order here is important. Sometimes we may think that we are saved because we keep God's commands. The truth is that we are saved because Jesus died on the cross to take away our sins and then rose to life again to give us hope. Jesus told his disciples, "If you love me, keep my commandments." We should love Jesus for what he has done for us. If we do, we will keep his commandments. This avoids two errors: First, some people mistakenly think they can be good enough to be saved by keeping God's commandments. Second, some people think that because Jesus has died and risen to save us, it is unnecessary to keep his commandments. Do we believe one of these two errors? Or do we love Jesus so much that we willingly keep his commandments?

In the ancient world many people thought that the place to worship the gods were on high places, the tops of mountains and hills. The writer of the Hundred-twenty-first Psalm says that he looks up at the hills and asks the question, where will his help come from? Will it come from the many gods that people have invented? No, he answers, his help will come from the God who made the heavens and the earth. Where do we look for help in times of trouble? Do we look to God and ask him for help? Or do we look for help from some other source?

The apostle John writes that there are sins that are "unto death," that is, sins that result in death, whether physical or spiritual, and there are sins that are not "unto death." He says that if we see someone sinning and their sin is not "unto death," then we should pray to God and ask him to forgive them, and he will do so. How do we respond when we see someone sinning? Do we pray for that person and ask God to forgive them? Or does the thought of a juicy bit of gossip rise up in our hearts, and we can't wait to tell someone else what this person has done wrong?

August 18

The Hundred-twenty-seventh Psalm speaks of vain things. House builders labor in vain if God is not behind the construction of the house. Guards keep watch over a city in vain if God is not guarding the city. Those who rise early and stay up late filling their life with work and worry do so in vain without God in their life because God gives rest to the ones that he loves. Do we find ourselves trusting in our own abilities and not seeking the help of God? Life without God is lived in vain; it defeats our purpose of existence. The psalmist says that children are a heritage and reward from the Lord. Do we thank God for our children?

The Hundred-twenty-eighth Psalm pronounces a blessing on those who fear the Lord and live their lives in his ways. Such people will be happy, and things in their lives will go well with them. Their children will be a blessing to them, and often they will live to see their grandchildren. Are we people who fear the Lord and strive to live our lives the way that he wants us to? Do we raise our children to live their lives in the same way? If we do, they will be a blessing for us.

The Hundred-thirtieth Psalm is a cry to God for forgiveness. It says that no one could stand before God if he marked iniquities. But God forgives people so that he may be revered. The psalmist waits for the Lord and puts his hope in God's word. He says he waits for God to act more than a night watchman waits for the morning to come. His hope is in God because of his steadfast love and great power to redeem. Do we place our hope in God? Do we wait for him to act, or do we lose patience with God? Do we revere the Lord for his forgiveness?

The psalmist of the Hundred-thirty-first Psalm says that he is not a proud person. There are things that are too great and too marvelous for him to dwell on. But he has found a calm and quiet soul in God. His soul is calm like a weaned child in the arms of his mother. That is why he places his hope in God. Do we have the humble hope in God that allows our souls to be calm and quiet? Or do we fill our lives with worry?

August 19

The Hundred-thirty-third Psalm says that it is good and pleasant when brothers and sisters live together in unity. It seems that disunity in families started early when Cain killed Abel because of his jealousy. Sibling rivalry is a real thing that many families experience. It is caused by those sins that Paul labels the works of the flesh. Unfortunately, a spiritual kind of sibling rivalry can happen in the family of God. It ends up destroying church unity. Do we promote unity within our families and within our churches? Or are we part of the problem?

The Hundred-thirty-fifth Psalm says to sing praises to the Lord because he is good, gracious, and great. He does whatever pleases him. He controls the clouds, the lightning, and the wind. He did signs and wonders in Egypt and empowered the Israelites to victory against the kings of Transjordan and Canaan. Do we realize the power of God, how he works not only with the weather, but also with the nations? Do we sing praises to him for his power?

The Hundred-thirty-sixth Psalm is a responsive hymn. The response after each line is "for his steadfast love endures forever." The lines say that we should give thanks to God; he is the One who does great wonders. He created the heavens and the earth. He struck Egypt down and brought the Israelites out of Egypt with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. He defeated kings and gave their land to Israel. Do we realize that God's steadfast love for us endures forever? Do we thank God for how he is at work in this world?

It would be wonderful if churches always practiced unity. But churches are made up of people, and people sin. The apostle John wrote to Gaius about Diotrephes who was opposing him. Diotrephes wanted the power in his church. He refused to welcome other disciples and forced his followers to do the same. John said he would deal with him. Do we want to have our own way in church? Do we, like Diotrephes, seek the power and influence that can keep others out if they disagree with us?

August 20

The last verse of the Hundred-thirty-eighth Psalm says that God will fulfill his purpose for the psalmist. Our lives need to have purpose, and a part of that purpose is to live so as to glorify God. Do we realize that God is at work in our lives to fulfill his purpose for us? Have we thought about what that purpose is? Are we trying to live for it?

The psalmist of the Hundred-thirty-ninth Psalm says that God has searched him and known him. God knows when he lays down and when he gets up; God also knows his thoughts and all his ways. Even before he speaks a word, God knows what he is going to say. The same is true for us today. We can make this our psalm. He knows all the things that we are thinking, not just the things that we say. Do we realize that God searches out our minds and knows all about us? He knows our hearts. Do we try to focus our minds on the things that he wants us to think about? Or do we fill our minds with some of the trash that the world around us offers? The psalmist says that God's knowledge is too wonderful for him; he cannot comprehend it all. There is no place to get away from God's presence. The psalmist says that even if he could ascend to heaven or travel down to the Hadean world of the dead (called Sheol in Hebrew), God would be there. Even if he could fly across the sea, God would be there. He cannot hide from God in darkness, for God sees in the dark just like he does in the light. Wherever he goes, God holds on to him and leads him. Do we realize that God is with us wherever we go? When Jacob left home to go to his uncle Laban, he stopped at Luz (later called Bethel) and had a vision of steps leading up to heaven where God is. He said that God was in that place and he didn't know it. He apparently thought that God was just back home. Do our children grow up thinking that God is back home and maybe they can get away from him? The psalmist says that God formed him in his mother's womb, and he is fearfully and wonderfully made. God knew the length of his life, and he knows about our lifespan too. Do we live it for the One whose thoughts are vast and weighty, as the psalmist says? He has fearfully and wonderfully made us to live for him.

August 21

The psalmist of the Hundred-forty-second Psalm says that he pours out his complaint before God. He tells God about his trouble because God knows his way when his spirit is faint. Do we tell God about our troubles? Do we feel free to complain to him? He knows our ways so we should feel free in asking him for help.

The psalmist of the Hundred-forty-third Psalm asks God not to enter into judgment with him because no one living is righteous before God. He remembers God's deeds of old and meditates on the works of God's hands. His soul thirsts for God like parched land thirsts for rain. He wants God to answer him quickly. He doesn't want God to hide his face from him; instead, he wants to hear of God's steadfast love because he puts his trust in God. He wants God to teach him the way that he should go because he lifts up his soul in prayer to God. He wants God to teach him to do his will and have his good Spirit lead him to level ground. Do we meditate on God's works? Do we want God to teach us the way that we should go and how we should do his will? Do we thirst for God?

The psalmist of the Hundred-forty-fourth Psalm asks God for blessings on his sons and daughters, on his crops, flocks, and herds, and on safety from enemies. He says that those who receive such blessings are happy because the LORD is their God. Do we ask God for blessings on our children and the things that we have? He wants to bless the people who serve him.

The psalmist of the Hundred-forty-fifth Psalm blesses God every day and praises him forever. He tells of God's mighty acts to the next generation and meditates on his works. He says the Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounds in steadfast love. God is good to all and has compassion over all his creation. He says that God's kingdom is everlasting and endures through all generations. God is faithful in his words, gracious in his deeds, just in his ways, and kind in what he does. Do we think of God in these kinds of ways?

August 22

The psalmist of the Hundred-forty-sixth Psalm begins with "Praise the LORD" (in Hebrew Halelu YaH; YaH is the short form of the name of God). He says he will praise God as long as he lives. He will sing praises to God all his life long. Do we praise God all of our life? Or do we think that is just for children and young people and give up praising him as we get older? The psalmist says not to put one's trust in princes. They are just mortals and cannot really help. They die and their plans perish with them. The same could be said of presidents, prime ministers, and governors. However, those whose help and hope are in God are blessed. He is the one who made heaven and earth and the sea and all that is in them. He keeps faith forever and executes justice for those who are oppressed. He makes sure that the hungry have food. He loves those who practice righteousness and is concerned with foreigners, orphans, and widows. These are all reasons to praise the Lord. Do we think of reasons to praise God?

The psalmist of the Hundred-forty-seventh Psalm says that it is good to sing praises to God because he is gracious, and a song of praise is a fitting thing to offer to him. God is the one who heals the brokenhearted. He is the great creator who has abundant power. No one can measure his understanding. When people are downtrodden, he lifts them up. That is why we sing songs of thanksgiving to him. The psalmist says that God doesn't delight in the strength of a horse or the speed of a runner; instead, he takes pleasure in those who fear him and put their hope in his steadfast love. Not many of us will own a horse that can win the Triple Crown; not many of us can run fast enough to make it to the Olympics; but we can all fear God and put our hope in his steadfast love. The psalmist says that God is the one who blesses our children and grants peace within our borders. He gives commands and his word runs swiftly to see that they are obeyed. He has given his word in the scriptures with statutes and ordinances to be obeyed. Do we fear God and put our hope in his steadfast love? Do we obey the statutes and ordinances that he has given us in his word?

August 23

King Solomon, known as a very wise man, wrote in the book of Proverbs that one should seek for wisdom and search for it like searching for hidden treasure. When a person has wisdom, he or she will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. He says that God is the one who gives wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, but he gives it to those who are upright and live their lives in a blameless way. Wisdom helps one understand righteousness, justice, and equity. It is the good path that will watch over and guard a person from the way of evil. Do we seek after wisdom? Wisdom can be found in God's word. Do we read and study and meditate on it? Most importantly, do we apply it to our lives so that we follow the good path?

Solomon warns about the danger of adultery. He says it breaks a sacred covenant and leads along the path to death. In our society today, it seems that sexual sins, including adultery, have become common. These sins seem to be promoted in the visual media, including movies, television shows, and now the streaming services. But even in these shows, they lead to heartache and trouble. Do we guard our lives from these sins of the flesh? Do we see marriage as a sacred covenant? Are we careful about what kind of shows we watch? We are talking about pleasures that lead to death and eternal destruction as well.

Solomon says that we need to trust in the Lord with all our heart and not rely on our own insight. We should acknowledge God in all our ways and let him make our pathways straight. We should not be wise in our own eyes; rather, we should fear the Lord and turn away from evil. Do we trust in our own understanding? Or do we look to God for true wisdom? Do we go our own way or let God make our paths straight?

Solomon says that we should honor the Lord with the firstfruits of what we acquire. If we do so, God will bless our possessions so that we will not run short of anything. Have you noticed that those who give away the most seem to have plenty? Do we honor God in our giving?

August 24

The wise man Solomon warns against laziness. He suggests looking at the industrious ant to gain wisdom. The ant gathers its food in the summer without having any ruler to tell it to do so. The one who lays around sleeping instead of working during the best time to work will soon find himself in poverty. Are we diligent in our work?

Solomon says there are seven things that the Lord hates. Two of them have to do with lying. Truth is very important to God and it should be important to us as well. Is truth important to us? Do we always strive to tell the truth, or are we known for lying? The first item in Solomon's list is haughty eyes; it is that prideful look that says the person with it is better than other people. Do we tend to look down on others? Three other items in his list are murder of the innocent, making wicked plans, and hurrying to do evil. Hopefully none of those apply to us. The final one in the list is the person who causes discord among brothers. This last one could well refer to troublemakers in a family. There are plenty of disputes that happen among relatives. However, it can also be applied as well to a spiritual family. God wants unity in his church. The apostle John writes that Jesus prayed for unity among his believers the day before he died. The apostle Paul lists eight works of the flesh that cause trouble of disunity in churches. When people cause trouble at church, God is not pleased. Do we strive for peace among brothers and sisters at church? Do we tolerate sins such as envy, jealousy, party spirit, and strive among fellow believers? Are we troublemakers ourselves? Or are we peacemakers? God calls us to peace.

Solomon has two sections in chapters six and seven of Proverbs about the folly of adultery. This is a sexual sin that causes discord within the immediate family. It tends to break the bonds of marriage and ends up hurting any children. A short time of pleasure ends up causing all kinds of grief. It may be brought on by discord already in the family, but it produces more sins as a result. Is marriage sacred to us? Do we strive to stay faithful to our marriage partner, especially in sexual matters?



August 25

Solomon writes that wisdom will show love to those who love it, and those who diligently seek after wisdom will find it. A life lived with wisdom will produce riches and honor, but even though there is wealth to be gained from wisdom, there are much better results from wisdom than mere gold and silver. Do we diligently seek after wisdom?

Solomon also says that God created wisdom before he created anything else in the universe. Wisdom was the beginning of his work, the first of his acts. It was through wisdom that he made the heavens and the earth and set the boundaries of the sea. God delighted in wisdom, and he delighted in the human race that he created using it. Do we marvel at all the things that God has made and the way that they all work together?

Solomon writes that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowing about God brings insight. Today it seems that many people have decided to trust in their own thoughts rather than listen to what the Creator says about how they should live. Most often it does not end well. And it becomes like a disease that spreads from person to person. It is to our own peril that we decide to ignore the wisdom of the one who made us. Do we fear the Lord? Do we listen to what he says in his word? Or do we decide that the Bible is old-fashioned and full of nonsense and put our trust in the things we hear in the media?

Solomon says that if a person rebukes or corrects a scoffer, all he gets back is abuse and hatred. However, if he or she rebukes a wise person, love is given in response. Those who are righteous and wise learn from instruction. When a righteous person speaks, the words of the mouth are a fountain of life; they teach wisdom. On the other hand, there are those who slander and tell lies. The words they say conceal violence. They bring on hatred, and hatred brings on strife. But the person who loves covers over people's offenses. It is wise to be restrained in our speech. Do we guard what we say? Are we righteous and wise in our words? Do we show love that conceals the offenses of others?

August 26

Solomon writes that the person who belittles another person lacks sense. People call other people names and make fun of them usually because they are insecure about themselves. We often call such people bullies. Solomon says that a person of intelligence will keep quiet rather than calling names. Do we join in the group that is making fun of someone? Solomon lists another kind of person who misuses the tongue: the gossip. Some people delight in sharing other people's secrets with those around them. When they learn some spicy story, they just have to tell someone else. Solomon says that a person who is trustworthy will keep a confidence. Gossip often starts with the phrase, "Don't tell anyone, but ..." How do we use our tongues? Do we use them to praise God and to tell others about Jesus? Or do we use them to belittle others and spread some juicy bit of gossip about them? James writes that such ought not to be. Springs don't give both sweet and sour water from the same opening. Neither should both good and bad words come out of our mouths.

Solomon says that it is wise to be generous. He says there are people who freely give to others, and yet they grow richer. God blesses those who are going to use the wealth that he gives them to help others. On the other hand, Solomon says there are people who hold back the things that are due to another, and they end up not having enough for themselves. He says that the one who gives water will get water in return. Water is one of the necessities of life. So is grain. Solomon writes that people curse the one who stores up his grain crop and refuses to sell it. People do this to cause the price to rise. He says that people bless those who sell their grain. Jesus tells the story of the rich fool who was blessed with a bumper crop and decided to build new barns to store it rather than sell it. This manipulating the price ends up primarily hurting the poor. Jesus asks who would get all his stored grain when he died. A person can't take physical wealth into the next world with them. Where do we lay up our riches? Is it in heaven or here on earth? Are we generous people? God is generous with us.

August 27

Solomon writes that a faithful witness does not tell lies, but a false witness does. God loves the truth. Do we love the truth? One problem with people who tell lies is that they don't know what the truth sounds like. Solomon says that people who are simple believe everything. There are a lot of lies in this world. One needs wisdom to sort out what is true and what is false. The people who tell lies do not have that kind of wisdom. They end up believing what is false. Are we people who tell the truth? Or do we deal in lies? If so, how do we know what to believe? Remember, God's word has the truth.

Solomon says that there is a way that seems right to a person, but it is the road that leads to death. Jesus says that there are two roads that a person can take in this life. One is a straight road that is narrow and sometimes difficult. It is the road that leads to eternal life. The other road is wide and easy to travel on. It leads to death. Most people chose to travel on the easy road. It seems right to them. Jesus says that few people find the straight road. One has to search for it. It is found by seeking Jesus. What road are we traveling on?

Solomon writes that those who are kind to the poor are happy. He says that even the neighbors don't really like the poor. They need a lot of help. They can be taken advantage of by the crafty. Solomon says that the people who oppress the poor insult their maker, that is, God. However, the people who are kind to the needy are people who honor God. Do we honor God by helping the poor? Do we help those who are being taken advantage of and sometimes don't realize it?

What kind of words do we use when we disagree with people? Do we use harsh words and insults? Solomon says that such language just stirs up anger. On the other hand, he says a soft answer will turn away a person's wrath. He writes that a gentle tongue is a tree of life. One doesn't have to agree with another in order to use kind language. Is our language soft, gentle, and kind? Or is it harsh toward others?

August 28

Solomon says that God is in charge of our lives. We as humans may plan our ways in our minds, but God is the one who directs our steps. He is even in charge of the things that seem to be random, like casting lots. More than that, he is the one who tests our hearts, like silver and gold are tested in the fire for purity. How are our hearts? Are they pure for him? If not, in what direction is he directing our steps? Is it toward him or away from him? Do we really believe that God is still at work in this world?

James writes that the anger of humans does not work the righteousness of God. Solomon advises that people should be slow to anger. He says that a person who is slow to anger is better than one who is mighty. Further, the one who can control his temper is better than one who can capture a city. People who are slow to anger calm contention when it happens, but those who are hot-tempered stir up strife. Solomon says that when strife begins, it is like letting out water; it is hard to stop it or put it back. He says to stop the strife before a real quarrel breaks out. It is the people who love transgression that love strife. Do we like a good fight? Or are we peacemakers? Jesus says they will be called sons of God. Do we control our temper? Are we slow to anger? Or are we quick-tempered and take offense at the drop of a hat? To our benefit, God is very patient with us. He gives us time to repent. However, he does store up wrath for those who refuse to repent. Let us not be one of those people.

Solomon writes that God stays away from wicked people, but he hears the prayers of those who act righteously. Jesus says that when we pray, we should believe that God answers our prayer. James says not to doubt when we pray. To be sure, God answers prayer in his own good time. He is working things out for our benefit, not on our time schedule. James says he doesn't answer prayers for stuff that we spend on ourselves. What kind of prayer life do we have? Are we trusting God to answer in the best way? Are we acting the way he wants us to?

August 29

James writes that one should be quick to listen and slow to speak. Solomon says something similar. He writes that the one who is sparing in what is said is knowledgeable, and if that person can keep his cool, that is, his temper, he or she will have understanding. He says that even foolish people who keep silent are thought to be wise and intelligent. Do we have to express ourselves on every topic we hear? Can we sometimes keep our thoughts to ourselves? Sometimes we speak too quickly. Solomon says that the person who answers before hearing the question experiences folly and shame. Are we quick to listen before we speak? And there are some things that just should not be said. Solomon warns about the whisperer, who shares delicious morsels of information that go deep into the body. He says that gossips reveal secrets, and so one should stay away from people who are babblers. This is important because he says that life and death are found in the tongue, and metaphorically speaking, one will eat the fruit that grows from the tongue. Do we control what we say? Do we listen to whisperers and gossips? Do we stay away from those who share secrets? It may be our secrets that are being shared.

Solomon had many wives, too many it would seem. He experienced both the good and bad in wives. He writes that the man who finds a wife finds something good and experiences God's favor. He says a prudent wife comes from the Lord, but there can be quarreling in a marriage when each partner wants to get his or her own way. He says that a wife who is always quarreling with her husband feels to him like a continual dripping of rain. The contentious wife makes him want to live in the corner of the flat roof on the house or maybe move to a desert land. Do we have good marriages? Or do we argue with our spouse all the time because we want to get our way? Sometimes we all have to give a little.

Solomon warns about those who are always in a hurry; they may go the wrong way. He says people who are hasty rather than diligent end up lacking things. Do we hurry around too much? Can we take our time?

August 30

Solomon warns against being lazy. He says the lazy person refuses to work. He makes up excuses like, "I can't go outside. There is a lion in the street." The book of Proverbs also includes sayings of other wise people. One of them says that a lazy person had a vineyard that was overgrown with thorns and nettles, and its stone wall was broken down. The lesson from this is that the person who sleeps too much will come to poverty. Do we guard against laziness? Are we diligent in our work?

Solomon writes that although wicked people are greedy, wanting to get more and more, righteous people are generous, giving and not holding back. He says that generous people are blessed because they share food with the poor. What kind of people are we? Are we greedy, gaining and holding back? Or are we generous, sharing what we are blessed with?

Solomon notes that the rich rule over the poor, and that the borrower is like a slave to the lender. There are times that a person has to borrow money. However, we live in a world of advertising that tries to promote greed. There are things that we think we have to have, just because we want them, but often we don't have the money for them. We borrow money to buy them and obligate our future money to the lender. Instead of saving for things that we want, we live in a world of the present where we have to have things right now. Our impatient greed ends up costing us more and maybe impoverishing us. And we tie up money that could be used for good works, but we have obligated ourselves to pay back people and banks that are already rich. How do we handle our finances? Are we always in debt? Do we have trouble helping others because we have obligated our money to our bills?

Solomon writes that folly is bound up in the heart of a child. It takes discipline to drive it away. The parents who train their children when they are young are pleased with them when they grow up. Other wise sayings say not to withhold discipline from a child. Discipline doesn't kill them, but the lack of it may. Do we discipline our children?

August 31

Solomon writes that we should let another person praise us instead of praising ourselves. He says that a person should not put themselves in the presence of a king or in the place of someone great. Instead, it is better to be told to come up here to this important place. The danger in putting oneself forward is that one may be told to lower oneself. Jesus says something similar. He says that when one is invited to a banquet, that person should take the lowest seat rather than one of the honored ones. That way the host will honor the person by offering him or her a more honored position. The opposite may happen if we take the honored seat ourselves. We all like to be honored. But honor comes from others' opinion of us, not our own opinion of ourselves. Solomon writes that it is not good to seek honor on top of honor. That is like eating too much honey; if you eat too much, he says you will vomit it up. What is our opinion of ourselves? Is it too high? Or is it too low so that we never use our talents for the Lord? In the twelfth chapter of Romans, the apostle Paul wrote that we should think of ourselves with sober judgment according to what God has given us. Are we satisfied with God's gifts to us? Do we use them for his honor?

Solomon writes that when we see our neighbor doing something we think is wrong, we should be careful about bringing that to court. We may imagine that we know what he or she is doing, but we don't know the whole story. Solomon warns that we may be put to shame by the neighbor if we get it wrong. He says that we should discuss the situation directly with the neighbor rather than telling his or her secrets to others. There is a danger in getting a bad reputation from sharing secrets. Jesus says something similar when someone sins against us. We should go to that person first and try to work it out. Only if it can't be worked out should we take one or two others as witnesses. If it still can't be worked out, then we can tell the whole church. Do we share what we know about others without talking to them first? Do we gossip about others? Solomon says a whisperer causes quarrels. Do we get involved in quarrels that we shouldn't? What kind of reputation do we have?