



Devotional

Oct. 4 - Dec. 30

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Day 311: November 6, 2020

Full Plan: Romans 8:18–10:21

Abbreviated Plan: Romans 4:1–25

Romans 8-10. God's love is expansive and inclusive. It breaks through every barrier that might separate us from God (8:38-39) and it shows no favoritism to any one people. (10:9-13) Our response to God's love then is to claim it (10:9) and share it. (10:15)

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 312: November 7, 2020

Full Plan: Romans 11:1–13:14

Abbreviated Plan: Romans 6:1–23

The first two-thirds of Romans is about belief; this last third is about behavior. Romans 12-16 is easier to understand, but harder to apply. We are called to obedience, humility, prayer, peace, and most of all, love. (ch 12-13) Nothing else but love mattered for Paul, and nothing else should matter for us.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

November 1–7, 2020: Weekly Devotional by Mandy Cloninger

Ezekiel 18:20 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

“The person who sins shall die. A child shall not suffer for the iniquity of a parent, nor a parent suffer for the iniquity of a child; the righteousness of the righteous shall be his own, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be his own.”

This verse clearly outlines to us that we must be responsible for our actions, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot cling to the righteousness of those around us and rely upon their good deeds to carry us into life. Nor, can we allow the excuse of others poor judgement to become our excuse for poor judgement and bad deeds. Depending on your circumstance this may come as a relief or may seem overwhelming. We are surrounded each day with temptations and opportunities to stray from God's will. We are tested by those around us and sometimes loving our neighbors and enemies becomes very difficult. We can have people around us that continuously fall to sin and therefore tempt us to follow in their footsteps. Still we must remember that we are going to be held accountable for our actions. We must confess our sins to Jesus, spend time in prayer, and remember that he died for our forgiveness of sin.

Prayer: May we feel your spirit Lord and go through each day with you guiding our way. May we remember to praise you and you alone, love all, and be selfless. Amen.

WEEK SIX (NOVEMBER 8–14)

Day 313: November 8, 2020

Full Plan: Romans 14:1–16:27

Abbreviated Plan: Romans 12:1–21

We can't help but imagine what a better country, world, and church we would have if we all took Romans 14 to heart: Pursue peace. Don't judge or live for yourself, or let your strong convictions get in the way of your relationships. Could you imagine?

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 314: November 9, 2020

Full Plan: 1 Corinthians 1:1–3:23

Abbreviated Plan: 1 Corinthians 1:1–15; 3:10–23

Few churches were as culturally divided as the Corinthians. 1 Cor. 1-3 reminds us that no one has cornered the market on ultimate truth, for God's foolishness is wiser than our wisdom. It's not about claiming to know it all, but knowing the One who does.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 315: November 10, 2020

Full Plan: 1 Corinthians 4:1–6:20

Abbreviated Plan: 1 Corinthians 5:1–13; 6:12–20

1 Cor. 4-6. Paul decries sexual immorality, not because sex itself is sinful, but because infidelity is. It is a recurring OT theme: faithfulness in marriage is a metaphor for faithfulness to God. Paul goes even further, saying we are God's "Temple." (6:19)

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 316: November 11, 2020

Full Plan: 1 Corinthians 7:1–9:27

Abbreviated Plan: 1 Corinthians 8:1–13; 11:17–34

The issues Paul addresses in 1 Corinthians may seem antiquated today, but his guiding principles are just as applicable now: self-control, respect for others, concern for those who are weaker, & devotion to God. Regardless of the issue, these values apply.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 317: November 12, 2020

Full Plan: 1 Corinthians 10:1–12:31

Abbreviated Plan: 1 Corinthians 15:1–41

1 Cor. 10-12. The Christians in Corinth were plagued by a “me first” mentality, creating division and inequality. For Paul this was a spiritual problem, solved by humility, servanthood, and a commitment to doing everything for the glory of God. 10:31)

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 318: November 13, 2020

Full Plan: 1 Corinthians 13:1–16:24

Abbreviated Plan: 1 Corinthians 15:42–58; 16:1–14

1 Corinthians ends with a tour de force of the hallmarks of the Christian faith, which we should remember: the centrality of Christ’s resurrection (ch15), the promise of eternal life (ch15), a call to service (ch16) and most of all, a call to love. (ch13)

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 319: November 14, 2020

Full Plan: 2 Corinthians 1:1–3:18

Abbreviated Plan: 2 Corinthians 1:23–24; 2:1–11

It’s a very different Paul writing his second letter to the Corinthians. He has suffered greatly (1:8) with a restless mind (2:13). He’s now more humble and heartfelt, drawing strength from those he calls the aroma (2:15) and living letter (3:3) of Christ.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

November 8–14, 2020: Weekly Devotional by John Dormois

The only full book of the Bible I studied while at Duke Divinity School was 1st Corinthians. The text for the study was written by the dean of the school at the time, Dr. Richard Hayes, a well-respected Pauline scholar. In the introduction to the book, Dr. Hays made an interesting observation. He likened the study to “reading someone else’s mail”.

Paul had been to Corinth and established the fledgling church around 51 CE. He began to have correspondence about some problems in the church around 53-55 CE. There were no formal churches at the time; the followers of Jesus met in peoples’ homes, often by sharing a meal. Corinth was at the crossroads of major trade routes, and as a result there was a wide range of people of many faiths and customs.

Perhaps it’s easier to relate to the Corinthians given the current

controversies in our own Methodist church. There were divisions that had developed; Paul encouraged the focus to always be on Jesus, the good news. There were problems of a sexual nature; Paul insisted that sexual integrity was symbolic of one's response to Christ and that it matters what one does with one's body. There was controversy about whether food offered as a sacrifice could then be eaten; Paul redirected the focus to love as the guiding principle. There were concerns about members speaking in tongues; Paul encouraged that the faithful not be distracted and remain focused on love. Finally, there was an expression of doubt about the resurrection; Paul emphatically declared that without the resurrection the new faith was meaningless.

Prayer: Times change but in so many ways things stay the same. Someday in the future the communications surrounding the current concerns of the church will be read by others. With continued faith, it's our prayer that the church will endure and our mail will be understood as the natural reflection of a people dealing with life's many challenges.

WEEK SEVEN (NOVEMBER 15–21)

Day 320: November 15, 2020

Full Plan: 2 Corinthians 4:1–7:16

Abbreviated Plan: 2 Corinthians 4:1–18

Twice Paul again recalls the suffering and hardship he experienced since his last letter to the Corinthians. (4:7-12; 6:3-10) What kept Paul going? Faith in Christ (ch 5) and love from others, who "open their hearts wide open to him." We should do the same.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 321: November 16, 2020

Full Plan: 2 Corinthians 8:1–10:18

Abbreviated Plan: 2 Corinthians 8:1–24

"Prosperity gospel" preachers have warped 2 Cor. 9 to suggest that if you give money to the church, God will make you rich. Not at all. Rather, Paul is saying that God already has everything necessary to transform the world. It's just up to us to surrender it.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 322: November 17, 2020

Full Plan: 2 Corinthians 11:1–13:13

Abbreviated Plan: 2 Corinthians 9:1–15

Paul concludes 2 Corinthians with a reprise of his sufferings. Yet he offers his greatest encouragement in the whole letter: God told him, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." Words to live by, especially in tough times.