



# Devotional

Oct. 4 - Dec. 30

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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.

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

**Day 323: November 18, 2020**

**Full Plan: Galatians 1:1–2:21**

**Abbreviated Plan: Galatians 1:1–9; 2:16–21**

Until now, Paul opened his letters by addressing the recipients as “saints.” But not to the Galatians. He chastises them for veering away from the gospel. In chapter 2, we discover why: the Galatians are not welcoming of Gentiles. Paul’s gospel welcomes all.

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

**Day 324: November 19, 2020**

**Full Plan: Galatians 3:1–4:31**

**Abbreviated Plan: Galatians 3:1–6–29**

The hits continue. Paul calls the Galatians “foolish” because they refuse to welcome Gentiles. He says such actions are done by those who are enslaved to the law. But in chapters 3-4 he makes it clear: “You’re better than this. Act like it. Welcome all.” (3:28)

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

**Day 325: November 20, 2020**

**Full Plan: Galatians 5:1–6:18**

**Abbreviated Plan: Galatians 5:1–26; 6:11–18**

Galatians 5-6 is pretty direct: Don’t bite other people. (5:15) Instead, love them (5:14), don’t envy (5:26), bear their burdens (6:2), and work for the common good. (6:10) Just imagine what a better world we would have if everyone did these things for each other.

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

**Day 326: November 21, 2020**

**Full Plan: Ephesians 1:1–2:22**

**Abbreviated Plan: Ephesians 2:1–22**

Ephesians 1 has the odd distinction of containing Paul’s longest sentences. They are long sets of run-on sentences, as if transcribing a fast-talking person with something exciting to say. This is what has made Paul so excited: We have received the gift of Jesus and the gift of praising God.

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

### **November 15–21, 2020: Weekly Devotional by Joanie Mellen**

This week we conclude 2 Corinthians, read all of Galatians, and begin the opening verses of Ephesians. These letters of Paul are filled with guidance for living in Christ.

2 Corinthians chapters 4-13 deal with Paul's emphasis upon following the way of the Cross where Jesus died for our sins and gave us a new 'Way of Life'. He instructed the Corinthians of the need to give up their old ways and become generous and humble servants, transformed by the Holy Spirit.

Paul's letter to the Galatians has been referred by some scholars as the "Magna Carta" of the Christian faith. It is revolutionary in its teachings to reject all authority of past customs and laws of the Torah that prevented an individual from having direct access to his God. According to Paul's teaching, God's forgiving love through Christ was the only way to salvation. Faith is the way to God's kingdom.

My favorite part of Galatians are verses 19-26. It begins with describing the '*works of the flesh*', all those traits we wish we didn't have. Then comes the listing of the '***fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and self-control.***' The ending reminds us that '***if we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be conceited, provoking***

***one another and envying one another***'. Wonderful words to live by.

Prayer: Lord, we give thanks for your gift of the Holy Spirit. Let our hearts receive the full measure of your grace to walk in the way that leads to life.

### **WEEK EIGHT (NOVEMBER 22–28)**

#### **Day 327: November 22, 2020**

**Full Plan: Ephesians 3:1–4:32**

**Abbreviated Plan: Ephesians 3:1–21**

Ephesians 3-4. God's love is without boundaries (3:18-19) so that God's people can love without boundaries. (4:1-6) Christian unity and mutual respect (4:25-32) is a reflection of God's love, so put away sinful anger and malicious talk.

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

#### **Day 328: November 23, 2020**

**Full Plan: Ephesians 5:1–6:24**

**Abbreviated Plan: Ephesians 4:1–32**

It's unfortunate that Ephesians 5 has been used to enforce the subjugation of women. Before 5:22, we read 5:21. It is not that husbands have more authority than women. All of us must be