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## Welcome Back to the Building!

By Deacon Mary Kemp

The Zion family vacated its building more than fifteen months ago because of the deadly spread of the pandemic virus. Having properly achieved the re-opening sanitization requirements of our edifice, the doors of the Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church swung open on July 18, offering one morning worship service and welcoming approximately 250 faithful survivors back into the sanctuary. During the absence from our House of Worship, the body of believers never gave up on God. They prayed, kept the faith, trusted Him, and never lost hope because of God's goodness, faithfulness, and His promise to never leave us nor forsake us. We know that in spite of the circumstances, God is still in control and He will take care of us!

Without delay, God gave Pastor Roscoe D. Cooper III a vision to immediately provide spiritual connections that would nurture the spiritual, emotional, and social needs of his members throughout the closing. With the assistance of dedicated church members, the very first Sunday, March 15, 2020, following the shut-down, Pastor delivered an online powerful and inspiring sermon entitled, "Faith over Fear." Every Sunday thereafter, his sermons have been restorative, inspirational and heartening to our weary souls. Monday night Prayer Call, Wednesday evening Bible study and drive-in & park Communion ritual on second Sundays were added. Each of these spiritual occasions brought comfort to the isolated congregants and reminded us that we, the believers, have witnessed time after time how God answers from His heavenly sanctuary with the victorious power of His Right Hand that symbolizes His might, strength, power and His warring against enemies. Even when we may doubt how we will overcome the challenges that confront us, God uses His supernatural powers and His chosen-servant of God to speak reassurance to us. Our God of victory reminds and encourages us to trust in Him, rise-up and stand firm every day of our lives, realizing that we are constantly in a battle against the flesh, sin, sickness, and other evils in the world. Therefore, we readily give thanks to our Heavenly Father who purchased for us everything we need to experience life----forgiveness of sins, healing of the mind and body, deliverance from demonic influence, provisions for

I have held many things in my hands and lost them all; but the things I have placed in God's hands, those I always possess.

*I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him for that day.*

2 Timothy 1:12 (NIV)

(Continued on Page 2)

our needs, and so much more. Regardless to what goes on in our lives, our faith and hope continue to arise within us because we know that Jesus has already won the victory on our behalf.

Ironically, as we return to our sacred sanctuary and experience healing and breakthrough in our lives, Pastor Cooper's initial sermon was entitled, "Victory in the Valley", utilizing *II Chronicles 20:25-27* as his fundamental scriptural reading. A powerful and realistic video referencing the dismal valley of the virus, the George Floyd murder, Black Lives Matter Movement, the need for social injustice reforms, the January 6, 2021 Insurrection on the Capitol, and more preceded the sermon. Additionally, while the sanctuary remained darkened, the spotlight switched to the online choir members as they certainly lifted our spirits, as they sang "Glad to be in the Service One More Time." Midway through the song, Pastor Cooper was highlighted entering the pulpit, singing, clapping and displaying his known joyous shouts and causing the house to erupt in jubilant praise! There was no doubt, everyone was glad to be back—to see one another and the Pastor in-person. After having read the chosen scripture and announcing the sermon title, Pastor Cooper captured the attention of the audience from start to finish! He emphasized that our valley was the sixteen months we had endured. Yet, the victory was that we didn't have to go through our low place alone. He stated *Psalms 23:4* to remind us of God's forever presence with us. Poignantly, Pastor accentuated that our anointing is shadowed by our actions and God's blessings which attract adversaries, attention and attacks. In all instances we must size-up our situation, and know what's working for us and what's working against us. Assuredly, Pastor encouraged us to:

- (1) *Seek* the Lord in our valley.
- (2) *Sum-up* the success stories of God.
- (3) *Situate* (Position) yourself- GET VACCINATED and VOTE!
- (4) *Show-up* to exhibit your faith.
- (5) *Shout* in advance and *shout* afterwards.

Praise God for His mercy endures forever! Praise the Lord in a "Lay-Away" method—Build on your faith, expecting your blessed reward in the end! What an inspiring and a well-received message!

Let all of us ask our peerless God to fill us with His faithful love so that we are able to worship Him, love others with genuine affection and revive our spirits with encouraging words and thoughtful actions. Never must we let a building confine our faith because we will never change the world by just going to church. We need to be the church wherever we are! In spite of our valleys, there are still Blessings that Remain...

## THE BLESSINGS THAT REMAIN

~Annie Johnson Flint~

There are loved ones who are missing  
 From the fireside and the feast;  
 There are faces that have vanished,  
 There are voices that have ceased;  
 But we know they passed forever  
 From our mortal grief and pain,  
 And we thank Thee, O our Father,  
 For the blessings that remain.  
 Thanksgiving, oh Thanksgiving,  
 That their love once blessed us here,  
 That so long they walked beside us,  
 Sharing every smile and tear;  
 For the joy the past has brought us,  
 But can never take away,  
 For the sweet and gracious memories  
 Growing dearer every day,  
 For the faith that keep us patient  
 Looking at the things unseen,  
 Knowing Spring shall follow Winter  
 And the earth shall be green,  
 For the hope of that glad meeting  
 For from mortal grief and pain----  
 We thank Thee, O our Father,  
 For the blessings that remain.



***Welcome back Zion! May our souls be refueled and drawn closer to the love and presence of God as we praise and worship Him in spirit and truth in our sanctuary and beyond!***



*Dear Zion Family!*

Humbled by God's faithfulness and His ever-present help, I greet you, my Zion family and friends, with sadness but grateful to God who orders my steps in His Will, His Way, and His Word. Highly favored to have survived the month of August, my family and I, like so many of you, grieved the life of a loved one, my 30-year old brother, Chad. It was indeed a personal defining moment that my Dad and I lived the reality of our teaching and preaching beliefs. Therefore, our family is so grateful that in our weakest moment God strengthened us and through His supreme power, we are able to rejoice in hope, persevere in prayer and worship Him. The beauty of the silent presence of the Holy Spirit, the fullness of God's amazing grace, the daily renewing of His divine mercies, His steadfast promises to all of us, and the love and support of our church families and friends, helped us to endure our pain. We trusted God and kept the faith that He will guide us through to the good He has for our lives. Life reminds us that we can be happy one moment and sad the next. Zion, I remind you that time is precious and should not be wasted, enjoy life and remember time spent waiting on God is never wasted. For God's delay doesn't necessarily mean denial. Waiting on God's timing may mean that we aren't ready to receive the blessing. Or perhaps in His own time, in His own way, He'll always give what is best for us. Nevertheless, don't count your days but make every day count! The indelible mark that one's life leaves is not measured by the quantity of life, but the quality of life. Through it all, we must praise God in the storms of life because He is the only One who can safely guide us through the "rough" times and give us lasting peace, encouraging hope, and His mighty strength to keep us going. It is my hope that we continue to have faith in our God that He will calm and focus our minds, quiet our hearts, and fill us with His thoughts so that His Spirit shapes and grows our minds through His presence in our lives. I believe that our study, worship, teachings and prayers provide ingredients we need to thrive spiritually; survive the trauma, burdens, fears, losses and tears, keep anxiety and temptation from plaguing our sometimes undernourished hearts, and strengthen us for the journey we have before us. We must never let grief, pain or any situation in our existence grip us so tightly that we give up on life and not remember the power of the Holy Spirit. Our experiences attest to the fact that our relationship with God can turn barren, bitter circumstances into fruitful, prosperous attitudes, interests, and blessings. At all times and in every way, the goodness of the Lord gives us His peace and courage to face the challenges of life. All of us can take our brokenness to Him who gives us the sense of peace and comfort; and as our faith grows, we are drawn closer to God, the Source of our unfettered spiritual life. Let us embrace the value of love so that we can have a vertical relationship with God and a horizontal relationship with one another, knowing that it is impossible to love Christ without loving others. No matter what, none of us is exempt from grief. Therefore, it is my prayer that we all seek to refresh our thinking by studying the Word of God; renewing our spirit in the time we spend in prayer and meditation. Then, I believe, we will discover a new purpose, a new energy, and a new joy in our life. Regardless to our individual situations, let us make every effort to enrich our own life and the lives of others by having a Christ-like attitude. I'm a witness that the Holy Spirit will guide us and give purpose and direction to our life. As we obey Him and live to His glory, the rich harvest of spiritual fruit will become visible in our existence. We will see every day as a gift from God's hand and use every opportunity to live the eternal life here and now.

*My Zion family and friends, I was so excited to welcome you back home on July 18!*

*Be Blessed...*

*Pastor C. J. [Signature]*



## Sick, Shut-in & Bereaved Families

*May your unfailing love be my comfort, according to your promise to your servant. Psalm 119:76 NIV*

**Comfort thy people for the Spirit of the Lord, thy God is upon you!** Know that at some point in life, everyone faces sickness, grief, loss, and death. It is in those vulnerable, difficult and painful moments that only God's comfort can soothe a weary soul and provide the deep peace and the driving force of hope that inspire, give joy and assurance that everything is going to be all right. We must keep the faith and trust God in all situations. Daily, Pastor Cooper and the Zion family of God embrace, support, love, and pray that God blesses and keeps you in perfect peace...

- **Sister Chloe Dunston and Sister Janet Robinson (Brother Richard)** mourn her mother and relative, respectively, *Sister Larla Dunston*.
- **Sister Nisha Dowdell and Sister Tierra Kindred** mourn her mother and her grandmother, respectively, *Sister Delma Eddy*.
- **Sister Danita Barnes Jones** mourns her nephew, *Brother Cardinal Micheaux Barnes*.
- **Brother William "Bill" Walker (Sister LaFran)** mourns his brother, *Brother Elbert Walker, Jr.*
- **Sister Narcissa Best, Sister Joan Macklin** and other relatives mourn their aunt and relative, *Sister Bessie Hundley*.
- **Pastor Roscoe D. Cooper 111** mourns his spiritual mentor, big brother-like, friend and Pastor of the Bethlehem Baptist Church, the *Rev. Dr. Victor Davis*.
- **Deaconess Mary Hatcher (Deacon Richard), Sister Dannetta H. White (Brother James) and Young Sister Faith White and Young Brother Justice White** mourn her sister and their aunt, *Sister Lorene Fleming*.
- **Sister Dorothea Lynch** mourns her sister, *Sister Velmarine Richardson*.
- **The Zion family** joins *Sister Cassandra Jackson* in mourning a faithful Zion member and her mother, **Sister Mary Boyd**.
- **Brother Steve A. Jones (Sister Barbara)** mourns his brother, *Brother Claybrook Jones, Jr.*
- **Sister Michelle Gray** mourns her cousin, *Sister Tonya Denise Gregory*.
- **Sister Janet Turner-Ezell** mourns her father, *Brother Luther P. Fleming, Jr.* of Maryland.
- **The Zion family** joins the children, relatives and friends in mourning a faithful servant of God and beloved Zion Associate Minister, **Rev. Doris Batts**.
- **Sister Carolyn Johnson** and a host of **Zion relatives** mourn her mother, *Sister Dorothy Street Moore*.
- **Brother Wilbert Thacker, Sr. and Sister Chy-niece Thacker** mourn his father and her grandfather, *Brother Alfred Briggs, Jr.*
- **Brother Cedric Hughes, and Brother Michael Bower and Young Sister Gabriella Hughes, and Brother Larry Hughes, and Sister Amber Hughes** mourn his wife, their mother, his sister-in-law, and her aunt, respectively, **Sister Nikeisha Hughes**
- **Deacon Albert Scott, Jr. (Sister Jean), Brother A.J. Scott 111, (Sister Carla), and Young Adult Brother Julian Scott, and Young Brother Landon S. Scott** mourn his brother, and his uncle, and their great-uncle, *Brother Daniel Scott*.
- **Brother Darrell Vaughan (Sister Syreeta), and Jaelyn Tyler** mourn his mother and his grandmother, *Sister Sandra Vaughan*.
- **Sister Tracy Underwood** mourns her grandmother, *Sister Helen Underwood*.
- **Sister Lakeisha Lyles** mourns her father, *Brother Joseph Lyles III*.
- **Sister Shari T. Harris (Brother Keith)** mourns her mother, *Sister Bernice Thompson*.
- **Brother Irvin Green (Sister Sheila), and Sister Tanise G. Ingram (Brother Sean), Brother Derrick Green, Brother Darryl Green, Brother Dominic Green, and Young Miss Aaliyah Ingram and Young Master Andre Ingram** mourn his mother their grandmother/great-grandmother, *Sister Marjorie Green*.
- **Sister Angela Brown** mourns her god-daughter, *Young Adult Sister Ceirra Jackson*.



God is With YOU - Wherever You May  
Go and No Matter What Life Brings

by  
Rev. Blanche Faulk

While the worldwide pandemic has shed light on many important things about how we relate to each other, it's widely believed that older age is darkened by persistent loneliness. But a considerable body of research confirms this isn't the case. In fact, loneliness is the exception rather than the rule in later life. And when it occurs, it can be alleviated **when we invest in relationships**. Investing in relationships with family members and friends is important and according to the Word of God, this is the time to move beyond old grievances.

To alleviate loneliness, one must first recognize the underlying perceptions and emotions of social instinct and social isolation. Social instinct can be defined as the desire for contact and a feeling of belonging in a social setting. Whereas, social isolation is the voluntary or involuntary absence of having contact with others (this can produce abnormal behavior and physiological changes in both animals and humans).

The time we have spent apart from our immediate families, extended family, and co-workers has been challenging and necessary. If you have been alone or feeling lonely pre-pandemic, assembling with your church family has been particularly missed. The hugs of fellowship and casual touch experienced during praise and worship, Communion and convening in the sanctuary is not the same in a two dimensional format. The Bible tells us not to forsake the assembling of the saints for good reason. God has also said that it is not good for man (or woman) to be alone.

**If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Ecclesiastes 4:10**

While we have been away from close fellowship, joining a group can be effective. If there's a spiritual and/or educational component and people are actively engaged in loneliness; it's not the quantity of relationships that counts most. It's the quality. Also, it's a good idea to diversify your relationships so you're not depending exclusively on a few people. The goal is to help people become aware of their social needs, reflect on their expectations, analyze and improve the quality of existing relationships and develop new friendships.

One simple strategy can make a difference. "If you have good news, share it." The good news is while we may have wondered when and whether a vaccine would be developed, the uncertainty of food insecurity, mask mandates and eviction moratoriums has been no surprise to the God we serve. He is, and always shall be in control. We who believe in the God who cannot lie need, above all things, to put our faith into action. Nothing reminds us more of the presence of God than the Word of God. The New Living Translation of God's Word says: *All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.* His Word speaks through eternity. The battlefield is in our minds. How can we imagine ourselves alone when I am and you are loved more than we will ever know by someone who died to know us? Whenever you feel unloved, unimportant, or insecure, remember to whom you belong.

***Be strong. Be brave. Be fearless. You are never alone.***  
***Joshua 1:9***

**2021 Youth and Young Adult Recognition**

by  
**Karen S. Brown**

**CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!**

*Teach me your way, O LORD, according to your truth: Psalm 86:11*

The fight against the COVID 19 has been grueling just as the past school year has been uniquely challenging for students of all ages. On Sunday, August 1 during the morning worship service, Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church held its annual Youth and Young Adult Recognition Program to recognize, encourage, and support its students. All participants received a specially designed certificate, personalized candy bar, and a Chick-Fil-A gift card. In addition, high school graduates present at the service received personalized bottled water, and a laundry basket stuffed with air freshener, hand sanitizer, Lysol wipes, a laundry kit, a First Aid kit, and other valuable supplies that's useful to all persons, whether they are continuing their education or entering the work force. Listed below are the names of students who completed and returned the recognition form to the church by the deadline:



**ELEMENTARY students promoted to:**

Kindergarten - **Kori Hines**; 1<sup>st</sup> Grade - **Cedric Green, Jr.**; 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade -- **Ava Gaddy**; 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade - **Madeline Green**; 5<sup>th</sup> Grade - **Trey Gatewood, Jr. & Mackenzie Lewis**

**MIDDLE SCHOOL students promoted to:**

6<sup>th</sup> Grade – **Nazir Brown, Dezmon Gaddy, & Madison Hampton**; 7<sup>th</sup> Grade – **Troy Carter, Tayla Gatewood, André Ingram, & Laila Robinson**; 8<sup>th</sup> Grade – **Kenya Burton, Chiaya Deloatch, Janiya Edwards, Seth Hardy, & Aaliyah Ingram**

**HIGH SCHOOL students promoted to:**

9<sup>th</sup> Grade – **Sonti Burton, Briana Coleman, & Mikhail Haywood**; 10<sup>th</sup> Grade – **Diondre Reid**; 11<sup>th</sup> Grade – **Jasmin Payne & Lexi Pitman**; 12<sup>th</sup> Grade – **Michae’la Banks, Ryeann Bates, Lindsey Brown, Melique Manning, A’Jon Orange, Evyn Preston, & Zahria Reid**

**COLLEGE**

**Eriel Waddy**

Sophomore ----- Virginia Commonwealth University



**High School and College**

**GRADUATES**

**Tauryn Baptiste**  
**Ming Artis**  
**Tajah Harris**  
**Michlailya Manning**  
**Chayla Robinson**  
**Samiyah Young**

Highland Springs High ----- Virginia Commonwealth University  
Hermitage High ----- Old Dominion University  
Varina High  
Huguenot High ----- Norfolk State University  
Varina High

Old Dominion University

**Ebony Deloatch**

Associate Degree in Social Studies ----- J Sargeant Reynolds

**CONGRATULATIONS!**

*~~God does, in His own time and in His own way, make dreams come true!*

**REMEMBER YOUR DREAMS!**



## SUMMER

Fill in the blanks below with the words listed:



season	heat	insects	ice cream cone
beach	air conditioners	cool	watermelon
sunglasses	weather	fishing	long
shorts	sandals	hat	fans
juicy	berries	sightseeing	lemonade
ice cubes	keep	mosquitoes	vacation
camping	butterflies		

### Summer

Summer is the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ days and hot \_\_\_\_\_. In summer, people try to escape the \_\_\_\_\_ by turning on their \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ or going to the \_\_\_\_\_.

### Summer Food

One way to \_\_\_\_\_ off is to eat something cold such as an \_\_\_\_\_. Another favorite summer food is \_\_\_\_\_ which is big, green, and \_\_\_\_\_. And of course, many people enjoy a cool glass of \_\_\_\_\_ with a few \_\_\_\_\_ to keep it cold.



### Summer Clothing

In the heat of the summer sun, it is important to dress properly. It is a good idea to wear a \_\_\_\_\_ on your head and \_\_\_\_\_ to protect your eyes. If you want to \_\_\_\_\_ cool, you can wear \_\_\_\_\_ instead of pants and put \_\_\_\_\_ on your feet.

### Summer Vacation

In many countries, kids get a \_\_\_\_\_ from school during the summer months. This is a good time to go \_\_\_\_\_, swimming, \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.

### Summer Animals

Summer is a good time for animals. There are lots of \_\_\_\_\_ to eat on bushes. As well, many \_\_\_\_\_ are about making tasty treats for birds and spiders. Some of these insects such as \_\_\_\_\_ look pretty in the garden. Unfortunately, others such as \_\_\_\_\_ make a tasty treat out of people.

## Managing Stress and the Storms of Life

By Valorie McBee



*"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you;*

*I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."* (Isaiah 41:10)



Stress is defined by Psychologists as an individual's response to circumstances that he or she perceives as dangerous or threatening. There are different types of stress or stressors as well as various stress management techniques and treatments. Many of us, at one time or another have experience stress or have gone through the "storms of life". Illnesses, job burnout, job loss, depression and other stress related occurrences can take a toll on our well-being. Ordinarily, we recover from the everyday stresses of life, and the storms we go through can make us stronger, and may promote

growth and development. However, during the past year, the Covid-19 Pandemic added an extra burden to people throughout the world; millions lost loved ones because of the virus. There were economic struggles along with senseless murders and racial injustices. Life changed from in-person connections to social distancing in venues, churches, schools and communities throughout the world. However, technology became an even more important blessing and enabled us to connect in ways we may not have thought possible. These added stressors caused a worsened condition for many, but brought others closer to one another and God.

Prayerfully, these stress management techniques will help someone who may be going through a storm or a difficult time in their life. This is not to be construed as medical or psychological advice. These are simply suggestions for managing stress or combating the storms of life. Seek medical or professional help when needed.

**Choose the stress management tools that will best work for YOU. Be certain to seek medical and/or professional advice when needed.**

### Spiritual or Inspirational Techniques

- ◆ Develop your prayer life.
- ◆ Make a list and involve yourself in practices that uplift your spirit.
- ◆ Read uplifting and inspirational materials, and choose to watch or listen to uplifting media programs, journal, keep a gratitude list.
- ◆ Learn a meditation practice; meditate on the Word of God.
- ◆ When things are not within your control, it helps to have faith in something greater than yourself.
- ◆ Look for role models of people who have serenity.
- ◆ Learn more about the natural world, explore the outdoors.
- ◆ Explore surrender. Learn how to change what you can, let go, and know the difference.
- ◆ Explore whether you need to forgive yourself or others.
- ◆ Assess whether childhood experiences or teachings add to your stress.
- ◆ **Remain prayerful.**



## Physical Techniques (check with your doctor beforehand)

- ◆ Exercise at least 20 minutes 3 times a week.
- ◆ Practice deep breathing to create relaxation.
- ◆ Learn a moving meditation such as yoga or tai chi.
- ◆ Rest, renew, or get a massage.
- ◆ Volunteer to help a good cause.
- ◆ Make your environment reflect calmness.
- ◆ Get a medical check-up. Take good care of yourself.
- ◆ **Remain prayerful.**



## Intellectual Tools

- ◆ Calm your anxious mind. Practice “thought stopping” when you feel yourself worrying.
- ◆ Set aside a time to think or problem-solve.
- ◆ Do cognitive restructuring. Replace negative self-talk with positive self-statements.
- ◆ Practice time management or assess whether you are bored in your life.
- ◆ Practice daily affirmations.
- ◆ **Remain prayerful.**



(Resources: Mindful.org, Stress Management Psychological Foundations by Stephen Auerbach, Sandra E. Gambling, and Psychology and Teacher Education course information acquired through VCU Bachelors Program.)

## What I Live For

*By George Banks*

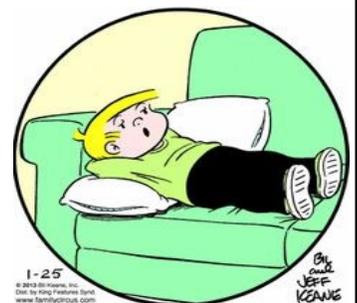
*I live for those who love me,  
For those who know me true;*

*For heaven that smiles above me, and awaits my spirit too;*

*For the cause that lacks assistance, for the wrong that needs resistance,*

*For the future in the distance,*

*And the good that I can do.*



1-25  
© 2013 by Keane, Inc.  
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By  
Jeff  
KEANE

“Mommy, I’m not ready to do my homework yet. I’ve still got my brain in sleep mode.”

## HOW TO SURVIVE A LOSS

A loss is a universal, complex, and painful process of dealing with and adjusting to loss and may not just be about a death of a loved one or friend. Perhaps it is the loss of a job, an illness that nothing more can be done, a home, a business, or a relationship. One thing for certain is that each person's loss and suffering has its own unique quality and trauma. No one can claim to fully know and understand the depth of another's stressful experience. It is however, a known fact that everyone will suffer with some form of loss. No one is exempt! If we learn to grieve appropriately over lesser losses and build up our confidence in God's faithfulness, there will be an inner strength that will enable us to weather the storm during difficult times. Nonetheless, God wants us to grieve so we can process and heal from the loss. He draws near to those of us with broken hearts and His loving presence provides a response to our need to be comforted, rescued, and blessed, giving us divine hope and everlasting peace in the midst of our loss. As believers in the Word, we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God and in our sufferings because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. Grief over loss calls on us to make changes in our lives that will either enrich or impoverish us.

Fortunately, as believers in Christ, we turn to our trusted Guide, Jesus Christ, to lead us through the process and stages of mourning. Some stages of grief such as *shock, denial, anger, bargaining, depression, submission, and reinvestment* are to be expected. However, everyone does not progress through these stages in the same order nor at the same time or speed. Don't rush the process but know that we can rely on God's indwelling Spirit and the Holy Bible to always give us the help we need to face the pain and loneliness that lie ahead.

The following four stages of grief that we must go through if we are to successfully live with our loss are:

### • **STAGE 1: ACCEPT THE REALITY OF THE LOSS**

- It is critically important for the grieving person to fully acknowledge the reality of who or what is being mourned.
- We must face the truth that the person we loved is gone.
- The defense that God provides cushions, protects, and helps us to survive the shock and function under the emotional anxiety of grief.
- Loss must be faced head on in order for us to begin rebuilding our shattered world.
- It is helpful to remember what we cannot lose---*God's Understanding, God's Love, and God's Presence!* Our God is a faithful and merciful High Priest who has tasted death for all of us. We must know that His love and His presence are with us as we walk through our valley; and He understands.

### • **STAGE 2: LET YOURSELF FEEL THE LOSS**

- Christians must always remember that grieving over loss indicates one's humanness, and not an indication of weakness or a lack of faith. The difference between us and those who don't know Christ, is that we do not "**grieve as others who have no hope**" (*1 Thessalonians 4:13*). Hope reminds us that something better is yet to come.
- How we negotiate the steep and sometimes perilous terrain of our own grief will greatly impact our ability to help others who are grieving.

# The **RESOURCE** Page...

- If there are no outward signs of grieving, and the person keeps all the emotions bottled up inside, that is an unhealthy sign.
  - Sadness, anger, guilt, anxiety, loneliness, fatigue, helplessness, shock and numbness express a healthy part of the grieving process because it helps us to express our emotions.
  - Trust God for the comfort that only He can give.
- **STAGE 3: LEARN TO LIVE WITH THE LOSS**
    - It's good to accept the new change in life by moving on without the other person's help or companionship, setting some short term goals such as returning to work, attending social events, or perhaps starting a hobby.
    - Life is not over. Yes, it will always be different, but it still can be good because of the goodness of the God we serve (*Psalm 118:1, 5-8*).
    - The virtue of perseverance is to participate in life again, bearing the scars of past wounds and continuously putting your trust in God to lead you.
  - **STAGE 4: REINVEST IN LOVE**
    - Trusting in God's enduring love is the only thing that will sustain us in the rough times of grief.
    - Hopefully in this stage, we, the mourners can view our loss as a growth-promoting experience that has made us better people in the process.
    - A loss changes our whole outlook on the fragility of life and gives us a greater appreciation for the beauty and importance of life.
    - Remembering what or whom we have lost will always cause a twinge of pain that will at times move us to tears again. It will also increase our appreciation for life and our passion for Christ's return that certainly would not have been possible had we not experienced the life-changing path of grief.

As a body of believers, we have been entrusted with the privileged opportunity of being the presence of Christ with those who are grieving. Often times, words are inadequate to express what the individual griever needs. It is the shoulder to cry on, the willingness to listen, and the commitment to sit in silence that communicate the most. No doubt, we all feel uncomfortable with situations where we can do nothing. Those who are grieving know that no one can change what has happened. What is most important to a griever is **“Will you walk with me along this painful path that I must travel.”** They already feel abandoned over the loss of their loved one. They don't need to feel abandoned by others around them. They need true friends who listen not only with their ears but also with their hearts---those who will reach out with the love and comfort of Christ, now and forevermore...

Practical support of small things like taking in a meal, providing a night out to dinner, a visit to just sit and talk/listen, financial management or help, and continued prayer support are essential for recovery from a devastating loss.

**Psalm 23**

**1 Thessalonians 2:16-17**

**Isaiah 40:31**

**2 Timothy 4:6-8**

## BITTER OR BETTER



*It is true that there is a myriad of things to worry about in our day-to-day lives; and we are certainly not immune to worry. However, God instructs us not to worry but to turn to Him in prayer. As we do so, His peace guards our hearts and minds through the power of the Holy Spirit. God is a God of Restoration who restores our faith, breathes hope into our heart, heals our soul, turns our mourning into peace, takes away our sadness, and clothes us with joy! Most assuredly, we, the body of Christ, will experience situations in life where we will seem to lose faith. But in that moment, in the midst of hopelessness and the lack of assurance, God reassures us of His character, His great love for us, His promises to us, and His provision on our behalf. Place your hand in God's hand, and place every person and every phase of your life at His feet. Then, wait patiently and watch intently to see how God changes things!*

### READ ON...

A daughter complained to her father about her life and how things were so hard for her. She did not know how she was going to make it and wanted to give up. She was tired of fighting and struggling. It seemed as one problem was solved a new one arose.



Her father, a chef, took her to the kitchen. He filled three pots with water and placed each on a high fire. Soon the pots came to a boil. In one he placed carrots, in the second he placed eggs, and in the last one he placed ground coffee beans. He let them sit and boil, without saying a word.



The daughter sucked her teeth and impatiently waited, wondering what he was doing. In about twenty minutes, he turned off the burners. He fished the carrots out and placed them in a bowl. He pulled the eggs out and placed them in a bowl. Then he ladled the coffee out and placed it in a bowl. Turning to her he asked, "Darling, what do you see?"

"Carrots, eggs and coffee," she replied.

He brought her closer and asked her to feel the carrots. She did and noted that they were soft. He then asked her to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard-boiled egg. Finally, he asked her to sip the coffee. She smiled as she tasted the rich aroma. She humbly asked, "what does it mean Father?"



He explained that each of them had faced the same adversity, boiling water, but each reacted differently. The carrot went in strong, hard and unrelenting. But after being subjected to the boiling water, it softened and became weak.



The egg had been fragile. Its thin outer shell had protected its liquid interior. But after sitting through the boiling water, its inside became hardened.

The ground coffee beans were unique. However, after they were in boiling water, they had changed the water.



"Which are you?" he asked his daughter. "When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a carrot, an egg, or a coffee bean?" Are you the carrot that seems hard, but with pain and adversity do you wilt and become soft and lose your strength? Are you an egg which starts off with a malleable heart? Were you a fluid spirit, but after death, a breakup, a divorce, or a layoff have you become hardened and stiff? Your shell looks the same, but are you bitter and tough with a stiff spirit and heart?

Or, are you like the coffee bean? The bean changes the hot water; the thing that is bringing the pain, to its peak flavor reaches 212 degrees Fahrenheit. When the water gets the hottest, it just tastes better.

If you are like the coffee bean, when things are at their worst, you get better and make things better around you!

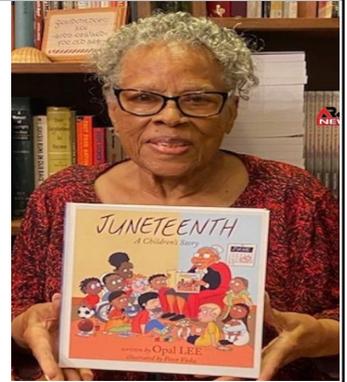


WHO ARE YOU? ...a **CARROT**, an **EGG**, or **COFFEE**

## SPOTLIGHT on...



### MRS. OPAL LEE hailed as the “Grandmother of Juneteenth”



On June 17, 2021, Mrs. Opal Lee watched her vision come to fruition as Juneteenth became a national holiday. She has spent decades tirelessly working to see Juneteenth receive the recognition it deserved. The 94-year-old activist from Fort Worth, Texas, had a front-row seat as President Joe Biden who was honored to welcome Mrs. Opal Lee to the White House, signed **Juneteenth National Independence Day Act** into law. It was a historical moment in which Mrs. Lee took great pride and is delighted that finally Juneteenth is a federal holiday. She stressed that there's a lot more work to be done and that it's not a Texas thing, or a Black thing, but rather, it should be an American thing. While Black Americans appreciate the establishing of Juneteenth National Independence Day at a time of racial reckoning in America, many believe that Congress needs to take a strong stance to protect voting rights and institute policing reforms and address other disparities that disadvantage people of color and minorities throughout this country.

Living in a predominantly white neighborhood, Mrs. Opal Lee's family home was set fire and vandalized by a mob of white supremacists. The structure was destroyed and no arrests were ever made. Had the family had the opportunity to stay there, they would have made good neighbors and wanted what every American family does---a decent place to live, jobs that pay well, and to be able to go to school in the neighborhood, even if it were a segregated school. Experiencing that hate crime pushed Mrs. Lee into a life of teaching, activism, and eventually campaigning.

Nonetheless, the first Juneteenth celebrations took place in Galveston and Fort Worth, Texas. Mrs. Lee recalls that there were multiple days of festivities, including picnicking with her family and attending parades, 5K walks/runs, prayer breakfasts, art exhibits, gospel festivals, and more recently the Juneteenth Pageant. As the Black Lives Matter non-violent protests continue across the country, many companies made Juneteenth a day-off for employees; and New York and Virginia had planned to make it a paid holiday for state employees. Unfortunately, this monumental event remains largely unknown to most Americans. Hopefully, the new federal law will provide a chance for all Americans to learn about this and other long-ignored histories of our country. Given the 200+ years of enslavement, Black Americans were inspired and empowered to transform their lives and their country. The changes were nothing short of amazing.

The former educator and school counselor continues her own opportunities and other accomplishments. Every Juneteenth she embarks on her annual 2.5 mile walk to recognize 2.5 years it took for the news to reach enslaved people in Galveston. She calls herself “just a little old lady in tennis shoes getting in everybody's business.” This journey kicked off in 2016, when Mrs. Opal Lee, who was 89, began *Opal's Walk*. She planned to walk 1400 miles from Fort Worth to Washington DC to raise awareness and gain support from Congress to name Juneteenth a national holiday officially. Instead she ended up completing an impressive 300 miles as her vision extended to people across the country. She set a goal to get 100-thousand signatures and actually collected more than 1.5 million signatures. As Opal Lee walked alongside her community in Fort Worth this Juneteenth, she encouraged folks all around the nation to join her and participate in their own way, engaging in a multiple of activities that honors the historical legacy of Juneteenth and shows value of never giving up hope in uncertain times. Thank God for people like Mrs. Opal Lee who is relentless in making a difference!

*The National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington DC, is a community space where this spirit of hope lives on and historical events are shared and new stories with equal urgency are told.*



# The Seven Habits of a Godly Life

*Excerpted from a Lesson by Dr. Charles Stanley*

A habit is a recurring and often subconscious pattern of behavior that is acquired through frequent repetition. What we habitually do has tremendous influence on living a godly life, a life of one that is no longer seeking satisfaction through a sinful lifestyle but is surrendered to God and His Will.

## The Seven Habits of a Godly Life

1. **A life of prayer.** We see this modeled by Jesus. Jesus knew that prayer was an important priority of His life. *Mark 1:35* "In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place and was praying there." *Luke 4:42* "When day came, Jesus left and went to a secluded place and the crowds were searching for Him and came to Him and tried to keep Him from going away from them." Prayer that promotes godliness is not merely occasional petitions offered in times of trouble or need but a daily conversation with the Father that springs from love for Him and gratitude for who He is and what He does.
2. **Faith.** God controls everything—not only what happens but why and how it happens as well. His sovereignty is our firm foundation for believing and trusting Him. *Proverbs 3: 5-6* offers this advice. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths."
3. **Meditation on the Word of God.** *Psalms 63:6* "When I remember you in my bed, I meditate on you in the night watches." Meditation includes reading Scripture, thinking about it, seeking to apply what God says, asking Him questions and surrendering any issues He brings to mind. Meditation keeps us alert and sensitive to whatever God wants to do in our lives.
4. **Obedience.** We walk on a higher level when we live in obedience to God. It is not a matter of looking down on others but choosing to live by God's standards rather than following the world's lifestyles.
5. **Dependence upon the Holy Spirit.** Paul tells us to "be filled with the Spirit" (*Ephesians 5:18*) The Greek verb signifies that this is a continuous action of filling. It means to live in obedience to Him, relying on Him to equip, empower, strengthen, teach, and guide us each day.
6. **Giving to God and others.** We can never outgive God. *Luke 6:38* "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."
7. **Forgiving other people.** Forgiveness may not be easy, but it is what the Lord commands. (*Ephesians 4:32*) Even if someone betrays us, we must forgive them and trust God to take care of the situation.

### **YOUR RESPONSE...**

- \* What changes would you have to make to cultivate these seven godly habits?
- \* Which areas are the most challenging for you?
- \* What obstacles will you need to overcome?

## *Spratley Allen Missionary Circle*

*By Sister Valorie McBee*

*What we have heard and known, what our fathers have told us, we will not hide them from the children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, His power, and the wonders He has done.” (Psalms 78:3-4 NIV)*

The 122<sup>nd</sup> Annual Session & Congress of Christian Faith Formation sponsored by the Baptist General Convention of Virginia was held from June 26 – 30. The Spratley Allen missionaries were truly blessed to virtually attend classes, worship and memorial services, and prayer.

Several classes were offered including one entitled, *Somebody’s Calling My Name: Knowing Our Ancestors and Remembering Sacred Spaces*. Dr. Angelita Reyes of Literacy InterActives, Inc. was one of the presenters and Rev. Dr. Elisha Burke, BGC Director, was the facilitator. Dr. Reyes presentation was enlightening and stated that our ancestral information can be shared with children in church school as well as public schools, particularly now that Governor Northam is incorporating more African American history in our schools. Our ancestors often utilized one building for church and education during slavery, worship was held in secret wherever they could find space. Perhaps sacred spaces are as diverse as buildings and cemeteries. Preserving our church history includes bulletins, funeral programs and donated items from members. Dr. Burke stated that BGC is offering digital imaging for churches that desire to preserve their archival collections.

Mr. Ross, the historian for Six Mt. Zion, presented information on properly preserving artifacts and documents. He shared that their church’s historical information is part of the Smithsonian Institute. Documents should be preserved by using specific methods to prevent deterioration. Paper clips, rubber bands, staples, plastic or ink should not be used on documents, nor should they be folded. Over time these methods are damaging. Artifacts can include robes, furniture, books, and church plates with old patterns. Historical societies are interested to hear from African American churches. Dr. Nichole Myers-Turner stated that children should understand our legacy so it’s important to preserve our history; include a mapping history and record stories of the elders for what may not be in written documents. Mr. Stewart Scott presented information also about family search. Mr. Scott is affiliated with the Family Search Organization; he shared that there are over 3.2 billion digital images and 8 billion names listed in the family history library. Dr. Elisha Burke shared his family tree from his DNA match. Resources included [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org), [www.rootstech.org](http://www.rootstech.org) and [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com).

The Women’s Ministry of BGC also offered several informative classes. Sister Barbara Crump, Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Advocate, presented on “God’s Plan, Our Part: We are Nurturing Christian Women, (*Mark 12:30-31, 1 Thessalonians 5:11, Galatians 6:1-2, Hebrews 4:15*). Sister Crump reiterated that a strong Christian woman is the lifeline of her family and is nurturing, loving, supportive, caring, and encouraging. Nurturing is about helping people, and being empathetic. The steps for being empathetic include: enlisting all your faculties, reaching out physically, verbally and emotionally, praying for discernment, asking caring questions, thinking deliberately, helping in meaningful ways, and yielding your convenience, pride, resources. Empathy is considering the feelings of others; it increases unity and promotes healing.

*Sister Shirley Robinson*, Spratley Allen missionary was the honoree for the BGC Area A Women’s Ministry. Congratulations to all the honorees from Area A to Area L of the Women’s Ministry.

We mourn the transitioning of our dear Spratley Allen missionary and Life member of BGC Area A Women’s Ministry, and RMZ Associate Pastor, **Rev. Doris Ann Hodges Batts.**



*Lord, You have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.*

*Psalms 90:1 NIV*

# Health Matters

By Cheryl Jordan-Sayles, MD

## THE COVID-19 VACCINE

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a tremendous toll on the entire world since it first appeared in December 2019 from Wuhan, China. As of August 2021, the number of new cases of COVID-19 is once again surging in the United States with the new delta variant of the coronavirus. But the COVID-19 vaccine is here and available for all persons over the age of 12 which could help slow this rapid surge that is happening.

Breakthroughs in vaccine technology even prior to this pandemic made it possible for scientists to move quickly to respond to this pandemic in the development of vaccine. Although the COVID-19 vaccine was developed fast, IT DID NOT SKIP STEPS TO GETTING IT AUTHORIZED THROUGH THE FDA FOR EMERGENCY USE (EUA). EUA is granted for drugs needed for “very catastrophic immediate circumstances”. The vaccine was still sent thru the typical clinical trials that are required thru the FDA prior to allowing the vaccine to be made available for use in the general population. The trials were standard in design, but overall timelines were reduced by overlapping portions of the trials due the seriousness of the pandemic. Full approval is given when the FDA reviews much more data and covering a longer period of time. This data which is currently being reviewed by the FDA under a priority review and it is expected that full approval should come in the next couple of months for the Pfizer vaccine. Moderna and Johnson and Johnson vaccines have not yet formally requested priority review. Full approval of the Covid-19 vaccine could help overcome some the hesitancy to getting the vaccine.

Vaccines are one of the greatest discoveries in public health. They have helped rid the world of many diseases such as smallpox and polio and have helped to reduce other infectious diseases such as measles, whooping cough and chicken pox to name a few. Similarly, having a vaccine now for COVID-19 is now one of the most important medical success stories that is available to help reduce transmission and illness from this virus. Currently there are 3 authorized COVID-19 vaccines in the US. There are known potential benefits of each of the vaccines to prevent COVID-19 illness that outweigh any potential risks related to the vaccine.

The COVID19 vaccines are safe and effective. From December 14, 2020 thru August 9, 2021 over 351 million doses of the COVID19 vaccines have been given under the most intense safety monitoring in US history. Most people have no side effects from getting the vaccine, but others have reported side effects ranging from fever, chills, pain at the injection site, and fatigue. These side effects if experienced are generally temporary and will be resolved in 1 to 2 days.

Getting the COVID-19 vaccine will help prevent you from getting COVID-19 or from becoming seriously ill or dying due to COVID-19 illness. Getting the COVID-19 vaccine also helps the community to work toward herd immunity which is our best way to “beat the pandemic”. Herd immunity happens when the population reaches immunity to the virus either through enough people receiving the vaccination or having had previous infection. Therefore, more people getting the vaccine means a greater chance of getting back to normal activities.

*Myths and misinformation about the vaccine are part of the problem for vaccine hesitancy or reasons why people do not want to get the vaccine. Here is some of the correct information related to some of the myths. (Taken from the American Academy of Family Physicians COVID-19 Vaccine Myths)*

- ⇒ **Myth #1: There were not enough clinical trial participants to declare the vaccine safe.** This is false. The clinical trials enrolled tens of thousands of participants which is the similar number of participates common with vaccine trials.
- ⇒ **Myth #2: COVID-19 vaccines will deliver a microchip into my body.** There is not a microchip in the vaccines. There are no electronic components in vaccines.
- ⇒ **Myth #3: The vaccine will change my DNA.** This is not possible with a vaccine. The messenger RNA vaccines like COVID-19 works in the cell’s cytoplasm and never enter the nucleus of the cell where the DNA lives.
- ⇒ **Myth #4: I have already had COVID-19, so I don’t need the vaccine.** It is not clear how long natural immunity from having the infection lasts. Therefore it is recommended that the vaccine still be given even in persons who have had the illness.
- ⇒ **Myth #5: You can get COVID-19 from the vaccine.** You cannot get Covid-19 from the vaccine because it does not contain the live virus
- ⇒ **Myth #6: The COVID-19 vaccine can affect women’s fertility.** The COVID-19 vaccine will not affect fertility. Confusion arose on his topic when information about a protein for the coronavirus was falsely reported to be the same as the protein that is associated with the placenta and that the vaccine would therefore affect fertility. However, the proteins are completely different and the vaccine has no effect on the placenta or fertility.

**TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE.** Waiting too long to be vaccinated allows the coronavirus to continue spreading in the community and allows for the virus to mutant or change to a different variant. The COVID-19 vaccine will be most effective when everyone in the community decides to get it and will shorten the pandemic. **Along with being vaccinated, you should continue to wear a mask, wash your hands and practice social distancing until the pandemic is over.**

# BOOK REVIEW

## Empty Out the Negative

Make Room for More Joy, Greater Confidence and New Levels of Influence

By Joel Osteen

Overview by Sheila Cunningham Price

JOEL OSTEEN

Author of 10 New York Times Bestsellers

EMPTY

+

OUT

+

THE

+

NEGATIVE

Make Room for More Joy, Greater Confidence and New Levels of Influence

Joel realizes how easy it is to go through life holding on to things that weigh us down. He says when we allow negative emotions in, they take up space we need for the good things that we could embrace. We allow our hearts and minds to be contaminated with worry, guilt, resentment, jealousy and doubt, which prevents us from enjoying our lives. He suggests that we should make the effort to wake up every morning determined to release any negative thoughts or offenses from the previous day. That will prevent us from dwelling on the negative inventory of what is holding us down. Instead, he encourages us to reflect on God and acknowledge that He is in control and He will get us to where we are supposed to be.

Joel says we must keep our hearts pure by letting go of bitterness and unforgiveness towards others for our own sake. Being forgiving does not excuse another person for wrongdoing. It allows the poison of an offense to be eradicated and that frees up space for the necessary emotional energy to be used for our dreams, goals and aspirations. When the little negative impurities come to light, let go of them and keep the heart pure. Step up to a new level of joy and peace.

We must not allow our thoughts to defeat us. We cannot live in victory while expecting doom. We can't think weak and develop strength. We must think power thoughts because victory begins in the mind. Success will depend on our thinking. ***The forces for me are greater than the forces against me.*** We must accept that we are all well able. We need not think like others think or do as others do. Each morning, we should power up and get our minds going in the right direction, thinking positive thoughts and proceeding through the day with confidence. Think victory, think abundance, think can-do thoughts and think these things on purpose.

We must not allow the self-defeating thoughts into our minds. We can defy the opinions of others that would have us to believe we cannot do whatever we dream of doing. Rebuke the negative thoughts, the recurring recordings in our heads and the naysayers and get in tune with what God thinks of us. He says we are wonderfully made. He says we are crowned with favor and we will leave our mark. For this reason, we should learn to love ourselves in a healthy way. Otherwise, we will not be able to love others.

We must quit the limited, defeated thinking. Stop with the unworthy thoughts and hold heads high. We are the children of the Most High God. We should expect His favor in our health, relationships, finances, and dreams. These things can manifest when we develop a fresh new attitude of faith, kindness and good cheer. We should clothe ourselves with good nature and compassion for others. We should be cloaked in an armor of praise and gratitude. We should decide to put aside discouragement and enjoy every day for the beauty it brings, telling ourselves that whatever we touch will prosper. If we erase the sour dispositions, the critical spirits and the clogged hearts, we can begin to see physical and emotional healing, restoration of relationships and the fullness of our destiny.

Crying over yesterday's disappointments and living with regret will never bring freedom. We can learn to drop those heartaches and move beyond the hurts. Although we may be products of our past, we do not have to remain prisoners of it. Let it go and let God right the wrongs. He will be our vindicator and will give us beauty for the ashes. Trust that better is coming.

We are all seeds, full of gifts, talents and potential. If our seeds are planted in unhealthy soil, such as with people with limited mindsets, people who scoff at our aspirations, those who criticize and abuse us, then the life may be choked out of our seeds. We must continue to keep our seeds in good soil in order that we might triumph. Let us find the right people who will encourage and fan the flames of greatness within us. Associate with those who will inspire and challenge us to higher heights.

We should do our part by eliminating thorny friends, those holding us back and weighing us down. Seek out people who will help to propel us to our God-ordained destiny. If we do this, God will open doors to more increase, abundance, influence, new experiences and more joy. Joel says it is headed our way!

### Suggested Reading



**"Woman Evolve"**  
By  
Sarah Jakes Roberts

***Be careful what you think, because your thoughts run your life. (NCV)***  
Proverbs 4:23



## God's Love

*I believe that God created me. He is my caring and loving heavenly Father. He provides for me, protects me, loves me, and forgives me if I ask.*

### THE PRODIGAL SON

CHOOSE THE CORRECT ANSWER FOR EACH QUESTION:

1. How many sons did the father have?  
A) two                      B) many                      C) three
2. Which son wanted his inheritance?  
A) oldest                      B) youngest                      C) senior
3. After the son wasted all his money, what job did he get?  
A) serving the king    B) waiting tables                      C) feeding pigs
4. *Why did the son return home?*  
A) he had no money    B) he missed his father    C) he was lonely
5. *What did the father do when he saw his youngest son?*  
A) cried                      B) gave him a hug                      C) turned him away
6. Who was not happy?  
A) oldest son                      B) senior                      C) youngest son
7. What did the father do to celebrate?  
A) had a feast                      B) ate meat                      C) went fishing

### MEMORY VERSE

Complete this verse using the words below. Then repeat it daily until you have memorized it.

For \_\_\_\_\_ so loved the \_\_\_\_\_ he gave his only \_\_\_\_\_. That whosoever  
believe in \_\_\_\_\_ shall not perish but have \_\_\_\_\_ life.                      *John 3:16*

him                      world                      God                      everlasting                      son



## let your VOICE speak... **VOTE**

**EVERY Election Day is IMPORTANT!!!** If you have NOT already planned your strategy to vote on **November 2, 2021**, start preparing now! Know the rules and your rights! The laws enacted by our local officials on behalf of we, the people, the institutions, and organizations have a direct impact on our lifestyles. Already several GOP-controlled states have passed laws to politicize, criminalize, and interfere with the Elections for the citizens of this country. Some of the planned implementations of law that make it harder for Democratic constituencies to vote are: *1) Cut back on the number of polling precincts in certain areas. 2) Close voting polls early. 3) Don't allow Sunday or mail-in voting. 4) Make it a crime for volunteer groups to pass out water or food to voters waiting in line. 5) Prevent Democratic secretary of the state from defending state Election laws. 6) Throw out election results for so-called fraudulent reasons. 7) Require additional proof of identification and more...* The restriction voting laws seem to increase daily.

Our foreparents fought, bled and died for us to have the right to vote.

Please honor them and **VOTE**---  
**OUR FUTURE DEPENDS ON IT!**



### November 2, 2021 General Election

- ⇒ **Offices on ballot:** Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, House of Delegates, some local offices (varies by locality).
- ⇒ **First day of in-person early voting** at [local voter registration office](#): **Friday, September 17, 2021.**
- ⇒ **Deadline to [register to vote, or update an existing registration](#):** **Tuesday, October 12, 2021.**
- ⇒ **Deadline to apply for a ballot to be mailed to you:** **Friday, October 22 2021.** Request must be received by [local voter registration office](#) by 5:00 p.m.
- ⇒ **Voter registration offices open Saturday, October 23, 2021 and October 30, 2021 for early voting.**
- ⇒ **Last day of in-person early voting** at [local voter registration office](#): **Saturday, October 30, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.**
- ⇒ **See who is on your ballot** by viewing the [candidate lists](#). (<https://www.elections.virginia.gov/casting-a-ballot/candidate-list/>)
- ⇒ **Register to vote or apply for a ballot online** using the [Citizen Portal](#). (<https://www.elections.virginia.gov/>)





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## FOURTH OF JULY WORD SEARCH

Circle each word from the list in the puzzle. The words can go in any direction.

F	I	R	E	W	O	R	K	S	N	G	B	C
I	N	Z	O	R	D	S	R	G	A	B	W	D
P	D	V	J	R	G	Y	F	O	J	U	L	Y
R	E	V	O	L	U	T	I	O	N	A	R	Y
F	P	O	F	B	H	F	B	M	G	P	H	N
O	E	S	G	F	O	U	R	T	H	V	D	S
O	N	U	T	G	Q	G	E	E	E	H	V	O
K	D	L	H	A	A	G	I	M	E	H	R	E
J	E	U	N	I	T	E	D	R	T	D	Y	U
D	N	Z	H	O	N	E	N	R	T	L	O	I
L	C	C	H	F	O	W	S	L	E	O	B	M
P	E	P	Q	G	W	B	R	I	T	A	I	N
D	F	G	H	R	T	Y	U	I	O	P	L	D

BRITAIN  
FIREWORKS  
FOURTH  
FREEDOM  
INDEPENDENCE

JULY  
REVOLUTIONARY  
STATES  
UNITED

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**Prayer Promises**

The Bible contains many prayers and promises. Fill in the blanks to complete the prayer promise in each statement.

1. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will; and it shall \_\_\_\_\_" (John 15:7)
2. "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee \_\_\_\_\_" (Ps. 37:4).
3. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called \_\_\_\_\_" (Rom. 8:28)
4. "the righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them \_\_\_\_\_" (Ps. 34:17)
5. "Evening and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall \_\_\_\_\_" (Ps. 55:17).



"Yeah, I had just figured out what I wanted to do during summer vacation and then it was over."