



DECEMBER 2011 – Cross Roads Community Church

Your greatest regret at the end of your life will be the lions you didn't chase. You will look back longingly on risks not taken, opportunities not seized, and dreams not pursued. Stop running away from what scares you most and start chasing the God-ordained opportunities that cross your path. Your next assignment maybe hiding in your biggest problem, your worst failure and your greatest fear

DAY 1

Proverbs 3:5-8

5 Trust God from the bottom of your heart;

don't try to figure out everything on your own.

6 Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go;

he's the one who will keep you on track.

7 Don't assume that you know it all.

Run to God! Run from evil!

8 Your body will glow with health,

your very bones will vibrate with life!

Day 2

James 1:5-8

5 If you don't know what you're doing, pray to the Father. He loves to help. You'll get his help, and won't be condescended to when you ask for it. 6 Ask boldly, believingly, without a second thought. People who "worry their prayers" are like wind-whipped waves. 7 Don't think you're going to get anything from the Master that way, 8 adrift at sea, keeping all your options open.

Day 3

Philippians 4:6-8

6 Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. 7 Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life.

8 Summing it all up, friends, I'd say you'll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious — the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse. 9 Put into practice what you learned from me, what you heard and saw and realized. Do that, and God, who makes everything work together, will work you into his most excellent harmonies.

Day 4

Matthew 6:25-34

25 "If you decide for God, living a life of God-worship, it follows that you don't fuss about what's on the table at mealtimes or whether the clothes in your closet are in fashion. There is far more to your life than the food you put in your stomach, more to your outer appearance than the clothes you hang on your body. 26 Look at the birds, free and unfettered, not tied down to a job description, careless in the care of God. And you count far more to him than birds.

27 "Has anyone by fussing in front of the mirror ever gotten taller by so much as an inch? 28 All this time and money wasted on fashion — do you think it makes that much difference? Instead of looking at the fashions, walk out into the fields and look at the wildflowers. They never primp or shop, 29 but have you ever seen color and design quite like it? The ten best-dressed men and women in the country look shabby alongside them.

30 "If God gives such attention to the appearance of wildflowers — most of which are never even seen — don't you think he'll attend to you, take pride in you, do his best for you? 31 What I'm trying to do here is to get you to relax, to not be so preoccupied with getting, so you can respond to God's giving. 32 People who don't know God and the way he works fuss over these things, but you know both God and how he works. 33 Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. Don't worry about missing out. You'll find all your everyday human concerns will be met.

34 "Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don't get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes.

Day 5

Psalms 37:1-9

Don't bother your head with braggarts

or wish you could succeed like the wicked.

2 In no time they'll shrivel like grass clippings

and wilt like cut flowers in the sun.

3 Get insurance with God and do a good deed,

settle down and stick to your last.

4 Keep company with God,

get in on the best.

5 Open up before God, keep nothing back;

he'll do whatever needs to be done:

6 He'll validate your life in the clear light of day

and stamp you with approval at high noon.

7 Quiet down before God,

be prayerful before him.

Day 6

Psalms 46:10

10 "Step out of the traffic! Take a long,
loving look at me, your High God,
above politics, above everything."

Day 7

Matthew 6:12-15

12 Forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.'

14 For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Day 8

Matthew 18:23-35

“The kingdom of God is like a king who decided to square accounts with his servants. As he got under way, one servant was brought before him who had run up a debt of a hundred thousand dollars. He couldn’t pay up, so the king ordered the man, along with his wife, children, and goods, to be auctioned off at the slave market.

26–27 “The poor wretch threw himself at the king’s feet and begged, ‘Give me a chance and I’ll pay it all back.’ Touched by his plea, the king let him off, erasing the debt.

28 “The servant was no sooner out of the room when he came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him ten dollars. He seized him by the throat and demanded, ‘Pay up. Now!’

29–31 “The poor wretch threw himself down and begged, ‘Give me a chance and I’ll pay it all back.’ But he wouldn’t do it. He had him arrested and put in jail until the debt was paid. When the other servants saw this going on, they were outraged and brought a detailed report to the king.

32–35 “The king summoned the man and said, ‘You evil servant! I forgave your entire debt when you begged me for mercy. Shouldn’t you be compelled to be merciful to your fellow servant who asked for mercy?’ The king was furious and put the screws to the man until he paid back his entire debt. And that’s exactly what my Father in heaven is going to do to each one of you who doesn’t forgive unconditionally anyone who asks for mercy.”¹

2

¹ Peterson, E. H. (2002). *The Message : The Bible in contemporary language* (Mt 18:29–35). Colorado Springs, Colo.: NavPress.

² Peterson, E. H. (2002). *The Message : The Bible in contemporary language* (Mt 18:23–29). Colorado Springs, Colo.: NavPress.

Day 9

Psalms 51:1-12

Generous in love — God, give grace!

Huge in mercy — wipe out my bad record.

2 Scrub away my guilt,

soak out my sins in your laundry.

3 I know how bad I've been;

my sins are staring me down.

4 You're the One I've violated, and you've seen

it all, seen the full extent of my evil.

You have all the facts before you;

whatever you decide about me is fair.

5 I've been out of step with you for a long time,

in the wrong since before I was born.

6 What you're after is truth from the inside out.

Enter me, then; conceive a new, true life.

7 Soak me in your laundry and I'll come out clean,

scrub me and I'll have a snow-white life.

8 Tune me in to foot-tapping songs,

set these once-broken bones to dancing.

Day 9 Continued...

9 Don't look too close for blemishes,

give me a clean bill of health.

10 God, make a fresh start in me,

shape a Genesis week from the chaos of my life.

11 Don't throw me out with the trash,

or fail to breathe holiness in me.

12 Bring me back from gray exile,

put a fresh wind in my sails!

Day 10

Romans 12:1-2

So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life — your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life — and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. 2 Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.

Day 11

Romans 16:17-20

17 One final word of counsel, friends. Keep a sharp eye out for those who take bits and pieces of the teaching that you learned and then use them to make trouble. Give these people a wide berth. 18 They have no intention of living for our Master Christ. They're only in this for what they can get out of it, and aren't above using pious sweet talk to dupe unsuspecting innocents.

19 And so while there has never been any question about your honesty in these matters — I couldn't be more proud of you! — I want you also to be smart, making sure every "good" thing is the real thing. Don't be gullible in regard to smooth-talking evil. Stay alert like this, 20 and before you know it the God of peace will come down on Satan with both feet, stomping him into the dirt. Enjoy the best of Jesus!

Day 12

Jeremiah 29:11-14

11 I know what I'm doing. I have it all planned out — plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for.

12 "When you call on me, when you come and pray to me, I'll listen.

13 "When you come looking for me, you'll find me.

"Yes, when you get serious about finding me and want it more than anything else, 14 I'll make sure you won't be disappointed." God's Decree.

"I'll turn things around for you. I'll bring you back from all the countries into which I drove you" — God's Decree — "bring you home to the place from which I sent you off into exile. You can count on it.

Day 13

Isaiah 43:1-4

ut now, God's Message,

the God who made you in the first place, Jacob,

the One who got you started, Israel:

"Don't be afraid, I've redeemed you.

I've called your name. You're mine.

2 When you're in over your head, I'll be there with you.

When you're in rough waters, you will not go down.

When you're between a rock and a hard place,

it won't be a dead end —

3 Because I am God, your personal God,

The Holy of Israel, your Savior.

I paid a huge price for you:

all of Egypt, with rich Cush and Seba thrown in!

4 That's how much you mean to me!

That's how much I love you!

I'd sell off the whole world to get you back,

trade the creation just for you.

Day 14

Isaiah 43:18-19

8 "Forget about what's happened;

don't keep going over old history.

19 Be alert, be present. I'm about to do something brand-new.

It's bursting out! Don't you see it?

There it is! I'm making a road through the desert,

rivers in the badlands.

Day 15

Philippians 3:12-21

12 I'm not saying that I have this all together, that I have it made. But I am well on my way, reaching out for Christ, who has so wondrously reached out for me. 13 Friends, don't get me wrong: By no means do I count myself an expert in all of this, but I've got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward — to Jesus. 14 I'm off and running, and I'm not turning back.

15 So let's keep focused on that goal, those of us who want everything God has for us. If any of you have something else in mind, something less than total commitment, God will clear your blurred vision — you'll see it yet! 16 Now that we're on the right track, let's stay on it.

17 Stick with me, friends. Keep track of those you see running this same course, headed for this same goal. 18 There are many out there taking other paths, choosing other goals, and trying to get you to go along with them. I've warned you of them many times; sadly, I'm having to do it again. All they want is easy street. They hate

Day 15 Continued...

Christ's Cross. 19 But easy street is a dead-end street. Those who live there make their bellies their gods; belches are their praise; all they can think of is their appetites.

20 But there's far more to life for us. We're citizens of high heaven! We're waiting the arrival of the Savior, the Master, Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our earthy bodies into glorious bodies like his own. He'll make us beautiful and whole with the same powerful skill by which he is putting everything as it should be, under and around him.

Day 16

2 Corinthians 2:5-9

5 Now, regarding the one who started all this — the person in question who caused all this pain — I want you to know that I am not the one injured in this as much as, with a few exceptions, all of you. So I don't want to come down too hard. 6 What the majority of you agreed to as punishment is punishment enough. 7 Now is the time to forgive this man and help him back on his feet. If all you do is pour on the guilt, you could very well drown him in it. 8 My counsel now is to pour on the love.

9 The focus of my letter wasn't on punishing the offender but on getting you to take responsibility for the health of the church. 10 So if you forgive him, I forgive him. Don't think I'm carrying around a list of personal grudges. The fact is that I'm joining in with your forgiveness, as Christ is with us, guiding us. 11 After all, we don't want to unwittingly give Satan an opening for yet more mischief — we're not oblivious to his sly ways!

Day 17

2 Corinthians 10:3-8

3 The world is unprincipled. It's dog-eat-dog out there! The world doesn't fight fair. But we don't live or fight our battles that way — never have and never will. 4 The tools of our trade aren't for marketing or manipulation, but they are for demolishing that entire massively corrupt culture. 5 We use our powerful God-tools for smashing warped philosophies, tearing down barriers erected against the truth of God, fitting every loose thought and emotion and impulse into the structure of life shaped by Christ. 6 Our tools are ready at hand for clearing the ground of every obstruction and building lives of obedience into maturity.

7 You stare and stare at the obvious, but you can't see the forest for the trees. If you're looking for a clear example of someone on Christ's side, why do you so quickly cut me out? Believe me, I am quite sure of my standing with Christ. 8 You may think I overstate the authority he gave me, but I'm not backing off. Every bit of my commitment is for the purpose of building you up, after all, not tearing you down.

Day 18

Ephesians 6:10-18

10 And that about wraps it up. God is strong, and he wants you strong. 11 So take everything the Master has set out for you, well-made weapons of the best materials. And put them to use so you will be able to stand up to everything the Devil throws your way. 12 This is no afternoon athletic contest that we'll walk away from and forget about in a couple of hours. This is for keeps, a life-or-death fight to the finish against the Devil and all his angels.

13 Be prepared. You're up against far more than you can handle on your own. Take all the help you can get, every weapon God has issued, so that when it's all over but the shouting you'll still be on your feet. 14 Truth, righteousness, 15 peace, 16 faith, 17 and salvation are more than words. Learn how to apply them. You'll need them throughout your life. God's Word is an indispensable weapon. 18 In the same way, prayer is essential in this ongoing warfare. Pray hard and long. Pray for your brothers and sisters. Keep your eyes open. Keep each other's spirits up so that no one falls behind or drops out.

Day 19

Galatians 6:1-4

Live creatively, friends. If someone falls into sin, forgivingly restore him, saving your critical comments for yourself. You might be needing forgiveness before the day's out. 2 Stoop down and reach out to those who are oppressed. Share their burdens, and so complete Christ's law. 3 If you think you are too good for that, you are badly deceived.

4 Make a careful exploration of who you are and the work you have been given, and then sink yourself into that. Don't be impressed with yourself. Don't compare yourself with others. 5 Each of you must take responsibility for doing the creative best you can with your own life.

Day 20

Romans 12:3

3 I'm speaking to you out of deep gratitude for all that God has given me, and especially as I have responsibilities in relation to you. Living then, as every one of you does, in pure grace, it's important that you not misinterpret yourselves as people who are bringing this goodness to God. No, God brings it all to you. The only accurate way to understand ourselves is by what God is and by what he does for us, not by what we are and what we do for him.

Day 21

Matthew 6:1-4

"Be especially careful when you are trying to be good so that you don't make a performance out of it. It might be good theater, but the God who made you won't be applauding.

2 "When you do something for someone else, don't call attention to yourself. You've seen them in action, I'm sure — 'playactors' I call them — treating prayer meeting and street corner alike as a stage, acting compassionate as long as someone is watching, playing to the crowds. They get applause, true, but that's all they get. 3 When you help someone out, don't think about how it looks. 4 Just do it — quietly and unobtrusively. That is the way your God, who conceived you in love, working behind the scenes, helps you out.

Day 22

Matthew 6:5-9

5 "And when you come before God, don't turn that into a theatrical production either. All these people making a regular show out of their prayers, hoping for stardom! Do you think God sits in a box seat?

6 "Here's what I want you to do: Find a quiet, secluded place so you won't be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense his grace.

7 "The world is full of so-called prayer warriors who are prayer-ignorant. They're full of formulas and programs and advice, peddling techniques for getting what you want from God. 8 Don't fall for that nonsense. This is your Father you are dealing with, and he knows better than you what you need. 9 With a God like this loving you, you can pray very simply.

Day 23

Matthew 6:9b-13

Our Father in heaven,

Reveal who you are.

10 Set the world right;

Do what's best —

as above, so below.

11 Keep us alive with three square meals.

12 Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others.

13 Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil.

You're in charge!

You can do anything you want!

You're ablaze in beauty!

Yes. Yes. Yes.

Day 24

Isaiah 9:2-7

2 The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light.

For those who lived in a land of deep shadows —
light! sunbursts of light!

3 You repopulated the nation,
you expanded its joy.

Oh, they're so glad in your presence!

Festival joy!

The joy of a great celebration,
sharing rich gifts and warm greetings.

4 The abuse of oppressors and cruelty of tyrants —
all their whips and cudgels and curses —
Is gone, done away with, a deliverance
as surprising and sudden as Gideon's old victory over Midian.

5 The boots of all those invading troops,
along with their shirts soaked with innocent blood,
Will be piled in a heap and burned,
a fire that will burn for days!

Day 24 Continued...

6 For a child has been born — for us!

the gift of a son — for us!

He'll take over

the running of the world.

His names will be: Amazing Counselor,

Strong God,

Eternal Father,

Prince of Wholeness. 7 His ruling authority will grow,

and there'll be no limits to the wholeness he brings.

He'll rule from the historic David throne

over that promised kingdom.

He'll put that kingdom on a firm footing

and keep it going

With fair dealing and right living,

beginning now and lasting always.

The zeal of God-of-the-Angel-Armies

will do all this.

Day 25

Matthew 1:18-25

18 The birth of Jesus took place like this. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. Before they came to the marriage bed, Joseph discovered she was pregnant. (It was by the Holy Spirit, but he didn't know that.) 19 Joseph, chagrined but noble, determined to take care of things quietly so Mary would not be disgraced.

20 While he was trying to figure a way out, he had a dream. God's angel spoke in the dream: "Joseph, son of David, don't hesitate to get married. Mary's pregnancy is Spirit-conceived. God's Holy Spirit has made her pregnant. 21 She will bring a son to birth, and when she does, you, Joseph, will name him Jesus — 'God saves' — because he will save his people from their sins." 22 This would bring the prophet's embryonic sermon to full term:

23 Watch for this — a virgin will get pregnant and bear a son;

They will name him Emmanuel (Hebrew for "God is with us").

24 Then Joseph woke up. He did exactly what God's angel commanded in the dream: He married Mary. 25 But he did not consummate the marriage until she had the baby. He named the baby Jesus.

Day 26

Matthew 2:7-11

7 Herod then arranged a secret meeting with the scholars from the East. Pretending to be as devout as they were, he got them to tell him exactly when the birth-announcement star appeared. 8 Then he told them the prophecy about Bethlehem, and said, "Go find this child. Leave no stone unturned. As soon as you find him, send word and I'll join you at once in your worship."

9 Instructed by the king, they set off. Then the star appeared again, the same star they had seen in the eastern skies. It led them on until it hovered over the place of the child.

10 They could hardly contain themselves: They were in the right place! They had arrived at the right time!

11 They entered the house and saw the child in the arms of Mary, his mother. Overcome, they kneeled and worshiped him. Then they opened their luggage and presented gifts: gold, frankincense, myrrh.

Day 27

2 Corinthians 4:13-17

13 We're not keeping this quiet, not on your life. Just like the psalmist who wrote, "I believed it, so I said it," we say what we believe. 14 And what we believe is that the One who raised up the Master Jesus will just as certainly raise us up with you, alive. 15 Every detail works to your advantage and to God's glory: more and more grace, more and more people, more and more praise!

16 So we're not giving up. How could we! Even though on the outside it often looks like things are falling apart on us, on the inside, where God is making new life, not a day goes by without his unfolding grace. 17 These hard times are small potatoes compared to the coming good times, the lavish celebration prepared for us. 18 There's far more here than meets the eye. The things we see now are here today, gone tomorrow. But the things we can't see now will last forever.

Day 28

Galatians 6:7-10

7 Don't be misled: No one makes a fool of God. What a person plants, he will harvest. The person who plants selfishness, ignoring the needs of others — ignoring God! — 8 harvests a crop of weeds. All he'll have to show for his life is weeds! But the one who plants in response to God, letting God's Spirit do the growth work in him, harvests a crop of real life, eternal life.

9 So let's not allow ourselves to get fatigued doing good. At the right time we will harvest a good crop if we don't give up, or quit. 10 Right now, therefore, every time we get the chance, let us work for the benefit of all, starting with the people closest to us in the community of faith.

Day 29

Hebrews 10:32-36

32 Remember those early days after you first saw the light? Those were the hard times!

33 Kicked around in public, targets of every kind of abuse — some days it was you, other days your friends. 34 If some friends went to prison, you stuck by them. If some enemies broke in and seized your goods, you let them go with a smile, knowing they couldn't touch your real treasure. Nothing they did bothered you, nothing set you back.

35 So don't throw it all away now. You were sure of yourselves then. It's still a sure thing! 36 But you need to stick it out, staying with God's plan so you'll be there for the promised completion.

Day 30

Joel 2:19-27

19 God answered and spoke to his people,

"Look, listen — I'm sending a gift:

Grain and wine and olive oil.

The fast is over — eat your fill!

I won't expose you any longer

to contempt among the pagans.

20 I'll head off the final enemy coming out of the north

and dump them in a wasteland.

Half of them will end up in the Dead Sea,

the other half in the Mediterranean.

There they'll rot, a stench to high heaven.

The bigger the enemy, the stronger the stench!"

21 Fear not, earth! Be glad and celebrate!

God has done great things.

22 Fear not, wild animals!

The fields and meadows are greening up.

The trees are bearing fruit again:

a bumper crop of fig trees and vines!

Day 30 Continued...

23 Children of Zion, celebrate!

Be glad in your God.

He's giving you a teacher

to train you how to live right —

Teaching, like rain out of heaven, showers of words

to refresh and nourish your soul, just as he used to do.

24 And plenty of food for your body — silos full of grain,

casks of wine and barrels of olive oil.

25 "I'll make up for the years of the locust,

the great locust devastation —

Locusts savage, locusts deadly,

fierce locusts, locusts of doom,

That great locust invasion

I sent your way.

26 You'll eat your fill of good food.

You'll be full of praises to your God,

The God who has set you back on your heels in wonder.

Never again will my people be despised.

27 You'll know without question

Day 30 Continued...

that I'm in the thick of life with Israel,

That I'm your God, yes, your God,

the one and only real God.

Never again will my people be despised.

Day 31

1 Corinthians 15:58

58 With all this going for us, my dear, dear friends, stand your ground. And don't hold back. Throw yourselves into the work of the Master, confident that nothing you do for him is a waste of time or effort.