

经节：恶鬼回答他们说：「耶稣我认识，保罗我也知道。你们却是谁呢？」

（使徒行传十九章15节）

灵性经验是没有二手经历的。没有任何人可以为你培养灵性的成熟。有先祖基督教的遗产是项资产，但是它不能代替你与基督建立活力、成长的关系。

保罗与神同行。神大大地使用他，在他的生命中行了许多神迹奇事。有人由保罗身上拿手巾或围裙，放在病人的身上，病人就痊愈了。邪灵被赶走。保罗的讲道与教导，帮助建立以弗所的教会。保罗的事工是那么令人震撼，事实上，有人想模仿他。

犹太祭司长士基瓦的七个儿子，就学保罗的方法驱鬼。他们向那被恶鬼附着的人说：「我奉保罗所传的耶稣，勒令你们出来！」这些人想使用保罗历年来紧密与主同行所得的大能行事。他们模仿保罗所说的话，然而，他们不能仿效保罗与神个人的关系，而得到神的大能。恶鬼反驳：「耶稣我认识，保罗我也知道。你们却是谁呢？」那些邪灵恶狠狠地攻击他们，羞辱他们。邪灵畏惧耶稣的名（雅各书二：19），他们知晓保罗对抗黑暗势力的影响力。但是，邪灵不认识士基瓦的七个儿子。

你可以模仿灵性成熟的基督徒的言行，但你不能承继他们与神同行的生命。基督徒的成熟是需要付出心力的，它需要经过时间的培育。如果你忽略祷告，忽视你与基督的关系，你的信心不会成长的。仿效他人的信心不会带来胜利。只有当你细心培育自己与基督的关系，你的属灵生命才会成长，才会充满神的大能。

Who Are You?

And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?"

Acts 19:15

There is no secondhand spirituality. No one else can develop Christian maturity on your behalf. A strong Christian heritage is an asset, but it cannot take the place of your own vibrant, growing relationship with Christ.

Paul had a powerful walk with God. God used him so mightily that extraordinary miracles occurred through his life. Cloths that touched Paul were taken to the sick, and the sick were healed (Acts 19:10-12). Evil spirits were cast out. Paul's preaching and teaching were instrumental in building a strong church in Ephesus. Paul's ministry was so impressive, in fact, that others tried to duplicate it. Seven sons of the chief priest, Sceva, attempted to cast out demons the way Paul did. They confronted an evil spirit and attempted to exorcise it "by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." These men were trying to use a spiritual power that Paul had acquired after years of walking closely with his Lord. They could imitate Paul's words, but they could not duplicate the power that was his through his personal relationship with God. The evil spirit retorted, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are you?" The demon then viciously attacked them and humiliated them. The evil spirits were fearfully aware of Jesus (James 2:19); they were familiar with Paul's influence over the powers of darkness. But the demons had no knowledge of the seven sons of Sceva.

You can duplicate the words and deeds of a spiritually mature Christian, but you cannot inherit his or her walk with God. Christian maturity takes effort; it comes over time. If you ignore the place of prayer and if you neglect your relationship with Christ, you will not grow in your faith. Imitating the faith of others will not give you victory. Only as you nurture your own relationship with Jesus will your life be filled with spiritual maturity and power.

12月19日（星期一）- 标题：**废弃偶像**

经文：主的道大大兴旺，而且得胜，就是这样。（使徒行传十九章20节）

保罗那时代的人追求偶像。当时在以弗所，再没有比亚底米女神更受人爱戴尊敬的了。那个最伟大的神像被供奉在一个辉煌华丽的庙宇里，曾被视为世界一大奇观。当时制造偶像的行业，为以弗所人提供了生计，他们制造偶像促进当时偶像的广传。

保罗并没有去以弗所指责拜偶像的罪，但他去那里宣扬耶稣基督的福音。当保罗分享神的真理，人们由罪的捆绑中释放出来，偶像崇拜行业渐渐衰落。石头雕塑的偶像与神的大能，在改变人心的对比上，变得很明显。基督徒公义的生活，比起拜偶像人们的狂欢作乐，大不相同。基督徒得胜的见证令人信服，以至于合城的经济大为衰退，人们喜爱基督教，而不喜欢偶像。

任何转移我们对神的奉献之事物，都是偶像。我们目前的社会，拜偶像的情况与保罗时代的情况雷同。我们不是拜那些木雕偶像，而是选择让财产、享乐或事业作我们的神，我们把自己的时间、金钱及精力花在这些事物上。

诚如保罗一样，我们每个人处在这偶像崇拜的社会，被呼召过得胜、喜乐、及有目标的基督徒生活。我们不需要寻找及定罪今日的偶像，而是要活出基督的生命，享受神所赐的丰盛生命，身旁的人自会觉得偶像不足以信靠。我们可能会遭受其它拜偶像者的反对与敌视。人们不喜欢看到自己的偶像被废弃！然而，当我们仰望神，人们会看出我们信仰的不同之处，并且会被祂与祂所赐予的生命所吸引。

Dethroning Idols

So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed. Acts 19:20

Paul's world worshiped idols. No idol was more revered in Ephesus than the goddess Diana. The great statue was housed in a magnificent temple and was recognized as one of the wonders of the world. An idol-making industry, providing a livelihood for many people, developed in Ephesus to support the widespread idolatry of the day.

Paul did not go to Ephesus to condemn those worshiping idols but to unashamedly proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. As Paul shared the truths of God, and as people were set free from sin's , idol worship began to decline. The contrast between stone carvings and God's power to change lives became obvious. The righteous lives of the Christians stood in stark contrast to the hedonistic practices of the idol worshipers. The victorious Christian witness was so compelling that the economy of the entire city was thrown into upheaval as idolatry diminished in favor of Christianity. An idol is anything that diverts our devotion from God.

Our society is as idolatrous as Paul's was. Rather than worshiping statues, we choose possessions, pleasures, or careers as our gods and pour our time, finances, and energy into these things. Each of us is called, as Paul was, to live a victorious, joyful, and purposeful Christian life in the midst of an idolatrous society. We do not have to seek out and condemn today's idols. Rather, as we live out our Christianity, enjoying the abundant life God gives, our lives will discredit the idols around us. We may face opposition and hostility from those who are angered at the contrast between our God and theirs. People do not like to have their idols dethroned! Yet as we uphold Christ, others will see a difference and be drawn to Him and the life that He offers.

12月24日（星期六）- 标题：**相信的人有福了**

经文：这相信的女子是有福的！因为主对她所说的话都要应验。

（路加福音一章45节）

在神的国度中，相信是接受的必要前提。神对马利亚说话，给了她保证。每回祂将人力无法达成的任务，交付祂的百姓时，祂总是会先给他们承诺。万事已经就绪，只等神施展作为。万事就等着马利亚相信神的话。她一相信，事就成了！在这种情况下，唯有全心相信，并向主清心的人，才能得见神（马太福音五：8；希伯来书十二：14）。

神总是如此与祂的百姓相交。马利亚看不到在天堂所有的安排，也看不到众多天使预备好要保护她和她的婴儿。她不知道将来如何，也不清楚自己和婴儿会遭遇什么事。她所知道的就是神对她说话，这就足够了。所以，她回答：「我是主的使女，情愿照你的话成就在我的身上。」（路加福音一：38）

当神宣告祂的计划时，万事已经就绪要成就祂的话。神从不说不肯定的话，祂清楚知道会发生什么事。祂只要你能够相信祂。若你完全信任祂，你会经历到极大的祝福。马利亚未曾想过全然顺服的结果是什么。同样地，你也无法想象当你完全相信神的时候，神在你身上的作为是什么。祂知道如何把救恩带给你所代祷的人，或医治你的朋友，或供应你的需要。神已经使万事就绪。你相信祂吗？

Blessed in Believing

Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord. Luke 1:45

In the kingdom of God, believing is a prerequisite to receiving. God spoke to Mary and gave the assurances He always gives when He assigns the impossible to His people. Everything was in place for God to act. Everything waited on Mary to believe Him. Once she believed, it was done! It takes an undivided heart to believe under such circumstances and a pure heart to see God (Matt. 5:8; Heb. 12:14).

This has always been God's way with His people. Mary could not see all that had been arranged and assembled in the courts of heaven. She could not see the legions of angels prepared to protect her and her baby. She was unaware of the future and all that she and her child would face. All she knew was that God had spoken to her, and that was enough. So she responded: "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38).

When God speaks about His plans, He does so with everything already in place to fulfill His word. God never speaks hypothetically. He knows exactly what will come to pass. He simply asks you to believe Him. You will experience great blessing when you place your absolute trust in Him. Mary could not have dreamed all that would result from her faithful obedience. Likewise, you cannot possibly imagine all that God has in store for you when you trust Him. He knows exactly what He will do to bring salvation to someone you have prayed for or to heal your friend or to provide for your needs. God has everything in place. Will you believe Him?

12月23日（星期五）- 标题：**属灵的检验**

经节：耶稣的智慧和身量，并神和人喜爱祂的心，都一齐增长。

（路加福音二章52节）

我们习惯以许多方式来衡量自己的进展。在学校有考试，在工作场合有考绩，身体的健康状况也有医生检查。然而，我们可能从未衡量自己灵性的成熟及社交的成长。当耶稣由婴儿、幼童、青少年到成年，神与人喜爱祂的心，随着祂的身量一齐增长。人们愈认识耶稣，他们愈信任祂。他们爱慕祂的智慧和感激祂的怜悯。同样地，当耶稣与天父的关系继续成长，祂一直讨天父的欢喜。

使徒保罗说，当他刚信主的时候，他的行为好象属灵的婴孩。然而，当他的信心渐渐成熟时，他的行为开始像属灵的成人（哥林多前书十三：11）。在作婴孩的时候，言行像婴孩并无不妥，但竭力进到完全的地步，是每个信徒的责任（希伯来书六：1）。

当你初信主之时，不总是知道如何以灵里成熟的方式与人相交。你可能与嫉妒、愤怒或不饶恕奋战。但是，当你与基督同行的时间愈久，应该愈会像祂一样与人相交。当你与基督的形像愈一致，天父愈满意你的顺服，就像天父满意祂的爱子一样。偶尔衡量自己的灵命是有助益的。评估灵性成长的好方法，是询问身边成熟的基督徒，自己的言行是否显露出灵性的成熟。求神评估你的灵性是否成熟，是绝对有必要的。不完全与神相交的关系，永远不会使你满足的。

The Wisdom of Spiritual Checking

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. Luke 2:52

We are accustomed to having our progress measured in many ways. We are given tests in school, evaluations at work, and physical examinations by our doctors. Yet we may never measure our spiritual or social growth. As Jesus grew from an infant to a child to a youth to an adult, he "increased in stature" with God and men. The better people knew Jesus, the more they trusted Him. They admired His wisdom and appreciated His compassion. Likewise, as Jesus grew in His relationship with His heavenly Father, He continued to please Him.

The apostle Paul said that when he was a new Christian, he behaved as a spiritual child, but as he matured in his faith, he began to act like a spiritual adult (1 Cor. 13:11). There is nothing wrong with acting like a baby when you are an infant, but it is the obligation of every believer to strive for maturity (Heb. 6:1). When you are a new believer, you will not always know how to relate to others in a spiritually mature way. You may battle with envy, anger, or unforgiveness. But the longer you walk with Christ, the more you should relate to others as He does. As you are conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, your heavenly Father will become increasingly satisfied with your obedience to Him, as the Father was with His Son.

It is helpful for you to measure the progress in your spiritual life from time to time. A good way to evaluate your spiritual growth is to ask mature Christians around you if your actions reveal spiritual maturity. It is imperative that you ask God to evaluate your spiritual maturity and that you never become satisfied with less than a fully developed relationship with God.

12月20日（星期二）- 标题：**反对**

经节：他们去后，有主的使者向约瑟梦中显现，说：「起来！带着小孩子同他母亲逃往埃及，住在那里，等我吩咐你：因为希律必寻找小孩子，要除灭他。」

（马太福音二章13节）

当神清楚告诉我们要做什么，而我们顺服去做的时候，你会遇见反对势力。遭受不敬虔者的属灵攻击及羞辱，并不总是你偏离神旨意的标识；它们甚至指明你正走在神的旨意当中。马利亚的丈夫约瑟是个敬畏神的义人，然而，他的顺服迫使他离乡背井、亡命天涯。约瑟遇见苦难不是因为他的罪，乃是因为他的顺服。虽然约瑟和马利亚被迫搬迁到另一个国家，他们仍行在神的旨意中。

耶稣警告门徒，当他们遵行神旨意的时候，世人会迫害他们。祂提醒他们，他们不会单独面对苦难，因为耶稣也曾经面对世界的苦难，并且祂已经得到胜利（约翰福音十六：33）。

当你面对反对势力时，不要灰心丧胆。敌对的势力显示出你是顺服神的。不要让敌对的势力使你怀疑神的旨意。检查你的心。如果你已经做了神要你去行的事，祂会带你超越那不与神同行者所敌对的阻挠力量。当使徒遭遇敌对力量时，他们没有要求神除去敌人，而是求神赐给他们勇气面对敌对势力（使徒行传四：24—31）。神在你身上的旨意可能包括苦难，就像神的爱子一样（约翰福音十五：20），然而，祂爱你，祂不会让你所面对的苦难多于你所能处理的。

Opposition!

An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." Matthew 2:13

Whenever God clearly speaks to you and you obey His will, you can expect to face opposition. Spiritual assaults and attacks by the ungodly are not always signs that you are out of the will of God; they may even indicate that you are in the very center of God's will. Mary's husband, Joseph, was a righteous man who feared God, yet his obedience to God forced him to flee for his life to a foreign country. Joseph's hardship came, not because of his sin, but because of his obedience. Although Joseph and Mary were forced to move to another country, they remained in the center of God's will.

Jesus warned His disciples to expect persecution from the world as they obeyed the Father. He reminded them that they would not face persecution alone, for Jesus, too, had faced the hostility of the world and had been victorious (John 16:33).

Don't become discouraged when you face opposition. Opposition may indicate that you are acting in obedience to God. Do not let opposition cause you to doubt God's will. Examine your heart. If you have done what you know He has asked you to do, trust Him to see you through the antagonism that comes from those who are not walking with Him. When they encountered persecution, the disciples did not ask God to remove their opponents, but to give them boldness as they faced opposition (Acts 4:24-31). God's will for you may involve hardship, as it did for His Son (John 15:20), but He loves you and will not allow you to face more than you are able to handle.

12月21日（星期三）－标题：**忠心祷告**

经文：又有女先知，名叫亚拿，是亚设交派法内力的女儿，年纪已经老迈，从作童女出嫁的时候，同丈夫住了七年就寡居了。现在已经八十四岁，并不离开圣殿，禁食祈求，昼夜事奉神。（路加福音二章36—37节）

因你的忠实，神会让你更深刻了解祂的作为。忠实所带给你的一些机会，是那些不忠诚的人所没有的。神乐意回答忠实的祈祷者。

亚拿已经做了许多年的寡妇。在她那个时代，寡妇是没有社会地位的，实际上，她们的生活很无助。亚拿在圣殿里昼夜祷告、禁食事奉神。当她祷告的时候，她渴望见到弥赛亚。当救主出生的时候，神只安排极少数的人遇见救主，祂的爱子只揭露给那些忠实纯洁的人。亚拿也是其中之一。耶稣后来向祂的跟随者说：「但你们的眼睛是有福的，因为看见了；你们的耳朵也是有福的，因为听见了。……因为天国的奥秘只叫你们知道，不叫他们知道。」（马太福音十三：16、11）

亚拿一直忠实地祈求，直到祷告蒙实现。她祷告的回答并没有马上来到。事实上，这个祷告的回复是在晚年时才到。神重视她的忠实，且赐下弥赛亚的救恩计划，包括回答一个寡妇的祈求。

忠实的祈祷包括终生等候神的回答。神寻找愿意持续祷告，直到得到回答的代祷者。

Faithfulness in Prayer

Now there was one, Anna, ...a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. Luke 2:36-37

Your faithfulness allows God to reveal greater insight to you than to the less faithful. Faithfulness brings opportunities to you that are not given to the unfaithful. God takes pleasure in answering prayers that come from a faithful heart.

Anna had been a widow for many years. In her day, a widow had little status in society and was virtually helpless on her own. Anna spent her time, day and night, in prayer and fasting in the temple. As she prayed, she yearned to see the Messiah. God chose few people to encounter the Savior when He was born, revealing His Son only to those whose hearts were faithful and pure. Anna was one of those few. Jesus would later say to His followers, "Blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear ... it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given." (Matt. 13:16, 11).

Anna continued faithfully in prayer until her prayer was answered. The answer to her prayers did not come immediately. In fact, it came near the end of her life. But God honored her faithfulness. God's redemptive plan to send the Messiah included answering the prayers of a humble widow.

Faithful praying may mean a lifetime of waiting to receive an answer. God is looking for intercessors who are willing to continue to pray and to believe until they see God's answer.

12月22日（星期四）－标题：**预见神的降临**

经文：正如先知以赛亚书上所记的话，说：在旷野有人声喊着说：预备主的道，修直祂的路！……凡有血气的，都要见神的救恩！（路加福音三章4、6节）

如果想拥有神大能的同在，我们一定要预备自己。施洗约翰是神所差的信使，帮助人们接受人类救主。约翰坚定地传道，说：「天国近了，你们当悔改！」（马太福音三：2）当耶稣来到时，那些听到约翰的信息、预备好自己生命的人认出耶稣，并且离开去跟随耶稣。这对门徒来说是特别真实的，因为他们的心已经被神预备好了（马太福音十六：17）。人必须要在神出现之前预备好！

神对人心预备的指示是很明确的：悔改！这包括人的心灵、意志和行为完全的改变，转向祂。祂是主，你的生命一定要预备好接纳祂为你的主。稍有保留就是不足。有些人显然尚未预备好跟随耶稣，而错失了机会（路加福音九：57—62）。在耶稣时代，大部分的宗教领袖并没有预备好面对祂的降临。他们知道弥赛亚要来，甚至知道祂要降生于何处（马太福音二：4—6）。然而，当他们听到救主已经降临，却没有加入祂，他们更喜欢自己的宗教仪式。

如果你尚未预备好，你也会错失经历耶稣的机会。你可能经常参加宗教活动，但是你会错过神。尽管其他人在敬拜中遇见神，你不会为之所动。当其他人得到神的光照时，你的体验是一片黑暗的寂静。宗教活动永远不能代替一颗在神面前纯洁的心。纯洁是由悔改而来。让我们像诗人一样如此祈祷，求神鉴察我们的心，让我们知道自己是否有任何恶行需要悔改（诗篇一三九：23—24）。

Preparing for the Presence of God

Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight...And all flesh shall see the salvation of God. Luke 3:4, 6

If we are to receive the powerful presence of God, we must prepare ourselves. John the Baptist was God's messenger to help people prepare to receive the Savior of the world. John preached unwaveringly: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven at hand!" (Matt. 3:2). Those who heard John's message and prepared their lives recognized Jesus when He came, and they left all to follow Him. This was especially true of the disciples, whose hearts God Himself prepared (Matt. 16:17). Preparation must precede God's presence!

God's instruction for preparation is specific: repentance! This involves a complete change of mind, heart, will, and behavior toward Him. He is *Lord*, and your life must be prepared to receive Him as your Lord. Anything less is inadequate. Some were obviously unprepared to follow Jesus and missed the opportunity (Luke 9:57-62). The religious leaders of Jesus' day were largely unprepared for His arrival. They knew the Messiah was coming. They even knew where He would be born (Matt. 2:4-6). Yet when word came that the Savior had been born, they made no effort to join Him, preferring instead their religious ritual.

If you are unprepared, you, too, will miss the opportunity to experience Jesus. You may practice religion, but you will miss God. While others encounter the Lord personally in worship, your heart will remain unmoved. As others receive a fresh word from God, you will experience a painful silence. Religious activity can never substitute for a heart that is pure before Him. Purity comes only through repentance. Pray, as the Psalmist did, that God will examine your heart and reveal your need to repent of your sin (Ps. 139:23-24).