

经节：扫罗到了耶路撒冷，想与门徒结交，他们却都怕他，不信他是门徒。惟有巴拿巴接待他，领去见使徒。（使徒行传九章26~27节上）

只有神知道每个信徒的潜力。我们可以推断神可能在某人身上的作为，但是，我们没有任何方法可以确定。我们看的是外观和行为，然而，神看的是内心（撒母耳记上十六：7）。

使徒怀疑一些公开宣称自己是基督徒的人。大数的扫罗似乎是最不可能献身成为耶稣的跟随者，他曾经是基督教最大的敌人之一，甚至监督谋杀司提反（使徒行传七：58~60）。当保罗突然表示要认识基督教运动的领袖们，使徒们怀疑保罗的动机和悔改信主，那是很自然的事。虽然使徒们不愿认同保罗，但巴拿巴却愿意往好处想，他冒自己生命的危险为保罗辩护。

你可能与保罗感同身受。你也许看起来不太可能像是委身的基督徒。神也许在你的身边安排一位基督徒，帮助你培养信心。感谢天父差遣一些人，在众人都怀疑你时，他们相信神能在你身上成就大事！

你目前的立场也许与使徒一样。你周围有些人虽然自称是基督徒，但是你对他们实在没信心。要放心，如果神能够改变那骄傲的谋杀者保罗，成为历史上最伟大的圣徒之一，祂同样也可以救赎你周围的人。不要放弃任何一位基督徒伙伴。观看神在他们身上的作为，然后加入祂的计划。能够像巴拿巴一样，投资在一位基督徒伙伴的身上，是何等地荣幸。这是门徒训练的目的。

Divine Potential

And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. Acts 9: 26-27

Only God knows the potential of each believer. We can project what we think God might do in someone's life, but we have no way of knowing. We see only outward appearances and behavior, whereas God looks at the heart (1 Sam. 16:7).

The apostles were skeptical of some who professed to be Christians. No one seemed more unlikely to become a dedicated follower of Jesus than Saul of Tarsus. He had been one of Christianity's greatest enemies, even overseeing the murder of Stephen (Acts 7:58-60). When Paul suddenly expressed an interest in knowing the leaders of the Christian movement, it was natural for the apostles to suspect devious motives and to doubt his conversion. Nevertheless, despite the apostles' reluctance, Barnabas assumed the best in Paul and risked his own life to be Paul's advocate.

You may identify with Paul. Perhaps you were an improbable candidate to be a committed Christian. It may be that God placed a Christian friend beside you to help you develop your faith. Thank the Father for those He has sent to you who believed in what God could do in you, even when others doubted. Perhaps you stand with the apostles. There may be some around you in whom you have little confidence, though they claim to be Christians. Be assured that if God could turn the proud and murderous Saul into one of the greatest saints in history, He is equally capable of redeeming those around you. Don't give up on your fellow believers. Look to see where God is working in their lives, then join Him. It is a great privilege to be like Barnabas and to invest in the life of a fellow Christian. This is the purpose of discipleship.

9月19日（星期一）- 标题：**称恶为善，称善为恶**

经节：祸哉！那些称恶为善，称善为恶，以暗为光，以光为暗，以苦为甜，以甜为苦的人。（以赛亚书五章20节）

说服人把神看为善之事当作邪恶，和神看为恶之事视为善，是撒但惯用的伎俩。撒但说服亚当和夏娃不顺服神（而不是顺服神）可以保证他们得到最完美的人生。他们相信了牠，就立即开始经历了罪的后果！虽然撒但的逻辑很荒谬，牠仍然继续欺骗人们，使人怀疑神曾经清楚讲过的话。

扫罗王希望撒母耳能肯定自己所献上的祭品，虽然他根本直接地违背神的命令（撒母耳记上十五：13）。亚拿尼亚和撒非喇公然地不顺服神，却希望因着自己的奉献，能够得到早期教会的嘉许（使徒行传五：1~11）。一位亚玛力的军人希望以刺杀神所膏立的扫罗王，来得到大卫的感激（撒母耳记下一：1~16）。

我们同样也会面对称恶为善的试探。我们可能会被说服，以不说实话、撒谎的方式来做些好事。我们可能自称是在推动基督徒为某个罪人祈祷，而事实上是在传播谣言。我们可能声称自己在事业上顺服神的旨意，事实上却是在追逐自己的野心。我们也同样会被试探，把神称为美好之事当作邪恶。神说，爱你的敌人是好的，然而，我们可能保持某种姿态，要他们为自己的所作所为负责任。

把神的话句句当真，是非常重要的。神不要我们为祂的命令找特例，祂要我们完全顺服。

Evil, Good and Good, Evil

Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Isaiah 5:20

It is Satan's practice to convince people that what God calls good is actually evil and what God declares evil is, in fact, good. Satan persuaded Adam and Eve that their disobedience, rather than their obedience, would guarantee a full life. They believed him and immediately began to experience sin's consequences! Despite the absurdity of Satan's logic, he continues to deceive people into doubting what God has clearly said.

King Saul sought Samuel's affirmation for the sacrifice he had offered, even though he had acted in direct disobedience to God's command (1 Sam. 15:13). Ananias and Sapphira expected praise from the early church for their offering, though they were blatantly lying (Acts 5:1-11). An Amalekite soldier sought David's gratitude for killing Saul, God's anointed king (2 Sam. 1:1-16).

We, too, will face the temptation to call something good that God has declared wicked. We may be persuaded that we can accomplish more good by lying than by telling the truth. We may claim that we are mobilizing Christians to pray for someone in sin when, in fact, we are spreading gossip. We may assert that we are following God's will in our job when, in fact, we are striving to pursue our own ambitions. We will also be tempted to call evil that which God declares is good. God says it is good to love our enemies, yet we might decide our task is to hold them responsible for their actions. It is so important to hold ourselves accountable to God's word. God does not need us to find exceptions for His commands. He requires our obedience.

9月24日（星期六）- 标题：**活祭**

经节：所以，弟兄们，我以神的慈悲劝你们，将身体献上，当作活祭，是圣洁的，是神所喜悦的；你们如此事奉乃是理所当然的。（罗马书十二章1节）

神喜悦有价值的献祭。在旧约时代，神详细地指示自己的百姓如何献祭。祂宣告，这些祭会以「馨香的气味」来到祂的面前（利未记一：13、17）。当以色列人向神献祭，那祭物不再是自己的，乃是完全属于神的。神只接受人们献上最好的部分，若献上有残疾的动物，对神是公开的侮辱。就连神自己也符合祭品的标准，祂让自己的儿子成为祭物，像一只无瑕疵的羔羊。只有祂最完美的儿子，才足以为全人类赎罪。

现在，神要我们把自己的身体献上，当作活祭。我们的献祭一旦献上，就不得收回，就像旧约时代一样。我们完全属祂。我们不能只献上部分的生命，我们的献礼一定得全心全意。

因此，如果你是一个基督徒，你的生命不再是自己的。然而，神不是要你去死，而是要你把自己当作活祭，为祂而活。每一天，你向祂献上自己的生命，事奉祂。你不是有闲暇时才事奉祂，也不是用剩余物资来事奉祂。你为神而活的生命，是你对祂的献祭。持续不间断地追求圣洁，好叫你对神的献祭是无瑕疵，是神所悦纳的（以弗所书四：1；腓立比书一：27；帖撒罗尼迦前书二：12）。

A Living Sacrifice

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. Romans 12:1

God takes great pleasure in worthy sacrifices. In the Old Testament God gave detailed instructions for how His people were to give their offerings. He declared that these brought a "soothing aroma" to Him (Lev. 1:13, 17). When the Israelites gave an offering to God, it was no longer their own, it belonged entirely to God. God would accept only the best that people could give. It was an affront to almighty God to offer Him animals that were damaged or imperfect in any way. God Himself met the standard for sacrifices when He offered His own Son as the spotless Lamb. Only the death of His perfect Son was a worthy enough offering to atone for the sins of mankind.

Now, God asks us to lay down our lives on His altar as a living sacrifice. Just as it was in the Old Testament, our sacrifice, once offered, cannot be reclaimed. We belong entirely to Him. We cannot make a partial sacrifice of our lives; our offering must be wholehearted.

Therefore, if you are a Christian, your life is not your own. Rather than dying, however, God asks you to live for Him as a living sacrifice. Every day, you are to offer your life to Him for His service. You do not serve Him in your spare time or with your leftover resources. The way you live your life for God is your offering to Him. Relentlessly pursue holiness so that your offering to God is unblemished and acceptable to Him (Eph. 4:1; Phil. 1:27; 1 Thess. 2:12).

9月23日（星期五）－ 标题：**报复**

经文：亲爱的弟兄，不要自己伸冤，宁可让步，听凭主怒；因为经上记着：「主说：『伸冤在我，我必报应。』」（罗马书十二章19节）

在相信神的路上，其中最困难的一点是公义的问题。当我们遭遇不公平时，总想看到犯罪的一方受惩治。我们要伸张正义，特别当自己是受害者的时候。如果不能很快地报仇雪恨，我们会变得很没耐性。然而，神警告我们，报仇雪恨不是我们的特权。我们要渴慕公义，但是不可伸冤报仇雪恨（弥迦书六：8）。当某人伤害我们，要以饶恕回应伤害（马太福音五：44）。伸张正义是神的事。神非常爱人类，以至于不允许罪不受抑制。

彼得断言，神并不是耽搁祂给我们的应许，乃是在祂审判之前，耐心地宽容我们（彼得后书三：9）。然而，神已经预备好绝对的终极审判。到时候，没有任何罪可以不受处罚的。刑罚不是落在祂儿子的身上，就是落在那犯罪者的身上。每个人最终都得为自己所做的每一件事负责任（哥林多后书五：10）。

神是绝对公正的，只有祂可以担保公义完全得伸张。如果我们没耐性，想自己伸冤，就是假定自己比神有智慧。如此一来，也就是公然地透露出自己不相信神会做对事。只有信任神拥有最高主权的智慧，才能由自己的愤怒和专注于加害者的情绪中，释放出来。倘若拒绝相信神的公义，我们会变成苦毒与愤怒的奴隶。一定要管理自己的心，相信神必执行祂的审判在那敌对祂的人身上。

Revenge

Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. Romans 12:19

One of the hardest areas in which to trust God is in the matter of justice. When we perceive an injustice, we want to see the guilty party punished. We want justice to prevail, especially if we are the victim. We become impatient if we are not avenged quickly. Yet God warns us that vengeance is not our prerogative. We are to desire justice, but we are not to seek vengeance (Mic. 6:8). When someone offends us, our responsibility is to respond to the offense with forgiveness (Matt. 5:44). God takes the responsibility to see that justice is done. God loves people too much to allow sin to go unchecked.

Peter claimed that God is not slow about His promises to us, but He is patient and long-suffering before He brings about judgment (2 Pet. 3:9). Yet ultimately God has prepared for absolute justice. There will be no sin committed that He will leave unpunished. Either the punishment will fall on His Son or it will be charged against the sinner, but everyone will ultimately give an account for everything they have done (2 Cor. 5:10).

God is absolutely just, and only He can ensure that justice is fully carried out. If we are impatient and seek revenge, we presume that we are wiser than God, and we reveal a blatant lack of trust that God will do the right thing. Only by trusting God's sovereign wisdom will we be free from our anger and preoccupation toward those who have committed evil. If we refuse to trust God's justice, we become enslaved to bitterness and anger. We must guard our hearts and trust God to exercise His judgment against those who oppose Him.

9月20日（星期二）－ 标题：**清心的人**

经文：我又听见主的声音说：「我可以差遣谁呢？谁肯为我们去呢？」我说：「我在这里，请差遣我！」（以赛亚书六章8节）

清心的人有福了，因为他们必得见神（马太福音五：8）。你可以参加主日崇拜、读经和祷告，但是，当罪恶充满你心的时候，你是看不见神的。当你遇见神的时候，你绝对会知道的，因为你的生命会全然改变。

以赛亚很担心犹太最伟大的国王乌西雅的驾崩，很迷惘不知道天上君王的心意。然后，发生了一件事，永远地改变了以赛亚的一生。神威严地降临圣殿，四周环绕天堂的受造物。神的显现使以赛亚马上察觉自己是有罪的。其中一个撒拉弗手里拿着一块红炭，飞到他的前面，洁净以赛亚的罪。以赛亚立即听见一些自己从未听见的事情。现在，他听见天上有段话，关于谁愿意作神的使者，传达祂的旨意给祂的百姓。以赛亚立即热切地回答：「我在这里，请差遣我。」现在，神已经洁净了以赛亚，他知道神所关心的是什么，并且预备好要事奉神。以赛亚过去满脑子都是属世的东西，现在他唯一所关心的是神的事工。

如果你渐渐疏远神和神的事工，你需要经历祂的洁净。成圣预备你能够看见及听到神，它使你可以事奉祂。只有神可以洁净你的心，让祂为你除去任何阻止你与祂建立关系的污秽。如此一来，你对祂的奉献才会有真正的意义。

A Pure Heart

Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?"

Isaiah 6:8

It takes a pure heart to see God (Matt. 5:8). You can attend church services, read your Bible, and pray, but if sin fills your heart, you will not see God. You will know when you have encountered God because your life will no longer be the same.

Isaiah was concerned with the death of King Uzziah, the able king of Judah, but was dis-oriented to his heavenly King. Then something happened that forever changed Isaiah's life. God, in all His awesome majesty, appeared to him in the temple, surrounded by heavenly creatures. Instantly, God's presence made Isaiah aware of his sinfulness. One of the seraphim came to him with a burning coal and cleansed Isaiah of his sin. Immediately, Isaiah began to hear things he had never heard before. Now, he was aware of a conversation in heaven concerning who might be worthy to be God's messenger to the people. This prompted Isaiah's eager response: "Here am I! Send me." Now that God had cleansed Isaiah, he was aware of heavenly concerns and prepared to offer himself in God's service. Whereas Isaiah had been preoccupied with earthly matters, now his only concern was the activity of God.

If you have become estranged from God and His activity, you need to experience His cleansing. Sanctification prepares you to see and hear God. It enables you to serve Him. Only God can purify your heart. Allow Him to remove any impurities that hinder your relationship with Him, and then your service to Him will have meaning as you offer Him your consecrated life.

9月21日（星期三）- 标题：**工具**

经节：斧岂可向用斧砍木的自夸呢？锯岂可向用锯的自大呢？好比棍抡起那举棍的，好比杖举起那非木的人。（以赛亚书十章15节）

基督徒生活的其中一个危机，是窃取神的荣耀。这是亚述人的问题。他们本来是非常软弱的国家，直到神选择去祝福他们，使用他们成为管教以色列人的工具。然而，神愈加祝福他们，他们愈加自恃自己的能力。当农夫有好收成时，他们认为都是自己耕种技巧的功劳，与神无关。当他们的军队得到一场大胜利时，他们归功于领军的将领。当整个国家繁荣兴盛时，亚述人归功于自己的军事与政治力量。最后，神指出他们怪诞的结论（以赛亚书十：5~19）。

有时候，管理贫穷与软弱的问题，比起管理财富与刚强要容易得多。贫穷使我们看到自己对神的需要，繁荣昌盛则容易让我们自以为不需要神。圣经中包含许多例子，有些人自以为靠自己就够了，却不了解自己远离神乃是极度贫穷。参孙是最强壮的人，然而，他忘记自己的力量是从神而来。一旦神除去了他的力量，参孙沦落成一个可怜的奴隶。扫罗是以色列第一个国王，当神从这骄傲的统治者身上，除去自己圣灵的同在，他就变成一个心胸狭窄的偏执狂，甚至去求教交鬼的妇人。

当你经历神所赐予的胜利时，要小心自处！当你在家庭、工作或事工上享受祂的祝福时，要铭记在心，自己只不过是主手中的工具。

Instruments

Shall the ax boast itself against him who chops with it? Or shall the saw exalt itself against him who saws with it? As if a rod could wield itself against those who lift it up, Or as if a staff could lift up, as if it were not wood! Isaiah 10:15

One of the dangers in the Christian life is to take credit for what God does. This was the Assyrians' problem. They were a weak nation until God chose to bless them in order to use them as an instrument to punish the Israelites. However, the more God blessed them, the more confident they became in their own strength. When the farmers had good crops, they credited their farming skills rather than God. When their army won a victory, their generals took the credit. When the nation experienced prosperity, the Assyrians attributed it to their military and political might. Finally, God pointed out the absurdity of their conclusions (Isa. 10:5-19).

It is sometimes easier to handle poverty or weakness than wealth or strength. Poverty causes us to recognize our need for God. Prosperity persuades us that we no longer require Him. Scripture holds several examples of those who assumed they were self-sufficient, only to realize their dire poverty apart from God. Samson was the strongest person alive, but he forgot that his strength came from God. Once God removed his strength, Samson was reduced to a pitiful slave. Saul was the first king of Israel, yet when God removed His Spirit from this proud monarch, he became a paranoid, petty man, seeking counsel from the occult. Be careful how you handle the success God gives you! As you enjoy His blessings in your family, your business, or your ministry, keep in mind that you are an instrument in the hands of the Master.

9月22日（星期四）- 标题：**预备你的心**

经节：所以要约束你们的心，谨慎自守，专心盼望耶稣基督显现的时候所带来给你们的恩。（彼得前书一章13节）

你的心思意念是一件美好的东西，你可以熟背改变生命的经文，成为每日生活的力量。你可以默想神的话，发现神庄严伟大的真理。你可以分辨真理与谬误；你可以回忆神过去的祝福。

一些最有能力的神仆，训练自己的心思意念来服事神。摩西曾经在埃及的最高学府受教育，他为以色列人编辑律法书。以赛亚以自己博学的背景，写出圣经中占有崇高地位的先知书。保罗曾经受教于迦玛列的门下，迦玛列是当代最杰出的教师。保罗因着这些训练成为神手中的器皿，描述出新约中许多的神学理论。

可悲的是，今日的基督徒并没有操练他们的心思意念，好为神所使用。他们允许其他人为他们思考属灵的事。如果他们在一本书上可以找到神学思想，就不会费心去研读神的话。如果讲员说了一些权威性的话，他们查都不查，也不管他的话是否合乎圣经标准，就马上接受他的看法。

保罗鼓励基督徒要努力使心志成熟（哥林多前书十四：20）。他说自己属灵的心思意念虽不成熟，然而，他已经操练自己的心思，好能够明了神最伟大的真理（哥林多前书十三：11）。他不允许其他人为他思考。当你成为基督徒时，神会更新你的心思意念（罗马书十二：2）。要使用自己的心思意念在荣耀神的事情上。

Prepare Your Mind

Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 1:13

Your mind is a wonderful thing! You can memorize life-changing passages of Scripture that can undergird you in your daily life; you can meditate upon God's Word, discovering His magnificent truths; you can discern between truth and falsehood; you can recall God's past blessings.

Some of God's most effective servants were those who disciplined their minds for His service. Moses, educated in the best schools of Egypt, assembled the books of the Law for the Israelites. Isaiah used his scholarly mind to write an exalted prophetic book in Scripture. Paul learned under Gamaliel, the outstanding teacher of his day, and it was through Paul that God presented much of the theology found in the New Testament.

Sadly, many Christians today do not exercise their minds to be of service to God. They allow others to do their spiritual thinking for them. If they can find their theology from a book, they will not bother to study God's Word themselves. If a speaker makes an authoritative statement, they readily accept it without verifying whether it is biblical. Paul urged Christians to strive for maturity in their thinking (1 Cor. 14:20). He said there was a time when his spiritual thinking was immature, but he had prepared his mind to know and understand the great truths of God (1 Cor. 13:11). He had not allowed others to do his thinking for him. When you became a Christian, God renewed your mind (Rom. 12:2). Be certain to use your mind in a way that brings glory to God.