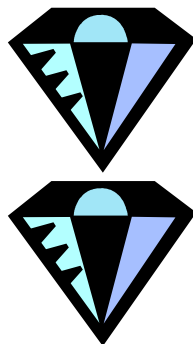


GEMS  
FOR DAILY MEDITATIONS



BY  
Pastor Joseph G. Summers



## Forward

The continual study of God's word from the Holy Scriptures is the life-blood of our Christian living.

The Word of God is his revelation to his children of how to:

- Know Him
- Understand Him
- Please Him
- Love Him

In instance of rebuttal or denial of our faith we need to be prepared for its defense.

When the needing soul approaches us we must be ready, willing and able to provide the way to the Savior.

Pastor Summers' thoughts here will enable the studious, dedicated, working Child of God to do as Paul instructed Timothy---" Study to show thyself a workman rightly dividing the truth of God".

*Pastor Franklin Schley*

Pastor Emeritus, Rose of Sharon Baptist Church

## *Acknowledgements*

I would like to first dedicate this book to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who through the Holy Spirit gave me the thoughts to share these daily lessons with all who will take the time to read them.

Second I dedicate these thoughts to my Church family, Fellowship Study Group Church. Each individual in the Church has and continues to bring such joy into my life by allowing me to be their Pastor.

Third and not least, I dedicate this, my first book to Pastor Franklin Schley and his wife Bessie Schley. They have been an inspiration to me and they are my spiritual parents.

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## *Introduction*

***Gems for Daily Meditations*** is a gift of love to those who wish to take a few moments each day preparing for all of the blessings that the Lord has in store for us.

I encourage you to not only read the daily thoughts but also to take a few minutes to really meditate on the daily lessons.

Use the "daily" thoughts as a springboard for reaching new heights in our interactions with others and also see the daily thoughts as little nuggets that can be used to gain a closer relationship with God.



**Love, Friendship,  
Fellowship**

The first quarter (January, February, and March) topics are all interrelated in that they discuss the theme of Love, Friendship and Fellowship.

I like to think of them in that order:

**Love** being the basis of all of our interactions with God and other members of the body of Christ. For the two great commandments are Love the Lord with all of our heart, mind and soul and the second Love our neighbors as ourselves.

**Friendship** is the next step in the development of a true relationship with God and others. Friendship is most often between two people and is long endearing only if there is true love between the friends. We are challenged to become friends of God as Abraham was a friend of God.

**Fellowship** is the next level and is usually a relationship between many individuals such as the Church body. I like to think of fellowship as a group of friends whose basis for interactions is love.

The "daily" lessons in this quarter address the thoughts around the development of true love, friendship, and fellowship with God and other believers.



# The month of January

## Importance of True Friendship

**Scripture: Proverbs: 17:17**

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

**Lesson Objective:** To begin to understand the importance of friendship in the Christian walk.

Many in the world take friendship lightly. One can be friends today and enemies tomorrow. It is important for Christians to understand that friendship must be first defined by whether someone is a Christian and a part of God's body. This may sound harsh but how can someone be your friend and not a friend of Christ. It is also imperative that one understands that the most important ingredient for friendship is love. A true friend is one that is honest and tells one what they need to know, not what they may want to hear. True friends make each other better. (Proverbs 27:17), Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 also discuss the need for a real friend.

**Thought for today:** Who are my closest friends and are they Christians?

## Tale of Two Friends

**Scripture: 1 Samuel 18:1-4**

...the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

**Lesson Objective:** To look at an example of true love and friendship as recorded in the Bible

Perhaps the greatest story of friendship in the Bible is that of Jonathan and David. 1 Samuel 18: 1-4 describes the true love of Jonathan for David. Jonathan made a promise of friendship with David and demonstrated that by giving David his robe, his sword, his bow and his complete set of armor. When we call someone a true friend, we must be willing to give all to the relationship to not only include material things but also our time and energy when the friend is in need. In this case Jonathan also gave up any thoughts of being King and even chose the love of David over his father when his father wanted to kill David. **Thought for today:** Who is my closest friend and what have I given them that really demonstrates my unrelenting love for them?



## Love to the End

**Scripture:** 2 Kings 2:2:

But Elisha said, "As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!"

**Lesson Objective:** To look at a friendship that could not be broken until death

Often times people have several "best " friends". This friendship could be as a result of being school chums in elementary school or working together in the same office. Sometimes friendships develop between mentors and mentees. However very often the friendships do not last. One moves away to a different city or moves to a different job and the friendship begins to suffer to the extent that it becomes one of a few telephone calls and a few cards. True friendship is based on love and as such the friendship will never cease. So is our Friendship with God. He will never leave us and it is not only to death but beyond

**Thought for today:** With whom do I have a true friendship that neither space nor time will come between? Am I true to my word when I said we would be friends forever?



## Love like a Friend

**Scripture:** Proverbs: 17:17

A friend loves at all times, And a brother is born for adversity.

**Lesson Objective:** To understand that friendship is stronger than being a brother.

We are taught that the biological family is very important and it is but the Bible teaches us that true love and friendship transcends the biological family. True friendships and relationships are not based upon "blood" relationships but the bond that occurs when two people really learn the meaning of friendship through their relationship with Jesus Christ. A truly committed marriage is where both can say that they are not only husband and wife but also best friends. The Bible says that a true friend is one that is willing to give his life for another. This is the ultimate sacrifice. Jesus Christ demonstrated that friendship by not only being willing but dying on the cross for our sins so that we could be a part of the

adopted family of God. As the song writer says "What a Friend we have in Jesus"

**Thought for today:** How much are you really ready to sacrifice for a friend? Are you willing to give your all?



**Friends Help Each Other**

**Scripture:** Proverbs  
As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.

**Lesson Objective:** To understand that true friends must be honest to each other.

True friendship is more than saying what one wants to hear. True friendship is being able to hold each other accountable. Many times we choose our friends because they laugh at our jokes or like the same things that we do. A Loving friendship is not based upon what happens when all is going well. It is based upon what happens when things are not going so well. A true friend is one that is not only there to pick you up when you are down, but also to provide honest and "bible-based" feedback when we are not following the word of God. A true friend's wise counsel can keep us from making unnecessary mistakes in our lives. We must surround ourselves not with those who say what we wish to hear but those who say what we need to hear.

**Thought for today:** When a true friend offers you constructive criticism, do you thank them or do you get defensive?



**Friendship Based Upon Relationships**

**Scripture: James 2:23**  
Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. And he was called the friend of God.

**Lesson Objective:** To understand the basis of friendship is relationships.

Friendships do not occur over night. It is not a one-night stand. Friendship is a development of love that is the result of a relationship. A relationship can only occur when there is an intentional act to learn about the other person and to be willing to share our weaknesses and needs with another. An intentional relationship is one where we are honest about our feelings and we



are able to have a heartfelt conversation with another. It is where we seek almost daily to have this conversation.

**Thought for today:** To whom today will I reach out to have an intentional relationship? Do I have an intentional relationship with God so that he can call me a friend?



**Seeking a True  
Friendship**

**Scripture:** Proverbs 18:24

A man who has friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother

**Lesson Objective:** To understand our responsibility in seeking a true friend.

How many times have you heard someone say that they do not have any friends? How many times have you heard someone say that the party was boring even though every one else there appeared to be enjoying themselves. Enjoying ourselves at the party is not the responsibility of the host. The only thing the host can do is to invite us to the party. To have a friend one must be friendly. This simply means that when you go to the party you cannot sit in a corner and expect everyone to come to you. You must get out of the seat and out of the corner and become friendly. Christ says that one must ask, seek and knock. The door will never be open unless you knock on the door of friendship.

**Thought for today:** Do you actively seek to have true friendships with Christians or do you wait?



**Friendships are  
Necessary**

**Scripture: Ecclesiastes 4: 9**

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor

**Lesson Objective:** To understand that we are not put on this earth to be alone.

There are some individuals who sadly believe that they do not need any one in their lives. They constantly work diligently by excluding others from their lives by their actions and words. They never seek

friendships and relationships but instead wrongly believe that they can make it on their own. This is far from the truth and is not biblically correct. The Bible does not teach independence and sole reliance but exactly the opposite. The Bible teaches that we must be dependant on others for it is the will and design of God. Christ sent the disciples out two by two and even Christ asked the disciples to pray with him.

**Thought for today:** Have you done anything today that will exclude others from having a true friendship with you?



**Who Should We  
First Love**

**Scripture: Matthew 22:37**

Jesus said to him, "You shall **love the Lord** your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.

**Lesson Objective:** To understand that God is the basis for all love and that we have to love God first before we can love others or ourselves.

The usual thought in the world is that we should first learn to love ourselves before we learn to love others. While this may sound good, it is completely opposite of what the Bible teaches. Jesus taught that our first obligation is to Love God totally with no hesitancy whatsoever. We are to love him with our total body. This commandment corresponds to the first four of the Ten Commandments in the Old Testament. Those commandments teach us how to show our love for God. Therefore we must first learn how to love God totally before we can love others or ourselves.

**Thought for today:**

In what manner will I show my love for God today?



**Who Do I love  
Second**

**Scripture: Matthew 22:39**

And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'.

**Lesson Objective:**

To understand who is our neighbor and how are we to demonstrate that love.

Often times during the year, we go into our closet to see what we are going to give away to Goodwill or the Salvation Army. We look quickly for those items that are no longer fashionable or items that we can no longer fit. It is easy to give these items away. However, do we ever give away that favorite dress or favorite pair of shoes or any other item that we may treasure. To show real love, one does not give what they do not want but instead part with those things that are most dear to them. God gave his only begotten son so that we can all have an opportunity for everlasting life.

**Thought for today:**

Plan today to go out and be a true blessing to someone that you do not even know.

## Love Yourself Last

### Scripture: Mark 9:35

And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.

**Lesson Objective:** To understand the importance of putting others first, which is consistent with the teachings of Christ.

When a man first dates the love of his life, he takes her to the restaurant of her choice or the movie of her choice. He is so eager to please her that he puts his own wishes behind so that he can show her how much he loves her by putting her wishes and desires first. He delights in seeing the glimmer in her eye when she opens a gift or receives flowers. When we really and truly love someone, we get great joy in making them happy. Which is why we always are most happy when we do for others.

### Thought for today:

How different would the world be if we all made decisions that was best for others rather than for ourselves.

## What is Love

### Scripture: 1 Corinthians 13:13

...Faith, Hope and Love but the greatest of these is Love.

**Lesson Objective:** To better define love so that we know how to love and to keep the Great Commandment.

Rick Warren has defined love as giving up, yielding my preferences, comfort, goals, security, money, energy or time for the benefit of another. Clearly love is giving up something that I may value so that another may be blessed. We are the hands, feet, and eyes of God here on earth. Matthew 25:40 states...as you did to the least of my brethren, you did unto me. It is necessary for each to understand that true love involves sacrifice of material goods, time, effort, so forth, for the blessings of others.

### Thought for today:

What will I sacrifice today so that another may reap the benefit of the blessings of God?

## Love is an Action Word

**Scripture: 1 John 3:18**

Let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth.

**Lesson Objective:**

To understand that true love requires an intentional act on our behalf and not just merely words.

For many it is easy to say that "I love you" but the question is whether that love is demonstrated daily. Christ demonstrated his love for us by his actions. He consistently went about doing good. 1 Corinthians 14:1 says that we are to make love our daily aim. Our daily aim is to be more and more like Jesus which requires us to live a life of love according to 2 John 1:6. We can tell if a parent loves their child by whether they provide not only the daily essentials but also meets some of the child's wishes, A parent who can financially take care of their child and does not do such can not really love that child.

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**Thought for today:**

Love is not only providing financially but an investment of time.



## Love Never Gives Up

**Scripture: Genesis 29:20**

So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed only a few days to him because of the **love** he had for her.

**Lesson Objective:** To understand that true love is everlasting and unchanging.

Jacob wanted to marry Rachel and worked seven years for the right however his soon to be father-in-law tricked him into marrying Leah (Rachel's sister) who he did not love. Jacob then agreed to work seven more years for the right to marry Rachel. Jacob could have been satisfied with Leah or walked away but his love for Rachel was so strong that he agreed to work seven more years. The Bible even says that the seven years seemed short because of his love. If we truly love, we will never give up that love no matter what the challenges or the situation. God never gives up on us because he loves us unfailingly.

**Thought for today:** God never gives up on us no matter what. Do we give up on God?



## Loving God Means To Obey Him

**Scripture: Deuteronomy 5:10**

But showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

**Lesson Objective:** To understand that our love for God is directly reflected by our obedience to Him.

The Bible says that children should love their parents and that they show that love by honoring and obeying them. That is also true with God. We cannot earn the love of God but God does require one thing of us and that is to obey his commandments. God expects us to obey him unconditionally and with true zeal. This obedience is shown by our faith and trust in God. We are never to question why or when but to just do as he instructs. We must have the faith of Abraham and to follow God's directions for our lives. True obedience and unwavering trust in God is the duty of all who choose to be called a Child of God.

**Thought for today:**

Obedying God is easy when it something with which we agree, however, how obedient are we when it is a habit that we find difficult to change



**There Are No  
Degrees of Love**

**Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:5**

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

**Lesson Objective:** To understand that true love for God must be total and unquestionable.

We cannot love God a little bit. We either love him or hate him. We must be willing to forsake all to follow him. God requires all of us. The Bible teaches that God is a jealous God and thus he is not to be shared with any other god. We must give God our all. Furthermore all that we do should be done for the glory of God so that we must complete all task to the best of our abilities. The Scriptures further says that one cannot serve two masters for we will love one and hate the other. As the song says 99 and  $\frac{1}{2}$  will not do. We must give 100%. True love requires 100% of our time and efforts.

**Thought for today:**

What can I do more for God to show him how much I love him. Do I do all I can or do I use excuses for not giving my all?



## True Love Is Unconditional

**Scripture: Genesis 29:32**

So Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben; for she said, "The Lord has surely looked on my affliction. Now therefore, my husband will love me

**Lesson Objective:** To understand that true love cannot be earned.

The story of Leah, Rachael and Jacob has many lessons for us today. Leah was not the first choice of Jacob; and Jacob never professed love for her. Leah thought that by having a baby for Jacob that she would earn his love. She was wrong. Not only did Jacob not love her; but, he had more love for Joseph which was only because Joseph was the first child of Rachael. I am so glad that God's love for me is unconditional and that he does not require me to work for his love but to accept his love by keeping his commandments.

**Thought for today:** Is there someone in my life that I say I love but only love them if they meet certain conditions or actions.



## Love is Honest

**Scripture: Proverbs 9:8**

Do not correct a scoffer, lest he hate you; rebuke a wise man, and he will love you

**Lesson Objective:** To understand that true love is reflected in not just encouragement but also rebuke.

Often times we are challenged by others to revisit our values or general thoughts on issues. More often than not we become very defensive and in fact stop listening to the other person. We become so intoned with defending our point of view that instead of listening we are thinking of our next point to argue. A wise man understands the importance of having a true friend who will be honest. Moreover this scripture admonishes us to not spend time trying to correct a person who is not wise. This process will only result in an argument. However, if we provide corrective criticism to a wise man, he will listen and govern himself accordingly.

**Thought for today:** Just like we want others to listen to us, we must also be willing to listen to those who can offer us wise counsel. Do you listen?





## Love Your Enemy

**Scripture: Matthew 5:44**

But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.

**Lesson Objective:** To understand the importance of loving everyone, not just those who we call our friends.

Christ teaches us that it is more important to love your enemies than to love your friends if we are going to be like Christ. The Bible says that even sinners love other sinners. It is not easy to love those who despise us because it appears to be opposite all that we are taught from birth. How can individuals forgive those who have committed murder or rape to their love ones. They can only do it by understanding what it truly means to love their enemy. Both Christ and Stephen were able to love their enemies even when they were being murdered.

**Thought for today:** I challenge you to go out and find the one person with whom you really do not get along and tell them that you love them.



## How Does One Show Their Christianity

**Scripture: John 13:35**

By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

**Lesson Objective:** To understand that the world is watching us to see how we react when we have differences of opinions.

It is always very discouraging to see how Christians react when there is disagreement in the Church. As it is often stated, Christians may be the only Bible that many others in the world read. It is imperative that Christians practice the words of Christ. Does this mean that Christians agree on everything? Certainly not. It is expected that Christians will not agree on everything but can and do agree to disagree. It is often stated that two can disagree without being disagreeable. There is never a reason for Christians to resort to earthly means such as courts and lawsuits.

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