



SCRIPTURE MEMORY

FELLOWSHIP

"The seed is the word of God." (Luke 8:11)

December 1, 2015

Dear Friends and Family,

Christmas celebrates something stunning: Jesus Christ has come to make His home, to abide with us as Immanuel, God with us! Joy! Human history's final page looks forward to the same joy: ***"Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people... And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes..."*** (Rev. 21:3-4). Though our story began with God living among us (Gen. 2:22; 3:8-9), human rebellion repeatedly led to terrible ichabod moments ("glory has departed"): we're banished from Paradise (Gen. 3:23-24), God's Spirit leaves us (Gen. 6:3), God's dwelling or Shekinah glory departs (1 Sam. 4:21-22; Ezek 9:3). But Jesus' coming reverses all that: Dwelling glory returns (John 1:14)! The Spirit comes to stay (John 14:16)! Paradise is regained (Luke 24:43)!

Our Lord Immanuel has indeed come to abide with us, but two questions remain: First, is He actually abiding and dwelling with you and me in particular? Second, are we abiding, living in Him? When the Son of God *in utero* came to the hometown of His father David, ironically, there was no room in the inn (Luke 2:7). They had no space for Jesus, and this symbolized the state of many hearts: ***"He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him"*** (John 1:10-11). Does the same thing happen in our lives at times? Our busyness can lead to barrenness, and our love of self, money, pleasure, and the praise of men may render us incapable of welcoming Him (2 Tim. 3:1; John 5:44; 1 John 2:15).

There is a sure way to tell if Christ abides in us, and it is this: in hearts where Christ abides, a genuine love is born. "No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us..." (1 John 4:12). When we truly love one another, the invisible God is seen to be living in His people! Is it any wonder then that life seems to be a school for learning to love? Is it surprising to find that over and over we come to places where love is out of our reach, where, if God is not within us, love will not endure? The truth is, we learn best in this school when it is hard or even impossible to love. In such situations, only Christ living in us enables us to love. We fall short and fail along the way, but the One who began this good work keeps working, and keeps giving us new opportunities to grow love in this school (Phil. 1:6, 9). Our great need, our great hope is that Christ will love through us, that His love will make us its channel: "O come to us, abide IN us, our Lord Immanuel."

***"And we have known and believed the love God has for us.
God is love and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him."***

(1 John 4:16)

We are pleased to announce the revision and reprinting of the *Journal of Mercies*, a small book with a line for each day to record God's mercies, which are new every morning. Enjoy the poetry of Frances Ridley Havergal and others. Use the accompanying reading calendar to read through the Bible in a year. Additional copies are available at \$5 each, 5 for \$20, or 10 for \$35. These make great gifts!

Sixteen chapters from Genesis, Ruth, and Matthew remain available for the **Kansas City Scriptorium**, Feb. 26-27. The scriptorium is a Scripture recital devoted to honoring the Lord with emphatic and dramatic recitation of whole chapters and books of God's word. Call us or go to www.scriptoriums.com and click "Kansas City" to sign up for this very encouraging event!

Our upcoming Android app (memory books in digital form for mobile devices) has received overwhelmingly positive feedback from our testers. If you're ready to try it, a formal launch on the Google Play web-store is just around the corner! Our programmers tell us that launch should be 2-3 weeks away. We will then begin development of the app for iPhone, with its launch slated for early 2016. Would you join us in praying for God's provision of the wisdom and funds needed (ca. \$20,000) for that work?

Scripture Memory Camp is a great opportunity to reward your memorizers with a fun week of fruitful learning and joyful fellowship in a beautiful place! Consider joining us in Ringgold, LA for:

May 30-June 3, 2016

Traditional week of Scripture Memory Camp

July 4-9, 2016

Scripture Memory Camp in conjunction with Southland's Family Camp

For either week, young people 18 and under or adults with financial need can earn their week of camp by completing memory work. Contact us for more details.

Michael and Bonnie, Iowa, wrote recently, "We are currently working on Adult Beginner 2 *Prayer* having finished book 1 *Peace* (which we review periodically). A challenge for these old brains but how blessed! We hadn't realized what soul-enriching material we'd been missing."

At Thanksgiving time, we pause to celebrate God's goodness in showering us with good gifts and showing so much kindness. God has provided enough for us to catch up on our recent bills. Praise the Lord and thank you for your prayers and giving.

Much grace to each one of you,

Jim Woychuk