

Wine & Bread

Our Life Source Connection—John 15:4-5

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Early Church Inspiration—

Priesthood of all believers,

Spirit-filled, gifted and led,

Spirit-sharing His word to all the world!

By Jose Alfonso Sierra, courtesy Unsplash



Pastoral Perspective

“In Everything, Give Thanks!”

by Pastor Mercado

I love the month of November! Fall has just started; it is not too hot nor too cold. However, the main reason I love November is because of the Thanksgiving holiday. Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday. There is something special about gathering with friends and family to share a meal together and to enjoy each other's company. My daughter Ariana and I have a tradition which consists in preparing the turkey the evening before. Back in 2019 Ariana had been a student at Andrews University and because of the schedule, she was not going to be able to come home for the holiday. I was “bummed out!” It was not going to be the same without her, and what about our tradition of preparing the turkey? There would be no turkey that year.

Unbeknownst to me, my wife Lucy and Ariana tricked me, and Lucy was able to bring Ariana home. I remember getting home after performing a wedding on the Sunday before Thanksgiving. Lucy told me that she had put the dog in my office because she had been misbehaving and that I should let her out. When I opened the door to my office, there was Ariana, “Surprise.” I was so happy to see her that all I could do was to start crying. I was so thankful to see her, and, of course, the turkey was still on.

Thanksgiving, of course, should not just be about the turkey and the fixings, it should be about, dare I say, being thankful. You say, for what do I have to be thankful? Especially, after the year we have had. If you had been a Pilgrim, would you have given thanks? Consider what they had been through, the people who broke bread together on that first Thanksgiving in 1621.

They had uprooted themselves and sailed for America, an endeavor so hazardous that published guides advised travelers to the New World, “First, make thy will.” The crossing was very rough, and the Mayflower was blown off course. Instead of reaching Virginia, where Englishmen had settled 13 years earlier, the Pilgrims ended up in the wilds of Massachusetts. By the time they found a place to make their new home -

Plymouth, they called it - winter had set in. The storms were frightful. Shelter was rudimentary. There was little food. Within weeks, nearly all the settlers were sick.

“That which was most sad and lamentable,” Governor William Bradford later recalled, “was that in two- or three-months’ time, half of their company died, especially in January and February, being the depth of winter, and wanting houses and other comforts; being infected with the scurvy and other diseases.... There died sometimes two or three of a day.”

When spring came, Indians showed them how to plant corn, but their first crops were dismal. Supplies ran out, but their sponsors in London refused to send more. The first time the Pilgrims sent a shipment of goods to England, pirates stole it.

If you had been there in 1621 - if you had seen half your friends die, if you had suffered through famine, malnutrition, and sickness, if you had endured a year of heartbreak and tragedy - would you have felt grateful?

Yet, we celebrate Thanksgiving today because they found something to be grateful about. How about you, are there things you can be thankful for? The apostle Paul wrote, “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thess. 5:16-18). The reason we can give thanks in everything is that no matter how difficult things seem to get, God is in control, and He always has our back. Above all, He has given us the gift of salvation through Jesus. Therefore, Paul ends verse 18 by saying, “for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” Wow, that certainly is a reason to be thankful in everything!

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Health & Wellness Corner

Set a Daily Intention

By Dr. Lynette Aluoch

When was the last time you woke up with a single clear goal in mind?

Maybe it was when you were getting ready for a vacation ... finishing up a work project by a deadline ... or going on a mad scramble to get your home ready for company or a party.

At those times, you are being INTENTIONAL with your actions, which leads you to direct results!

This month we are going to use INTENTIONS to power up our days!

Here's the thing—being intentional doesn't have to be limited to short-term “crisis” situations. You can bring that same focus and that level of intensity to your everyday life. It just involves being CLEAR about your goals for EACH day. That means...

- If you want to feel fit and healthy make a conscious choice to exercise and eat nutritious, balanced meals TODAY.
- If you want to feel more rested go to bed earlier TONIGHT and set yourself up for success with daily actions to help improve your sleep (exercise, diet, stress relief, etc.).
- If you want to improve your relationships focus on your actions TODAY that will help you be a good spouse, friend, partner, child or parent.
- If you have a financial goal, like saving for a home renovation or retirement, use that to guide your savings and spending decisions during the day.

This is the fastest route between where you are now and reaching your goals, because over time it builds on itself!

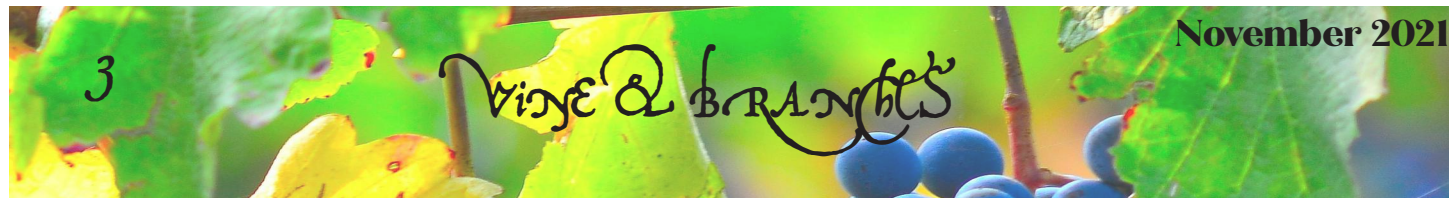
When you have a specific intention, the actions you need to take become more clear. And when you repeat those actions every day they begin to turn into habits leading to HUGE results and transformation over time.

BONUS TIP: Make your intention at NIGHT for the following day. That way you can wake up empowered and ready to go.

OK, let's hear it! What are YOU going to be intentional about this month? Share just one with a friend or loved one.

And here's a tip for keeping it in mind all day long: Every time you eat, take 1-2 minutes to remind yourself of the intention you've set as part of this month's challenge. Then, take a moment to reflect, without self-judgment on how you're doing. If necessary, get back on track.

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Parent Connect

A Room for Elisha

Junlan Funez

BIBLE STORY:

A ROOM FOR ELISHA 2 KINGS 4:8-13

**BIBLE VERSE: SERVE ONE ANOTHER
HUMBLY IN LOVE (GAL. 5:13)**

BIBLE TRUTH:

GOD WANTS ME TO HELP OTHERS IN NEED.

At the end of Elijah's ministry, God helped him choose his successor, Elisha. Just as Elijah had done, Elisha traveled from place to place to minister and guide the Israelites. A wealthy couple lived in the town of Shunem, a few miles south of Nazareth. Every time Elisha traveled to their town, they would offer him food to eat with them. The woman was so impressed by the ministry of Elisha that she wanted to build a room for him so that he would have a place to rest when he came to town. The wife was not looking for any personal gain when she set her heart to build Elisha a room. Rather, she did so from her pure heart to serve, recognizing Elisha as a "holy man of God". The couple built Elisha a room over their a roof and furnished it. When Elisha saw the room the next time he came to visit, he was so grateful for what the couple had done for him. As a reward for the couple's kindness, later God blessed the couple with a child.

There are several lessons we can draw from this short story with our children.

First, the sensitivity to recognize and meet the need of people around us. The Shunamite woman was sensitive enough to recognize Prophet Elisha's need for a place to rest after long-distance travel. She already served meals to the prophet each time he came to visit. Surely when Elisha had a meal with them, he rested from his tired feet during the short stay. But the woman recognized there was more to be done. She went the extra mile to build a room for him so that he can lie down in bed to rest overnight.

Ask your young children to pay attention to family members, talk about the needs of each member, and help them make plans to meet the needs of each member. Pray together to ask the Holy Spirit to train our hearts and ears to recognize needs we can address, and then enable us to do what we can.

Say something like this: "Look at mommy. Does she look tired every night after serving us dinner?"

The child might respond: "Yes! And there are still so many dishes laying around the table to do. Poor mommy!"

Then come up with a suggestion: "How about we

bring our dishes to the sink to make her job easier?" and follow through with the child.

For older children, talk together to find out ways to serve the people at school and in your community. It can be as small as helping a friend at school or as big as visiting a senior assisted living center. Ask the lord to help you step out your comfort zone to do whatever He puts in your heart to do.

Do the activity throughout the month to help reinforce of idea of service.

Second, the purity of the act of service. There was no hidden motive in this couple's action to gift Elisha a room to rest. They didn't do it to earn favor nor to show off their "righteousness" to men. They did it out of pure love, and a desire to demonstrate that love. In light of this true story, we should examine our motives in offering hospitality and any other means of help to others.

Ask the children when they do chores, do they do so to earn allowance, or out of a desire to serve? When they do something kind in public, do they secretly hope someone will take notice and give them praises? Do they expect something in return when they do good?

Finally, the ability to serve. We do not need to be wealthy to be in position to serve. God calls us from wherever we are and however we are to shine His light to the world. Many acts of kindness require little to no money. Saying a kind word, giving a warm hug, and lending a helping hand are so easy to do but can have such a great impact on the recipient's day.

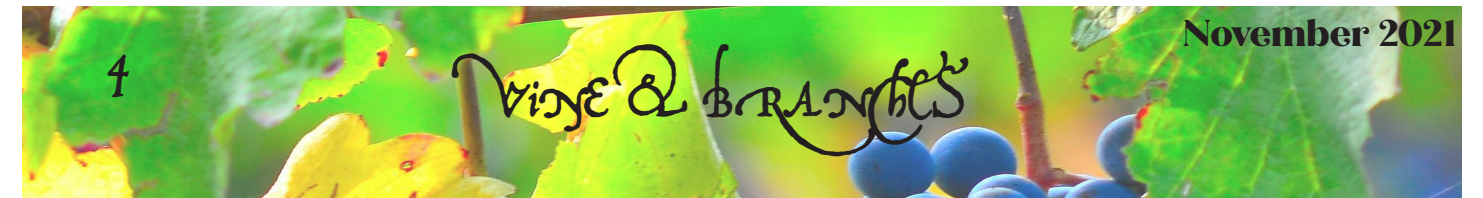
Help your children to do small acts of kindness throughout the month to demonstrate that small hands can do great things with the help of Jesus.

Ultimately, God will reward our willingness to obey Him out of love and make sacrifices where necessary.



Acknowledgment:

Story, activity and pictures adapted from Sunday School Zone.




Parent Connect (end)

Suggested Activities: Build a room or house

Kids love imaginary play and can spend hours using little more than cardboard boxes. You may already have empty boxes that can be cut and assembled. Add paint or sheets of paper to look like windows and doors. If you want a large size, stop by an appliance store to get large boxes. Talk about the kind family who added a room to their house for Elisha.





A Room for Elisha Coded Words

Each number stands for a letter of the alphabet.
Write the correct letter in the blank to find the coded words and phrase.

Code key		
A 1	J 10	S 19
B 2	K 11	T 20
C 3	L 12	U 21
D 4	M 13	V 22
E 5	N 14	W 23
F 6	O 15	X 24
G 7	P 16	Y 25
H 8	Q 17	Z 26
I 9	R 18	

8 15 12 25

19 8 21 14 5 13

2 5 4

20 1 2 12 5

3 8 1 9 18

The Shunamite woman shows us that we should

8 3 12 16 15 20 8 3 18 19



Ministry of Intercession

Excerpts from, *With Christ in the School of Prayer*

By Andrew Murray

“And it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, that when He ceased, one of His disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray.’” Luke 11:1.

The disciples had been with Christ, and seen Him pray. They had learnt to understand something of the connection between His wondrous life in public, and His secret life of prayer. They had learnt to believe in Him as a Master in the art of prayer—none could pray like Him. And so they came to Him with the request, ‘Lord, teach us to pray.’ And in after years they would have told us that there were few things more wonderful or blessed that He taught them than His lessons on prayer.

And now still it comes to pass, as He is praying in a certain place, that disciples who see Him thus engaged feel the need of repeating the same request, ‘Lord, teach us to pray.’ As we grow in the Christian life, the thought and the faith of the Beloved Master in His never-failing intercession becomes ever more precious, and the hope of being Like Christ in His intercession gains an attractiveness before unknown. And as we see Him pray, and remember that there is none who can pray like Him, and none who can teach like Him, we feel the petition of the disciples, ‘Lord, teach us to pray,’ is just what we need. And as we think how all He is and has, how He Himself is our very own, how He is Himself our life, we feel assured that we have but to ask, and He will be delighted to take us up into closer fellowship with Himself, and teach us to pray even as He prays.

Come, my brothers! Shall we not go to the Blessed Master and ask Him to enroll our names too anew in that school which He always keeps open for those who long to continue their studies in the Divine art of prayer and intercession? Yes, let us this very day say to the Master, as they did of old, ‘Lord, teach us to pray.’ As we meditate, we shall find each word of the petition we bring to be full of meaning.

‘Lord, teach us to pray.’ Yes, to pray. This is what we need to be taught. Though in its beginnings prayer is so simple that the feeblest child can pray, yet it is at the same time the highest and holiest work to which man can rise. It is fellowship with the Unseen and Most Holy One. The powers of the eternal world have been placed at its disposal. It is the very essence of true religion, the channel of all blessings, the secret of power and life. Not only for ourselves, but for others, for the Church, for the world, it is to pray that God

has given the right to take hold of Him and His strength. It is on prayer that the promises wait for their fulfillment, the kingdom for its coming, the glory of God for its full revelation. And for this blessed work, how slothful and unfit we are. It is only the Spirit of God can enable us to do it aright. How speedily we are deceived into a resting in the form, while the power is wanting. Our early training, the teaching of the Church, the influence of habit, the stirring of the emotions—how easily these lead to prayer which has no spiritual power, and avails but little. True prayer, that takes hold of God’s strength, that availeth much, to which the gates of heaven are really opened wide—who would not cry, Oh for some one to teach me thus to pray?

Jesus has opened a school, in which He trains His redeemed ones, who specially desire it, to have power in prayer. Shall we not enter it with the petition, Lord! it is just this we need to be taught! O teach us to pray.

‘Lord, teach us to pray.’ Yes, us, Lord. We have read in Thy Word with what power Thy believing people of old used to pray, and what mighty wonders were done in answer to their prayers. And if this took place under the Old Covenant, in the time of preparation, how much more wilt Thou not now, in these days of fulfillment, give Thy people this sure sign of Thy presence in their midst. We have heard the promises given to Thine apostles of the power of prayer in Thy name, and have seen how gloriously they experienced their truth: we know for certain, they can become true to us too. We hear continually even in these days what glorious tokens of Thy power Thou dost still give to those who trust Thee fully. Lord! these all are men of like passions with ourselves; teach us to pray so too. The promises are for us, the powers and gifts of the heavenly world are for us. O teach us to pray so that we may receive abundantly. To us too Thou hast entrusted Thy work, on our prayer too the coming of Thy kingdom depends, in our prayer too Thou canst glorify Thy name; ‘Lord teach us to pray.’ Yes, us, Lord; we offer ourselves as learners; we would indeed be taught of Thee. ‘Lord, teach us to pray.’

Endnotes

¹Andrew Murray, *With Christ in the School of Prayer*, chapter 1, “First Lesson,” paragraphs 1-6.



Bible Study

Community in Christ 2

by Richard Dickens

Last month we discovered biblical church growth has to do with a community in Christ growing into the image of Christ.¹ Numerical growth, as shown in Acts, is the result of that Spirit-filled phenomenon.

And it was our Lord Who fashioned the community during His ministry and crucifixion. The cross had a powerful emptying of their flesh that began to prepare them for the Pentecostal blessing.

The 40 days after his resurrection were used to build a deeper unity between His emerging community and Him. And that community was more than the eleven disciples.² We know there were 120 gathered in the upper room on Pentecost. (Acts 1:15), and probably more making preparations elsewhere (1 Cor. 15:6).

We also learned, though not specifically fleshed out in depth, that spiritual gifts are given and exercised for the “common good”³ with the intent of bringing about growth into Christ’s image. Spiritual gifts are both used within the church community and as an outreach to the larger population outside the church.

Community in Christ is a blend of both family and friendship. The transformative Person is the Spirit and it is our relationship with Him that effects our change.

Let’s take a look at the transformative experiences in Acts and how their community experiences impacted numerical growth.

Read and meditate on Acts 1:14

What are the characteristics you note that helped to make their time together blessed by God?

Let’s look at some words or phrases that probably have caught your attention. Word studies are a staple in Bible study, not only because we come to better understand what they meant back then but we need to grow into the experiences these believers had. We want to experience what they experienced. We want that joy, that peace, the oneness with God.

A One-Minded Community in Christ

You probably noticed the phrase, “these all with one mind,.” It occurs eleven times (10 times in Acts and once by Paul) in the NT. Here are the references for your study: Acts 1:14; 2:46; 4:24 (“one accord”); 5:12; 7:57 (“one impulse”); 8:6; 12:20; 15:25; 18:12; 19:29; Rom. 15:6.

Write down any observations, not just about the biblical passages but, as importantly, about your life and

living in accord with Jesus, your family, your church family, your work. Are there any areas of conflict that need to be resolved?

Conflict is to be expected in this world. We want to make certain to maintain the balance between standing for principle and God are maintained at the same time we are peacemakers in the Spirit of Jesus.

Can it be a principle of growing into the image of Christ that unity is essential? The church cannot prosper spiritually if the mission of the members is not the fulfillment of Christ’s prayer in John 17.

In these first disciples was presented marked diversity. They were to be the world’s teachers, and they represented widely varied types of character. In order successfully to carry forward the work to which they had been called, these men, differing in natural characteristics and in habits of life, needed to come into unity of feeling, thought, and action. This unity it was Christ’s object to secure. To this end He sought to bring them into unity with Himself. The burden of His labor for them is expressed in His prayer to His Father, “That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us;” “that the world may know that Thou has sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me.” John 17:21, 23. His constant prayer for them was that they might be sanctified through the truth; and He prayed with assurance, knowing that an Almighty decree had been given before the world was made. He knew that the gospel of the kingdom would be preached to all nations for a witness; He knew that truth armed with the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit, would conquer in the battle with evil, and that the bloodstained banner would one day wave triumphantly over His followers.⁴

Without this unity of mind and soul, nonbelievers will not find the reflection of Christ in its members. That drawing power He spoke of when He said if He were lifted up, He would draw all to Him, will not have its intended results—growth into the image by the community of believers.

Nonmembers may be attracted to the Christlike reflection in an evangelist and when they come to church, not find that same reflection in the church. There may be seeming friendliness and smiling faces, but little to no Jesus.

Now friendliness in the flesh can have an attraction and suffice for a time but it is not sufficient to effect Christ’s hope and prayer. Read the following quotations and study how important unity with Christ is for spiritual growth and victory in winning souls in and out of the church:

To the early church had been entrusted a constantly enlarging work—that of establishing centers of light and blessing wherever there were honest souls willing to give themselves to the service of Christ. The proclamation of the gospel was to be world-wide in its extent, and the messengers of the cross could not hope to fulfill their important mission unless they should remain united in the bonds of Christian unity, and thus reveal to the world that they were one with Christ in God. Had not their divine Leader prayed to the Father, “Keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We are?” And had He not declared of His disciples, “The world



Bible Study (end)

hath hated them, because they are not of the world”? Had He not pleaded with the Father that they might be “made perfect in one,” “that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me”? John 17:11, 14, 23, 21. Their spiritual life and power was dependent on a close connection with the One by whom they had been commissioned to preach the gospel.

Only as they were united with Christ could the disciples hope to have the accompanying power of the Holy Spirit and the co-operation of angels of heaven. With the help of these divine agencies they would present before the world a united front and would be victorious in the conflict they were compelled to wage unceasingly against the powers of darkness. As they should continue to labor unitedly, heavenly messengers would go before them, opening the way; hearts would be prepared for the reception of truth, and many would be won to Christ. So long as they remained united, the church would go forth “fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.” Song of Solomon 6:10. Nothing could withstand her onward progress. The church would advance from victory to victory, gloriously fulfilling her divine mission of proclaiming the gospel to the world.⁵

A Continually Devoted Community in Christ

We now turn to another important word in verse 14, translated as a phrase: “continually devoting.” It’s a focus on persevering in a course of action. And, of course, it is not just the emphasis on persevering but what we persevere in, or devote ourselves to that matters.

The word is used only once in the gospels (Mk. 3:9, the boat was to “stand ready”). Again, Luke, who penned Acts, uses it the most (Acts 1:14; 2:42, 46; 6:4; 8:13; 10:7). Paul has 3 verses where it is found (Rom. 12:12; 13:6; Col. 4:2). It is used a total of 10 times in the NT.

As you prayerfully contemplate the passages, does the Spirit convict you of any insight for your life? Do you see any relationship between this kind of devotion and God’s ability to add to their numbers and the quality of their experience as a community?

The church will only prosper if it is continually devoted to Christ. It’s devotion will display itself in the kinds of activities in which it engages “continually.” It will be a dominant habit of life, a preferred habit of life; and the more the community allows the Spirit to direct and breathe a freshness into it, the more growth it will experience.

What were the activities they were involved in besides prayer? In our flesh, we are not alone capable of this kind of continual devotion. The Spirit, however, is more than capable to make it a lifestyle. Until now, the commitment has been pockets of a few people here and there and it does begin with individuals, a family committed to building community in Christ.

What will it take to make it a whole local church? Will it be prompted from the daily communal walk each

experiences in Christ or the crises coming that will disrupt and disengage our preoccupation with the world and its attractions? Well, if it’s the crises, then I don’t hold much hope for us. If it’s the former, then the Spirit will be the attractive force that breaks the bonds of sin that so easily ensnares the world.

The weekly gathering of churches throughout this world can be a gathering of individuals, loosely committed to their creed, their history of ties to a community of believers, more culturally connected than spiritually. People seriously committed but just as happy for it to be over and back to their family life, their career.

That is not real community. For some, it is pseudo-community, filled with niceties and smiles, mostly civil and politically correct but not always heartfelt and sincere. It is, however, much preferred to hostility and rudeness, and the lack of civility exhibited by too many in today’s society. Some of the problem is the lack of opportunity to get better acquainted.

We do need to find and make opportunities available when possible to gather and get better acquainted. I find personally that the problem is more spiritual. When my week has been full of communion with my Lord, my heart is open and full of peace and joy. That spills over into relationships in and out of church.

The weekly gathering can be the end result of a week filled with communing with Christ that generates the spirit of true community. The lack of opportunity to get better acquainted in church doesn’t have to be a barrier to building a warm and welcoming spirit. Worship, true worship, flows from a heart of gratitude and love for Christ and our family in Christ.

These end times need not deprive us of a rich experience at church, at home and work. If we have a heart hunger need for a revival of early church devotion to Christ, more of Him within, the Spirit will not deny that. In fact, the events of our lives are being fashioned by the same Spirit to create such a need. A revival of primitive godliness will build a continually devoted to Christ experience. That revival begins today with me, how about you?

Endnotes:

- ¹Eph. 4:16-21..
- ²Acts 1:13-14
- ³1 Cor. 12:4-12
- ⁴E. G. White, *Acts of the Apostles*, (Pacific Press Pub. Assoc., 1911), p. 20.
- ⁵ibid., p. 90.



Anniversaries & Birthdays

Anniversaries

- David Funez & Junlan Jiang 11/03
- Ruben & Lynn Rivera 11/11
- Derek & Iris Riethmeier 11/17

Birthdays

- David Funez 11/09
- Shauntel Thomas 11/10
- Kwame Amponsah 11/13
- Bradley Hite 11/24

By Mel Poole, courtesy Unsplash

Stewardship

**Report for September 2021
Recommended Giving Percentage 2-3%**

Income	\$10,300.37	Income to Date	\$99,173.76
Outgo	6,229.33	Outgo to Date	76,811.42
Balance	\$4,071.04	Balance to Date	\$22,362.34

Church News

Upcoming Events:

Grief 101 (date unknown)

ALIVE Hospice will be offering a Grief 101 class in our church in the near future. It will be a basic class helping attendees become aware of the resources available in our community. This is at no cost to our church. Date and time will be forthcoming.

Madison Academy 11/6

The academy will have our worship service on November 6.

International Sabbath 11/20

