Morning Watch Readings

2021

SEPTEMBER



September 1

Chapter: James 2
Theme: Faith that Works
Study Verse: James 2:8

Statement: Like Paul, James believes that love is the fulfilling of the law. This makes it easy to see if people are really living by their faith or not. Are they loving? Even beginning Christians who still don't have a lot of knowledge and make a lot of mistakes, can be loving. And people can see and know that. Be careful with the second half of this chapter. Read it in its entirety and don't take verses out of context. Verse 14, for instance, doesn't mean we aren't saved by faith—it means faith that doesn't show results isn't faith. It's just a claim. Anybody can *say* they're a Christian. The question is, does it show by their love?

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Prayer: *Dear Jesus, the thing I need most is love. I know that every time I do wrong, it's because I was thinking of my own selfish desires in one way or another. Help me to see Your other children with Your loving eyes.*

September 2

Chapter: James 3
Theme: The Mighty Tongue
Study Verse: James 3:18

Statement: James spends a whole chapter on the power of the human tongue. God created the whole universe through His words alone. And He gave us a tiny spark of His creative power. So our words can bring death or life, too, though in a much smaller way than God's words. The safest thing is to have our tongues well stocked with *His* words, and then we're safe. It would be wonderful to memorize all of verses 17 and 18. Make a list of all those qualities of wisdom. Is God developing those in you?

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Prayer: *Most wise One, bring me Your pure, peaceable wisdom. Help me to be humble and teachable, and never a know-it-all.*

September 3

Chapter: James 4
Theme: Spiritual Warfare
Study Verse: James 4:7-8

Statement: We all have desires and wishes. Many of them are good in themselves. But when we spend all our energy on our wishes and desires, they become our masters, and we start fighting and quarreling. James says that all comes from the "lust for pleasures" in our sinful natures. Our sinful natures, if we listen to them, can turn even godly desires into destruction.

What does James advise as the solution to this problem?

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Prayer: *Lord, resisting and submitting are not that easy. I sometimes find myself resisting Your Spirit and submitting to the devil and my own temptations instead of the other way around. Keep me clear and focused on You.*

September 4

Chapter:	James 5
Theme:	Patience
Study Verse:	James 5:8

Statement: Greed, says James, is a terrible thing. It destroys those who give in to it. Instead, we are to keep our eyes on God, watching for the coming of the merciful Judge. Notice the imagery in verse 7. Perhaps you live in an area that faces drought, one in which farmers need a lot of faith, just to plant their seeds instead of eating them.
We, waiting for Jesus to come, must also be patient, though it sometimes looks as if the seeds God plants in us will never bear fruit. How does James say we should occupy ourselves while we wait?

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Prayer: *Lord, I long for Your coming. In the meantime, I pray with the sick, sing with the rejoicing, and spread Your love everywhere I can.*

September 5

Chapter: 1 Peter 1
Theme: Patience in Trial
Study Verse: 1 Peter 1:3

Statement: Just imagine Peter, the rough fisherman that he was "BC"—before he met Jesus! Could he ever have imagined being a church leader and writing two letters to be circulated around the early churches? He betrayed Jesus on the night of His trial, and didn't even feel worthy to continue as a disciple. But apparently Jesus thought Peter's fall and repentance equipped him for dealing with God's "lambs," (see John 21) and you can see that in these letters. There is love and compassion throughout. What is your favorite verse in this chapter?

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Prayer: *Lord, let me be as faithful and compassionate as Peter, and help me to accept his comfort when I am in trouble.*

September 6

Chapter: 1 Peter 2
Theme: Sheep or Stones
Study Verse: 1 Peter 2:25

Statement: The imagery in this chapter is fascinating. Have you ever tried to picture in your mind what kind of "living temple" could be built from the "living stones" of human beings? Perhaps some are like the strong stones at the bottom, that help to hold up the rest. Others could be windows that shine the glory of God's love on those outside. Others could be doors and doorframes, opening wide to invite everyone inside. Every single one, though depends on the one and only Foundation, Jesus Christ, who carries us all. Which part of the temple are you?

Response:

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Prayer: *Great Shepherd, whether we are a sheepfold or a temple (maybe they're much the same thing) I want to do my small part well, by Your strength and grace.*

September 7

Chapter: 1 Peter 3
Theme: Blessings, even when Suffering
Study Verse: 1 Peter 3:8, 9

Statement: Like Paul, Peter gives practical instructions for living. He also speaks much of following God faithfully even when suffering. It is thought that the letter might have been written at a time of persecution. Have you faced persecution for your faith? If not, have you faced other kinds of trouble and trial? What verses in this chapter help you?

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Prayer: *Lord, help me to be strong in You even when I am at my weakest. Don't let me deny my pain or pretend it's not there. Help me to recognize and own it, but rise above it in Your arms.*

September 8

Chapter: 1 Peter 4
Theme: More Comfort for Suffering
Study Verse: 1 Peter 4:8

Statement: Here is more counsel for those who are suffering. Peter points out that Jesus Himself suffered, why shouldn't we? He also reminds us that, even though we are prone to complain that we're in worse trouble than others, quite unfairly, in fact, nothing has happened to us that hasn't happened to others, and if we face it patiently, we could lead others' eyes to Christ. When has God carried you through suffering? What does Peter say is the most important thing, above all else?

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Prayer: *Dear Lord, I rest in the blessed certainty that no matte what I go through, You are right there with me, sheltering me and keeping me.*

September 9

Chapter: 1 Peter 5
Theme: Resisting the Lion
Study Verse: 1 Peter 5:6, 7

Statement: Satan may "seek to devour," but it does him no good as long as we are inside the much more powerful Lion of the tribe of Judah. He can't reach us there. Peter repeats, several times in this chapter, the rewards of patiently enduring, never losing our trust or giving in to evil. What are some of the rewards he lists? Also notice that in verse 12 Peter explains that Silvanus actually wrote the letter for him. Peter probably couldn't write. Yet, look at the deep wisdom he learned from his time with the Lord!

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Prayer: *Jesus, I want to serve You with whatever skills and abilities I have, just as Peter did. Help me not to think either too little or too much of myself.*

September 10

Chapter: 2 Peter 1
Theme: Peter's Ladder
Study Verse: 2 Peter 1:4

Statement: This is an amazing chapter. First of all, when the study verse says "by these," it means by God's "glory and excellence," just mentioned. Then it promises that we can actually "partake of," that is, take into ourselves, "*divine nature!*" That's astonishing! Then it goes on to show step-by-step how this happens, with the list known as "Peter's ladder." Make a paper ladder and write these virtues on each rung.

Where are you today?

Response:

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Prayer: *Great God, first You send down Jesus as a ladder, just like Jacob saw in his dream, and then You—by Your own strength—take us up it!*

You are amazing!

September 11

Chapter: 2 Peter 2
Theme: Results of Rebellion
Study Verse: 2 Peter 2:9

Statement: This chapter describes in vivid detail the kind of sinner who does not fall from weakness or momentary loss of faith, but deliberately and willingly rebel against God and His kingdom of love, counting it a pleasure to wallow in their sins. We are all sinners, but God deliver us from being this kind of sinner! Thank God that in the center of the letter, Peter reassures us that God knows how to rescue us, because we certainly don't know how to rescue ourselves.

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Prayer: *Loving God, I know You love and want to save even the vilest rebels. If I can help, show me, but if not, please keep me safe from them.*

September 12

Chapter:	2 Peter 3
Theme:	The End is Near
Study Verse:	2 Peter 3:13, 14

Statement: Fortunately, the end of all this evil and destruction is coming closer every day. God, Peter says, is being patient, giving extra time for all those, His children still, who are wallowing in Satan's deceptions. If He can, He longs to save them, too. If not, He will cut time short in mercy. What does Peter encourage us to do while we wait for that deliverance?

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Prayer: *Merciful Lord, I, too, wish You could save* everyone*. But I know that there are people who do not want to live a life of self -sacrificing love, who would be miserable in Your kingdom. As for me, I long to live "where righteousness dwells."*

September 13

Chapter: 1 John 1
Theme: Light in Christ
Study Verse: 1 John 1:3

Statement: The love that shines forth from this letter from the Beloved John to his beloved flock is unmistakable. It is not certain whether he wrote this before or after the gospel, but it is clear that he is old, thinking of his people as his "little children." The main theme of this first chapter is first, that John knows what he's talking about because he saw, heard, and touched the Messiah, and second, that God is endlessly merciful and forgiving. John, who used to be one of the "sons of thunder," ought to know. What are some of the things he was forgiven for?

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Prayer: *Dear Jesus, I am sorry I have to confess so often, but I am SO GLAD You are willing to not only forgive me, but clean me up so I can do better in You.*

September 14

Chapter: 1 John 2
Theme: Our Loving Advocate
Study Verse: 1 John 2:5

Statement: An advocate is another name for a lawyer, or defense attorney. Jesus, says John, stands beside us to support us and defend us against accusation. Even when we *have* done wrong (which John points out that all of us have) He forgives, and keeps us in His own perfect self. All that matters, He keeps reminding us, is love. How will you show God's love today?

Response:

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Prayer: *Father, I am Your little child. I want to abide in You, and never shrink away from You.*

September 15

Chapter: 1 John 3
Theme: Love and Hate
Study Verse: 1 John 3:1

Statement: How do we know we belong to God? By our love. We love God who first loved us, and we love each other. That can sometimes be easy (sometimes not) but the amazing thing is that we also love those who hate us. John says, don't be surprised—they hate Jesus, too. But He still loves them, and longs to save them, and He can share that unexplainable love with us. Notice verse 21. Sometimes our own heart can be the most condemning. But John says, don't listen— Jesus loves us even if we think we don't deserve it.

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Prayer: *Dear Father, sometimes my heart is my worst enemy. If I am recognizing actual sin, then I know that's Your Spirit's voice, pointing it out to me. But when I have asked forgiveness, help me to trust that You have given it, and not listen to a condemning heart.*

September 16

Chapter: 1 John 4
Theme: Love, Love, and More Love
Study Verse: 1 John 4:4

Statement: There are so many wonderful verses in this chapter! Perhaps you want to choose a different one from the study verse. Why do you think John concentrates so much on love, love, love? How much difference does it make to your understanding of the Great Judgment Day, whether you think of God as loving you passionately, or as waiting to condemn you? Which have you been thinking lately, and is there anything you need to ask God to change about your attitude?

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Prayer: *Glorious Judge, You would be within Your rights to condemn me. I am amazed that You love me instead, loving me perfectly, casting out all fear.*

September 17

Chapter: 1 John 5
Theme: You Can Know
Study Verse: 1 John 5:13

Statement: There have been times and places where people considered themselves blessed if they could get their hands on one small bit of God's Word. If they had just this chapter, they could find the reassurance of salvation. Why does John say he wrote all this down? Do you personally *know* you have God's gift of salvation? If it sounds like John is saying that Christians never sin, just reread earlier chapters. We all sin, he says, and we all have an advocate, but we don't deliberately keep on sinning. Instead, we trust in the One who has come, and who has overcome the world for us.

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Prayer: *Dear God, I didn't realize that doubting whether I'm saved is calling You a liar, as John says. I never want to do that. If I have asked You to save me, I know You have said yes, and I can trust You and* know *I have eternal life.*

September 18

Chapter: 2 John
Theme: Staying True
Study Verse: 2 John 6

Statement: We can't tell for sure if the “chosen lady” in the salutation is one particular woman, or means the church as a whole, with “her children” as the congregation. Either way, this personal little letter is encouragement to stand firm against an false teachers that come along. Again, John equates love with walking in Jesus' teachings. Why and how will being loving protect you from false teachings?

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Prayer: *Dear Lord, give me more love. I always need more; I can never have too much. Help me to show love to every single person I come across, including those who want to mislead me.*

September 19

Chapter: 3 John
Theme: Advice to an Elder
Study Verse: 3 John 4

Statement: Nobody knows who Gaius is, but John clearly loves him. It seems that the false teachers mentioned in the last letter might be usurping authority over the church. John is getting old; this might not be his last letter, but it's the last one we have, and he wants to be sure his "children" in the truth follow God alone, and no one else. Name three things John recommends Gaius and other Christians to do.

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Prayer: *Dear Jesus, help me to be hospitable and kind, helping in the work of traveling missionaries just because I was loving and supporting of them. Help me to be in health, body, soul, and mind.*

September 20

Chapter:	Jude
Theme:	Be on Guard
Study Verse:	Jude 24, 25

Statement: It is possible that the Jude who wrote this letter was actually the brother of Jesus, but we don't know for sure. He was going to write a general pastoral letter of encouragement, but then he heard that there were teachers of falsehood leading the people astray, so he hurried to combat that danger. It is very interesting to compare this letter with 2 Peter. What similarities and differences do you find? How are both these letters, so many centuries old, particularly applicable to our times?

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Prayer: *Oh, Lord, come soon! Keep us from falling into error in the meantime, and help us to be loving, though firm, even to those who are trying to lead Your people astray.*

September 21

Chapter: Revelation 1
Theme: Showing Jesus
Study Verse: Revelation 1:3

Statement: Sometimes Bible words become so familiar we forget what they mean. “Revelation” is like that. Literally, it means revealing. This means the name of this book is “that which shows Jesus.” Have you ever looked at Revelation that way? That's what we're going to do. In this first chapter, it's easy because it actually describes Him in verses 13-16. How is He different here than when He was on earth? Name three things you learn about Jesus in Revelation 1.

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Prayer: *Alpha and Omega, You are first and last in my life. I want to be one of the blessed ones who live by the words of this book.*

September 22

Chapter: Revelation 2
Theme: Messages to the Churches
Study Verse: Revelation 2:29

Statement: These messages are good in several different ways. First, they are historical— messages to God's people through time. Second, they can be messages to churches or groups in any time; the Holy Spirit can always direct any Bible verse to anyone in need of it. Third, they can be used in that same way by the Spirit to direct personal messages to one individual. Is there anything in this chapter that speaks to you personally today? What does it tell you about Jesus?

Response:

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Prayer: *Lord Jesus, You show such love and patience to Your people, through all the centuries. Help me to see messages You intend for me in all these chapters.*

September 23

Chapter: Revelation 3
Theme: More Messages to Churches
Study Verse: Revelation 3:21

Statement: Again, God speaks to His people through the ages, as well as to different groups and different individuals. Read this chapter to consider three questions: 1—What do you learn about Jesus? 2—In this chapter, the final message, the one to Laodicea, is the historic one for the church today, in the last times. What special message do you see for The Holy Seed Church and Christians in general? 3—What message does God have for you personally in this chapter?

Response:

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Prayer: *Father God, give me the gold of obedience, the white garments of Your salvation, and eye salve of the Spirit so I can see clearly.*

September 24

Chapter: Revelation 4
Theme: The Throne Room
Study Verse: Revelation 4:11

Statement: Now we begin the main body of the book of Revelation. The visions John saw, many of which are strange and disturbing, all say something to us about Jesus. First, John is taken to the very throne room of God. Imagine his awe! What would you have felt like to see the scenes and events described here? What do you learn about Jesus?

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Prayer: *Worthy and Holy One, You are indeed worthy of all honor and worship. I look forward to the privilege of bowing before You in person. In the meantime, here I am to worship and bow down and adore You.*

September 25

Chapter: Revelation 5
Theme: The Sealed Scroll
Study Verse: Revelation 5:5

Statement: Still in the throne room, before God the Father, John sees a scroll bound with seven seals—in other words, perfectly and completely bound. No one on earth or in heaven is able to open it—except One. That One is seen as a Lamb who has been slain, but who has seven horns (complete power) and seven eyes (complete, all-seeing wisdom). Why does the angel say He is worthy to open the book? What does this say to you about Jesus?

Response:

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Prayer: *Lamb of God, You were slain for* me! *You are worthy of every honor and blessing we can think of—and more!*

September 26

Chapter: Revelation 6
Theme: The First Six Seals
Study Verse: Revelation 6:14

Statement: There is a huge amount of prophetic information in this chapter, and in all the book. You should study it with the help of resources offered by your church. But in these six seals, our question for today is, what do you learn about Jesus? Do you ever ask, as in verse 10, "How long, Lord?" What does the sixth seal sound like? We've seen this language before in the Bible. Jesus is coming, finally! How does this make you feel?

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Prayer: *Conquering Hero, we are longing for You. But we know You must complete all You have promised and prophesied. Help me to be part of the sending forth of the message of Your salvation.*

September 27

Chapter:	Revelation 7
Theme:	Interlude
Study Verse:	Revelation 7:14

Statement: Between the opening of the sixth and seventh seals, John was shown an interlude in which 144,000 (perfection times perfection) of His children from every age, plus an enormous multitude of all the people who have come out of false systems and turned to God are worshiping Him with all their might. Can you feel the joy? What do you learn about Jesus? Especially notice the beauty of the last five verses.

Response:

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Prayer: *Lord of life, I, too, have been rescued from ordeals, and I, too, want to follow You everywhere You go!*

September 28

Chapter: Revelation 8
Theme: Seventh Seal: Seven Trumpets
Study Verse: Revelation 8:3

Statement: This chapter is full of sorrow and destruction. Notice that the first thing that happens, even before the seven trumpets are sounded, is that an angel adds incense on the altar of God to the prayers of the saints. Why do you think God wants as much prayer as possible at this time? What does it show about Jesus?

Response:

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Prayer: *Lord God, at the end of time, which seems very near to our world, things grow very dark. Help us all to remember that the most necessary thing is much prayer.*

September 29

Chapter: Revelation 9
Theme: Fifth and Sixth Trumpets
Study Verse: Revelation 9:4

Statement: Here is even more death and destruction and terror. You can learn a lot about the devil in this chapter, but that is not our focus. Where do you find hope? Where does this chapter teach about Jesus, and what does it teach us? Notice the last verse of the chapter—it seems that in all these horrible events, God is still trying to wake up some of His rebellious children, but what does verse 21 say? How do you think God feels about this?

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Prayer: *Father, I know You know so much more about all this than I can imagine, and I know You are already aware how many are lost. But still I am sorry for Your pain, as the children You created turn from You and refuse to repent.*

September 30

Chapter: Revelation 10
Theme: A Mysterious Prophecy
Study Verse: Revelation 10:1

Statement: In these first verses, as this angel is described, who does the description remind you of? It seems that this is Jesus Himself. As soon as He cries out, seven mysterious thunders say something, and John was going to write it down, but was told not to. Then Jesus makes a wonderful promise. What does He promise?
Finally, John is given a little book and told to eat it. What happens when he does? We are The Holy Seed Church see this as the promise of Jesus Christ's coming the second time —great joy, sweet as honey, then great disappointment when it turned out they were mistaken as to time. What do you learn about Jesus in this chapter?

Response:

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Prayer: *Dear Jesus, I can't wait until You say there shall be no more delay. Until then, I will wait patiently and work with You as well as I can.*