

## KEEP YOURSELVES IN THE LOVE OF GOD

### I. [Romans 12:15](#) [2 Corinthians 1:3-4](#) [Jude 1:20-25](#)

**A. [Philippians 1:3](#) says:** *"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you..."* **With those sentiments in mind, let me read the names of loved ones lost this past year. This list is not exhaustive. Most of you could add names to it. May the Lord minister to the families of:** Mary Boso, Flo Harlow, Rudolph Helle, Chucky Maynard, Art Bevinger, Ron Ortman, Scott Ortman, Ruth Crist, Sam Luca, Jason Huff, David Burkey, Fred Ramsey, John Sears, Tom Taylor (*of Lancaster*), Randy Butler, Donna Bevinger, Pastor Bill Beard, Patty DeBruin, Dennis Testa, Mary Lou Zimmerman, Jim Waller, Norma Spitzer, Bob Tanton, Bob James, Harold Reynard, Ginny Swick, Brenda Bonkowski, Ron Fink, Virginia Renner, Lynn Wetzell, Aaron Levacy, Debbie Carpenter, Laura Miller (*Pete's sister*), Nelson Trimmer, Ray Thomas, Larry Bishop, Jeff Matheny, Susie Gerhard, Lawrence Hoover, Grant Carpenter, Arthur Eddie Wikoff, Louise Good, Sylvia Nisly, Crissy Easton, Tom Taylor (*of Millersport*), Rick Dupler, Ruth Torrey, Fred Rousculp, Lilly Spade, Wayne Adkins, Rudy Hansberger, Barb Clark, Kim Anderson, Pauline Trimmer, Bill Kremer, Bob Parham, Tom Hannigan, Corabelle Marchington.

**B. So what are we to do about these losses? Stay in a perennial state of grief? No. Forget these folks altogether and just move on? No. How about remember their loved ones in prayer and support them through their seasons of grief? Yes...**

**C. [Romans 12:15](#) (NIV) says:** *15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. [2 Corinthians 1:3-4](#) (ESV) is more specific:* **3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. (Let me ask.)**

**D. When you've found yourself in a state of loss, did it help to know people genuinely cared? Did prayers matter? Did prayers make a difference? Did the presence of loved ones, even the quiet ones, matter? Were timely words meaningful? Did they help soothe your pain and reinforce your sense of Hope?**

**E. When someone passes, shouldn't our first response be something a little better than, 'Well I really didn't know them.'? And while we dare not live in a state of perennial loss, shouldn't we be sober enough in our daily walks to realize there's probably someone in our respective spheres in pain? And should they not be remembered in our prayers and be candidates for our love and consolation?**

**F. Or we could all just move to the city where death and dying, mourning and loss, seem to be more scarcely realized? Do neighbors still live in "*neighborhoods*?" Or are people moving to cities because it affords them more anonymity? Is this also the attraction of mega churches where no body knows your name unless you're wearing a name tag? Think about this: the subtle but real cultural change with home-architecture; how many homes used to have large and inviting front porches? And what did that say? And how many have moved away from porches to large rear decks with fenced-in back yards? What does that communicate?**

**G. Americans pride themselves with the notion of privacy. *Keep King George, keep Big Brother, and keep my neighbors out of my life and my yard!* Some suppose it's more Godly and Biblical to be private than it is to be hospitable. *Hospitality is not my gift! My gift is privacy! My way of building up the body of Christ is by staying as far away as possible!* When some folks get sick, they actually value privacy more than prayer. Sometimes the preacher doesn't even get to know!**

**H. And then there are outsiders... Many outsiders would just as soon Christianity become a quiet, keep-your-mouth-shut, mind-your-own-business, faith. Sorry, but that's not what it is. Christians were (and still are) put to death for simply living Christlike lives and talking about Jesus. In our culture they're ostracized on social media. In other places they're beheaded. In the Roman empire days, Christians rescued unwanted, abandoned babies tossed underneath bridges or garbage dumps and adopted them as their own. They took heat for that! Believers have always been drawn to the plights of the poor. They've cared deeply for the marginalized. They rally to support the life of the unborn and developmentally disabled, or at least they should. They also don't shrink back from the truths of God's Word. Hopefully without being obnoxious, they're always ready to give an account for the Hope within. But it's not a private faith. Some indeed are quieter than others. But you can only be so quiet when Jesus charged you to go and preach and make disciples. Even the shiest among us are called to go and tell.**

**I. Here's a word to end what's been a very tough year for many. It's also a cling-to word as a new year, even a new decade begins. Your past year may have been awesome, but for many it was anything but. And who knows what this coming year may bring? This next year may be your tough one. Below is God's Word of encouragement from the brother of Jesus and James; his name is Jude...**

**J. Jude 1:20-25 (ESV) *20 But you, (that's **you** plural) beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, (That's not merely a quiet or private thing--it's both vertical and horizontal!) waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. 22 And have mercy on those who doubt; 23 save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh. (Try doing that in the privacy of your basement!) (And Who will help you in this?) 24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of His glory with great joy, 25 to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.***

**K. As you read those verses over and over, you'll realize God's got His part and you've got your part. God will be absolutely faithful with His part. So will you be faithful with your part? Even when your part may involve others? Especially since He will enable you do what He has asked? I pray you will and I believe you will! May God's grace help keep us all in His love!**

**\* Close with Prayer...**

**[Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff](#)**

### **Romans 12:15 (NIV)**

**15** Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

### **2 Corinthians 1:3-4 (ESV)**

**3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, **4** who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

### **Jude 1:20-25 (ESV)**

**20** But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, **21** keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. **22** And have mercy on those who doubt; **23** save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh. **24** Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of His glory with great joy, **25** to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

"For All That You Have Done" - Rend Collective with Dan Mohler

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dBEWSowU9rI>

"There Will Be A Day" - Jeremy & Adie Camp

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DHh58d9W4ZQ>

"Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus" - Lauren Chandler (Hymns for Selena)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LuwsHp1ZZ9c>

Story Behind, "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" - Richard Kannwischer & Jadon Lavik

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_KOBsu\\_A4LU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_KOBsu_A4LU)

The Brevity of Life - Billy Graham

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-92ErT3ilUQ>

### **Bonus Stuff**

#### **Psalm 39:4-5 (NLT)**

**4** Lord, remind me how brief my time on earth will be. Remind me that my days are numbered--how fleeting my life is. **5** You have made my life no longer than the width of my hand. My entire lifetime is just a moment to You; at best, each of us is but a breath.

#### **Psalm 90:12 (ESV)**

**12** So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.

#### **Isaiah 40:6-8 (ESV)**

**6** A voice says, "Cry!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. **7** The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the Lord blows on it; surely the people are grass. **8** The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

### **Hebrews 12:1-2 (ESV)**

**1** Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, **2** looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

### **Romans 13:8-14 (ESV)**

**8** Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. **9** For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." **10** Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. **11** Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. **12** The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. **13** Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. **14** But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

### **1 Peter 3:15-16 (NIV)**

**15** But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, **16** keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

### **Quote by John Newton**

"The more you know Him, the better you will trust Him; the more you trust Him, the better you will love Him; the more you love Him, the better you will serve Him."

- John Newton, *The Works of John Newton*, Vol. 2. p. 141.

### **Quote by Howard G. Hendricks**

"Many of us want a word from God, but we don't want the Word of God. We know enough to own a Bible but not enough for the Bible to own us. We pay the Bible lip service, but we fail to give it *"life service."* In a world where the only absolute is that there are no absolutes, there is little room left for the authoritative Word of God as revealed in the Bible."

### **Quote by Tim Keller**

"God's Kingdom is "present in its beginnings, but still future in its fullness. This guards us from an under-realized eschatology (expecting no change now) and an over-realized

eschatology (expecting all change now). In this stage, we embrace the reality that while we're not yet what we will be, we're also no longer what we used to be."

### **Quote by St. Ignatius**

"Realize that illness and other temporal setbacks often come to us from the hand of God our Lord, and are sent to help us know ourselves better, to free ourselves of the love of created things, and to reflect on the brevity of this life and, thus, to prepare ourselves for the life which is without end."

### **Sermon Excerpt from PSB**

"I sat with my Mom in her oncologist's office 2 weeks after we buried Dad. The doctor came in and told Mom her pancreatic cancer had spread and there was no cure--chemotherapy could maybe ward it off for a short time. Then a staff person interrupted the doctor and he had to excuse himself briefly. Mom said to me, "He just gave me my death sentence." I had no words... but I knew one thing, My Mother belonged to Christ."

- Pastor Steve's sermon titled, "*From Death to Life*," August 2, 2009.

### **Quote by W.B. Hinson**

"I remember a year ago when a doctor told me, '*You have an illness from which you won't recover.*' I walked out to where I live 5 miles from Portland, Oregon, and I looked across at that mountain that I love. I looked at the river in which I rejoice, and I looked at the stately trees that are always God's own poetry to my soul. Then in the evening I looked up into the great sky where God was lighting His lamps, and I said, '*I may not see you many more times, but Mountain, I shall be alive when you are gone; and River, I shall be alive when you cease running toward the sea; and Stars, I shall be alive when you have fallen from your sockets in the great down pulling of the material universe!*'"

### **Life After Death - The Westminster Confession**

"The bodies of men, after death, return to dust, and see corruption: but their souls, which neither die nor sleep, having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them: the souls of the righteous, being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God, in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies. And the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day. Beside these two places, for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledges none"

- The Westminster Confession, (Chapter XXXII), 1646.