



Through the Bible in a Year

a chronological study of the Bible for women

Matt. 18
Luke 10-17:10
John 7-10

Week 43

“DAUGHTER OF ABRAHAM”
Lk.13:10-17

Daily Reading Plan:

__Mt. 18
__Jn. 7-8
__Jn. 9:1-10:21
__Lk. 10-11,
 Jn. 10:22-42
__Lk. 12-14
__Lk. 15:17:10
__REST*

*Use this day to meditate on the week's Scripture reading. If needed, use it to catch up or read ahead.

Next week:
Mt. 19-22
Mk. 10-12
Lk. 17-19:48
Jn. 11-12

MEMORY VERSE:

“Therefore, whoever
humbles himself like
this **child** is the
greatest in the **kingdom**
of heaven.”
Matt. 18:4

We know her as the crippled woman, but that isn't what Jesus called her. He called her the daughter of Abraham. He set her on equal ground with all the sons of Abraham, which is no small matter to the Jewish audience. He gave her a new identity, a healing from her “spirit of infirmity” as the King James Version refers to it.

On the face of it, this was a woman with a physical handicap that prevented her from being able to stand upright. I'm sure there are a number of medical possibilities to explain her affliction, but for now I am more interested in the spiritual possibilities, since Jesus refers to her as being “bound by Satan” in v. 16.

First, verse 11 says she was crippled by a “spirit” which is a translation of the Greek *pneuma* which can mean the rational soul, mental disposition or the superhuman, whether angel or demon or God Himself. Crippled is from the word *astheneia* which can also mean a weakness or moral frailty. “Bent over” (*sugkupto*) can also be translated “completely overcome”. Similarly “straighten up” (*anakuputo*) can also mean to look up or be elated. Finally, in verse 12, there is “set free” (*apoluo*) which can mean relieved, released, dismissed, pardoned, forgiven, or let go. (Meyers)

I think it is no accident that the Greek words used in this passage have multiple meanings. We are more comfortable admitting physical infirmity, as evidenced by the majority of requests on our prayer lists. The visual image of a woman bent over, unable to see anything but dirt, unable to ever look anyone in the eye, unable to walk through a crowd with her head held high, being suddenly and thoroughly allowed to stand up straight and praise her God is striking. What about the woman who carries such a load of guilt, or inadequacy, that she is bent over with it, unable to look anyone in the eye, and unable to stand up and freely praise her Savior? This story, this Jesus, is for her too.

Look around you. Who do you see living “bent over” lives?

Are you? _____
Jesus called this woman daughter of Abraham. What could you say that could express worth to those with a spirit of infirmity?

LIKE A CHILD Matt. 18:1-6

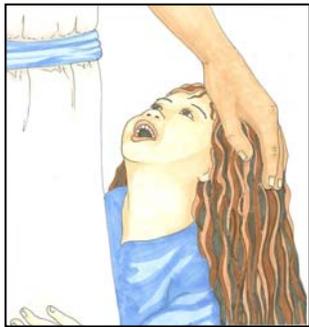
Jesus makes a pretty strong statement in verse 3:

“I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

This is important if we want to enter the kingdom of heaven. Both Mark 9 and Luke 9 tell us that the disciples were arguing over their relative status in heaven. Jesus tells them that if they don't make some changes, they aren't even going to get to heaven! What's more, He tells them they need to become like little children.

So, what does it mean to become like little children? Jesus gives us a clue in verse 4 when He says “whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” Think of the openness and exuberance with which a child expresses their affection and delight. Contrast that with the attitude of the Pharisees, or even the disciples who were reluctant to accept the humble followers of Jesus, the immature but loving Christians, the sinners and the tax collectors. Jesus cautions against leading one of these “little” ones into sin. I wonder if it has to do with giving them the message that they aren't good enough for Jesus, that they need to be too ashamed of approaching Him. Humility, like that of a child, calls us to not think too much of ourselves, whether in arrogance or shame, because that is what keeps us from loving Jesus.

Do you approach Jesus like a little child? _____



A DIFFERENT POINT OF VIEW Matt. 18:7-9

From our perspective, whatever keeps us comfortable NOW is good. From God's perspective, whatever keeps us out of hell is good, even if it causes us some discomfort now. Hell seems distant and unreal to us, but it doesn't to God!

FORGIVENESS Matt. 18:15-35

Get two or more people together and conflict is bound to arise. Sin has a way of cropping up to mess things up, even between two believers. So Jesus gives some instructions on how to handle the inevitable:

- v. 15 _____
- v. 16 _____
- v. 17 _____
- v. 17 _____

How often do we follow these instructions? _____

Why might this be especially hard for us as women? _____

What do you think verse 18 means? _____

Peter suggested that rather than the traditional teaching of forgiving a wrong three times, a more generous seven times would seem to be more in line with the teaching of Jesus. He had the right idea, but fell short in his understanding.

How many times did Jesus say we should forgive? _____

Under what circumstance will we be refused God's forgiveness? _____

MISCONCEPTIONS Jn. 7:25-44

The crucial question was, “Is this the Christ?” They weren't asking if that was the real last name of the guy named Jesus. People back then didn't have last names, and they already knew this was the son of Joseph the carpenter. What they wanted to know is “Is this THE Christ?” The Greek word Christos means the anointed one, or the Messiah. The kings of Israel had also been anointed as God's chosen ruler, but the people had long anticipated the King of Kings, or Messiah. (Downey and Shaw 33)

What are some of the misconceptions that made the people doubt that Jesus was the One? _____

THE MAN BORN BLIND Jn. 9:1-34

We still tend to think that when people suffer some misfortune, they must have done something to deserve it. I think we feel a little safer and more in control of our destiny that way. This man had been born blind and that brought up the question of whose sins he was being punished for, his own or that of his parents.

Jesus made the question irrelevant by making the blindness an opportunity for God's glory instead of a punishment to blame someone for.

What if we saw our own misfortunes in that same light? How might that change our attitude toward them?

What was unique about the manner in which Jesus healed this man? _____

THE WOMAN CAUGHT IN ADULTERY

Jn. 7:53-8:11

What did Jewish law say must be done with a man and woman caught in adultery?

Deut. 17:5,6 _____

Lev. 20:10 _____

Who did they catch this woman with? _____

Why did they bring the woman to Jesus? _____

What instructions did Jesus give the woman? _____

Do you think she did as He said? _____

With my three year old in one hand and my two year old firmly grasped in the other, my four year old was left to follow along the short distance to the changing room at an amusement park. Only she got confused in the crowd and followed the wrong family. Only a parent who has lost a child can understand that feeling of panic. It wasn't enough to say that I still had the other seven, my mind was on the one that was lost. The focus of the whole family (and everyone around us) was on finding that lost child. There are other ways through the years that one or another of my children has lost their way and gotten confused about who to follow. Again, I've never found much comfort in the fact that I still had seven other that were doing okay. My heart still breaks for the one that is lost.

That is how Jesus is with us.

NICODEMUS Jn. 7:45-52

We met this member of the Sanhedrin, a Pharisee in John 3 when he made a nighttime visit to Jesus. We see in him a desire for understanding, but perhaps a reluctance in wholehearted commitment.

Now we meet him again, this time daring a defense of Jesus and suggesting that He be given a fair hearing.

What did his words gain him among the other members of the Sanhedrin? _____

What would it have cost Nicodemus to make a public announcement of belief that Jesus was the Christ? _____

What does it cost you? _____

A BIGGER BARN? Lk. 12:13-21

In our country we are thought foolish if we don't save for retirement. Other cultures would consider greedy those who store up wealth while others go hungry. It is a struggle for us to have a godly perspective on this issue. To complicate matters even further, there are things other than money that can fill up our barns, but leave us impoverished before God.

What does Lk. 12:48 say that we are accountable for? _____

What was the shrewd manager commended for in Lk. 16:1-15? _____

Where did the rich man in Lk. 16:19-23 end up? _____



PUZZLE CLUES (taken from the NIV translation)

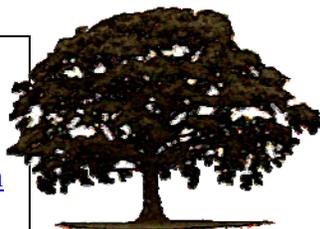
Across

2. man was beaten and robbed on his way to here Lk. 10:30
8. it will be good for the servants who are doing this Lk. 12:37
11. what has to be given up to be a disciple Lk. 14:33
14. better to be this than thrown into eternal fire Mt. 18:8
16. standards the Pharisees used to judge Jn. 8:15
18. what the servant begged for Mt. 18:26
19. why the invitation wasn't accepted Lk. 14:18
21. woe to this because of things that cause people to sin Mt. 18:7
22. what Martha was Lk. 10:40
25. fell from heaven like lightning Lk. 10:18
27. will set free Jn. 8:32
31. leave the ninety-nine to find the lost one Mt. 18:12
32. what the older son was Lk. 15:28
34. what Mary was doing Lk. 10:39
35. where the rich man went Lk. 16:22,23
37. Jesus said "I and the Father are _____" Jn. 10:30
38. what to invite the poor and crippled to Lk. 14:13
40. be on guard against this Lk. 12:15
42. what Jesus was accused of Jn. 10:33
45. wanted to kill Jesus Lk. 13:31
47. Jesus is the good one Jn. 10:11
49. took pity on the man who was beaten Lk. 10:33
50. how the Jews felt about the teaching of Jesus Jn. 7:15
51. the sheep know the Shepherd's Jn. 10:4
52. must be like these to enter heaven Mt. 18:3
53. what the Pharisees accused the guards of being Jn. 7:47

Down

1. what Jesus said He came to bring on the earth Lk. 12:49
2. Jesus stayed away from here Jn. 7:1
3. what the opponents of Jesus were Lk. 13:17
4. not being kept Jn. 7:19
5. comes to kill and destroy Jn. 10:10
6. Jesus is this Jn. 8:12
7. name of beggar covered with sores Lk. 16:20
9. what the father did when the lost son returned Lk. 15:32
10. always see the Father's face Mt. 18:11
12. Jesus was waiting for the right one Jn. 7:6
13. what a brother is to be shown if he sins against you Mt. 18:15
15. what Jesus called Herod Lk. 13:32
17. Jesus invited these to come to Him Jn. 7:37
20. between Abraham and hell Lk. 16:25,26
21. season of Feast of Dedication Jn. 10:22
23. day the blind man was healed Jn. 9:14
24. what is valued among men is this to God Lk. 16:15
26. what Jesus did in the temple courts Jn. 7:14
28. must _____ ourselves like a child Mt. 18:4
29. people didn't think the Christ could come from here Jn. 7:41
30. a man who had been _____ since birth Jn. 9:1
31. gathered to hear Jesus Lk. 15:1
33. did not believe in Jesus Jn. 7:5
36. when those who believed in Jesus would receive the Spirit Jn. 7:39
39. what Jesus put on the man's eyes Jn. 9:6
41. better to lose one than go to hell Mt. 18:9
42. the rich man built a bigger one Lk. 12:18
43. were delighted with what Jesus was doing Lk. 13:17
44. kingdom of God is like this seed Lk. 13:18,19
46. what is bound on earth will also be bound here Mt. 18:18
48. family of whom the Christ would come from Jn. 7:42

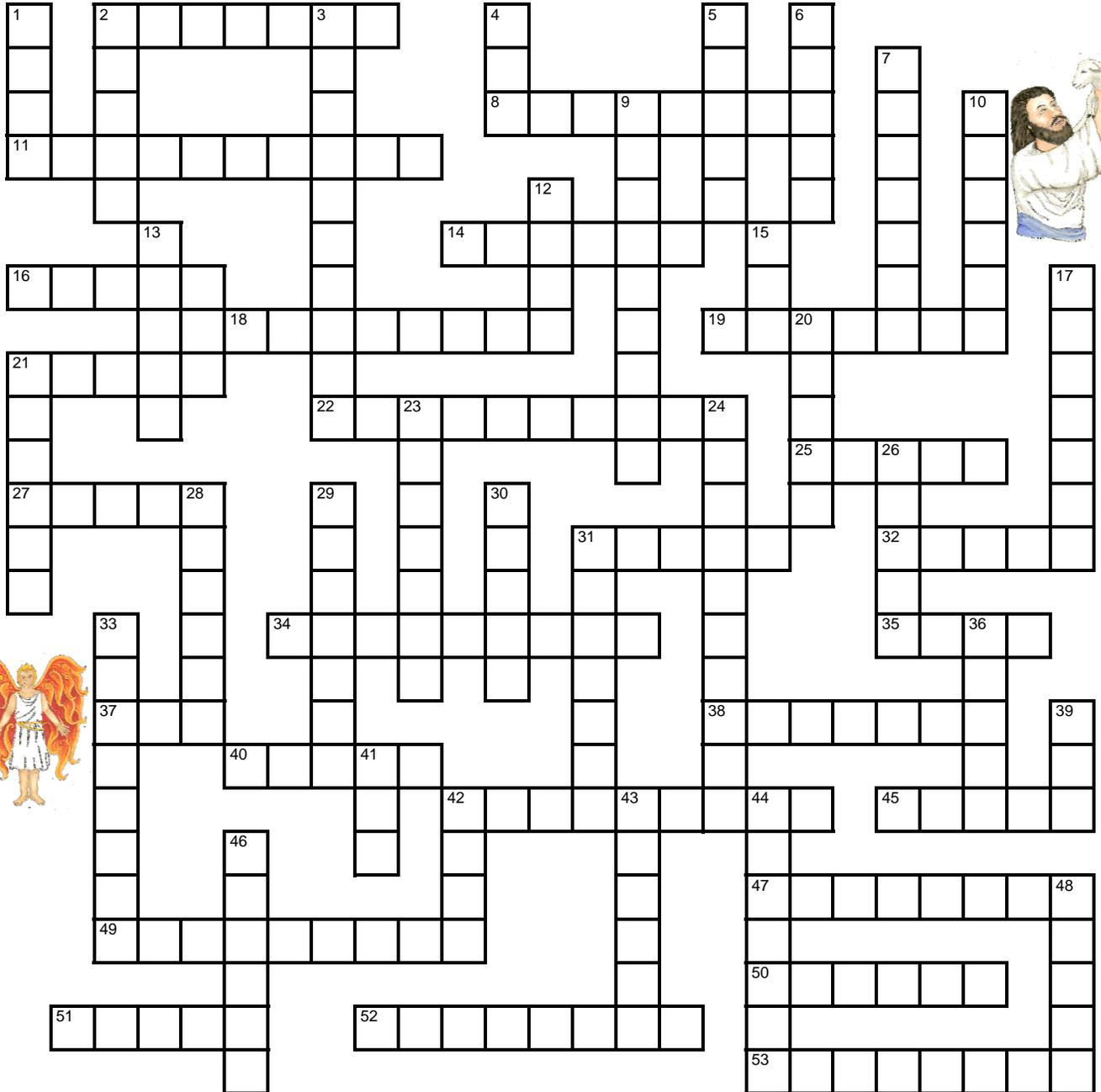
To contact me, or for
more studies, visit my
website at
www.downvictoryrd.com





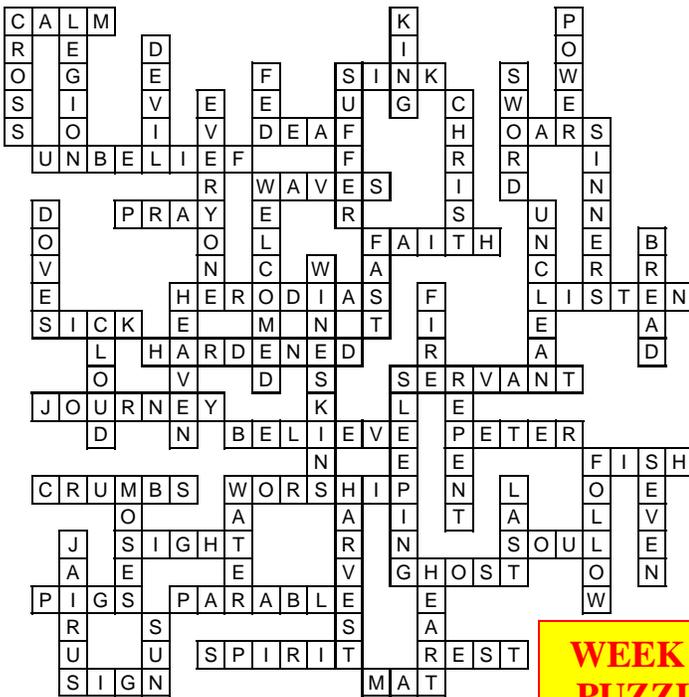
PUZZLE PAGE

WEEK 43



THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE John 8:32

This truth was more than just intellectual knowledge. In Luke 10:21 Jesus rejoices that things are hidden from the wise and learned. God's reality in Jesus is the truth. It has to be lived or experienced rather than known. By holding to the teachings of Jesus we will "know" or live the truth that sets us free from the bondage of sin.



WANT TO READ WHAT I READ?

DAUGHTER OF ABRAHAM p. 1

Meyers, Rick. e-sword. 17 May 2007 <http://www.e-sword.net>

MISCONCEPTIONS p. 2

Downey, Peter, and Ben Shaw. Everything You Want to Know About Jesus. Grand Rapids: Zondervan. 2007.

Who are the angels of the little ones? (Mt. 18:10)

What does it mean to never walk in darkness? (Jn. 8:12)

**WEEK 42
PUZZLE
ANSWER**

IT'S NOT ABOUT ME

Lk. 10:38-42

We know we can't barge into heaven by our own might. We know that the stench of our own sin won't allow us to sneak in unnoticed. We know that we can only gain entry to our own salvation through the saving grace of our Father who provided the perfect sacrifice.

But as women, we think we can always improve on things just a little. We can always do just a little more, make things just a little more special. We are taught to "do for others," and that is exactly what Martha was about. She was doing for Jesus, and she wanted everything to be just perfect. It is very hard for us to see any problem in that, so why did Jesus say that Mary made the better choice?

I think it was because Mary gave no thought to who she was or what she could accomplish, or how others expected her to behave, at least while in the presence of Jesus. She was so overwhelmed and enthralled by who He is that she didn't give a thought to what she could do, even for Him. She just sat there listening and soaking in the identity and presence of her Lord. She didn't want to miss a moment of Him.

Martha was much like Peter at the transfiguration, eager to **do** something to commemorate the glorious presence of the Christ. But doing makes it all too easy for our focus to shift off of Jesus and onto ourselves. Sometimes Jesus has to bring me up short and remind me to adjust my focus back to Him. It's not about me.

That is what the Pharisees were reluctant to grasp. They had all of their "doing" that gave them security of position. They earned their position with God by what they could do. It's also easy for us to move from serving out of gratitude for the free gift He has given, to serving Him in ways that will prove our own worth.

Humility is learning that it is about WHO HE IS and not about WHO I AM. As our self consciousness drops, and our God consciousness rises, we become freer to worship Him with an abandon that may at times counter the expectations of our culture.

"Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care." Psalm 95:6,7