

"God's Grace & The Believer's Acts"

Gleanings from select scripture passages in the Book of Romans Gleanings from select scripture passages in the Book of Acts

by Dr. Charles Westbrook



WRITER'S BIO

Dr. Charles Westbrook has served as international missionary and pastor of several churches. He is currently pastor of Pelion Baptist Church (SC). In addition to being a pastor, Charles is the author of eight books available www.charleswestbrookmedia.com. He is trained in the Revitalization/Replanting process of the North American Mission Board, SBC. He is a key member of the Revitalization Team of the Lexington Baptist Association (SC).

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NOTES		
	Day 1	Learners and Practitioners
		Charles Westbrook
	Read Romans 1:7	
	"To all who are in Rome, loved by from God our Father and the Lord	God, called as saints. Grace to you and peace Jesus Christ." (NAS)
	We are called as saints. God loves	qualities: 1) We are loved by God, and 2) s us. He calls us to a life that is set apart to we share in God's grace and in the peace
	Paul, thus, opens his letter to the with doctrinal truth. They set the	Romans. The first seven verses are packed tone for the rest of his letter.
		doctrines in the first seven verses: election, cripture, Lordship of Christ, promise and nip, obedience, faith, and peace.
	set apart to Him for His service, a have much to learn. To be effective learners of God's truth. And then, One of the foundations for revita	d loves, those whom God has called to be the to be a people of truth, which means we we in our service to God, we must be the weare to be practitioners of God's truths. Solization, whether for an individual or a the mer-practitioner of the truths of God found
	Prayer	
	practitioner of Your truths, so tha	ner of Your truths, so that I may then be a at I may be useful in the work of Your
	Kingdom. In Jesus' Name. Amen.	

DEVOTIONAL PRAYER GUIDES FOR CHURCH REVITALIZATION



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Day 2	Rejoice in Affliction?		
	Charles Westbrook		
Read Romans 5:3-4			
"And not only that, but we also rejoice in our afflictions, because we know that affliction produces endurance, endurance produces proven character, and proven character produces hope." Some might read the verses above and conclude that Paul was off his rocker, so to speak. Who in their right mind would rejoice in their afflictions? Affliction is not normally associated with something positive. Paul does not necessarily see affliction as positive. More accurately, he sees the outcome as positive. It produces endurance and character, and that in turn produces a hope that does not disappoint but instead encourages and enables us to keep going. So, we do not rejoice over our afflictions, but we do rejoice over what they produce. The first two-years for a new missionary in Japan are committed to full-time language study. It may even take four years. Studying Japanese, for many missionaries, can be one of the greatest afflictions they have ever known. But they do survive. Then, they thrive, and eventually they can communicate the truths of God to Japanese people in their heart language. Affliction was part of the process for getting there, and missionaries in Japan will often say that they cherish that language-learning experience.			
		In your personal walk with God, and in y your afflictions. Endure them. See beyon what will take you to hope and lead you	nd them to eventual outcomes. That is
		Prayer	
		Lord, teach me to value affliction for its the church I am part of also recognize the revitalization processes are going to cre positive. In Jesus' Name. Amen.	hat the afflictions we experience in
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	"And not only that, but we also rejoice in affliction produces endurance, endurance proven character produces hope." Some might read the verses above and so to speak. Who in their right mind wo Affliction is not normally associated with the outcome as positive. It produces en turn produces a hope that does not discensibles us to keep going. So, we do not do rejoice over what they produce. The first two-years for a new missionary language study. It may even take four y missionaries, can be one of the greatest they do survive. Then, they thrive, and etruths of God to Japanese people in the of the process for getting there, and mit hey cherish that language-learning expunsions. Endure them. See beyon what will take you to hope and lead you hat will take you to hope and lead you have church I am part of also recognize to revitalization processes are going to create the church I am part of also recognize to revitalization processes are going to create the church I am part of also recognize to revitalization processes are going to create the church I am part of also recognize to revitalization processes are going to create the church I am part of also recognize to revitalization processes are going to create the church I am part of also recognize to revitalization processes are going to create the church I am part of also recognize to revitalization processes are going to create the church I am part of also recognize to the church I am part of also recognize to the church I am part of also recognize to the church I am part of also recognize to the church I am part of also recognize to the church I am part of also recognize to the church I am part of also recognize to the church I am part of also recognize to the church I am part of also recognize to the church I am part of also recognize to the church I am part of also recognize to the church I am part of also recognize to the church I am part of also recognize to the church I am part of also recognize to the church I am part of also recognize to the church I am pa		

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NOTES	_	
	Day 3	Just "Faith" It
		Charles Westbrook
	Read Romans 6:11	
	"So, you too consider yourselves dead to sin and	d alive to God in Christ Jesus"
	This is Paul's first command in his letter to the plural and in the imperative. So, it is a comma intended for all believers.	
	Earlier, Paul teaches that we were dead to Good world. We were spiritually dead. Stone cold de however, we then died to sin and became alive Paul also says that baptism (by immersion) poresurrection. So, now that the situation is revewed are alive to God in Christ Jesus. That mean those alive to God.	ead. When we believed in Jesus, e to God through His grace. ortrays this death and ersed, and we are dead to sin,
	How are we supposed to do this? Simply put: dead to sin and alive to God. So, that's it? Just	
	More specifically, we "faith" it. Literally, the wo it." That is, the money is deposited, so count it done deal on the basis of faith. We accept it a we are dead to sin and live to God. We faith it the basis of that reality.	t. This means we count it as a s a genuine reality by faith that
	_	
	Prayer	
	Lord, by faith I count it as reality that I am dea commit to live this day and each day in that fr	reedom so that my life will
	honor You and serve as a testimony to the los Jesus' Name. Amen.	t of what is truly possible. In
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NOTES			
	Day 4	Free to Choose	
		Charles Westbrook	
	Read Romans 8:5		
		e flesh have their minds set on the things of ing to the Spirit have their minds set on the	
	People have a choice. We can follow a life oriented around we can choose a lifestyle oriented around the spiritual. Pau on the basis of the physical is death. That's because the ph Living a life based on the spiritual is life and peace because eternal.		
		ee to choose. To choose a life oriented ve the ability, the power to make that happens. So, how do we do that?	
	desire to live life in the Spirit, He w Spirit then "seals" us in this decision	f enables us to decide. If we have the ill enable us to make that decision. The n. The Spirit becomes the "guarantee" of I and characterized by joy and peace.	
	joy, love – the fruit of the Spirit. Liv	irit. That is the path that leads to peace, ing according to the Spirit is an absolute fe, and it is an essential ingredient for all zation of a church.	
	Prayer		
	· ·	ut I choose in the power of Your Spirit to than according to the physical. Enable me Amen.	

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NOTES		
	Day 5	Groaning in Hope
		Charles Westbrook
	Read Romans 8:23	
	"Not only that, but we ourselves who hav groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting fo bodies."	•
	This may sound negative, maybe even cy connect all of the creation is: Groaning. I groaning.	
	Groaning comes from suffering. Sufferin that is, in reality, the result of God's judg human condition produces groaning, wh something better to come. Thus, it is also groaning points us toward a groaning for inexpressible desire to experience the furgroan" for that. One reason for this is be groans before the Father and the Son or hope He has given us in Christ.	gment on human sin. Thus, our fallen nich is pointed toward the hope for o true that this suffering-produced or hope, a deep, heart-felt almost all redemption promised in Christ. We ecause the Holy Spirit within us
	We hope for something yet unseen, which therefore, wait patiently, believing that Gottomer.	•
	This same groaning we experience indivineed to experience corporately if genuir indispensable. Are you, in your church, ghope you have for the full revitalization of	ne revitalization is to take place. It is groaning for the fulfillment of the
	Prayer Lord, in this day, may each of us acknow Your Spirit, and may we also as Your chufor the full revitalization of Your church.	urch in this world groan in the hope

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Day 6	The Transformation of Mercy and Grace
	Charles Westbrook
Read Romans 12:2	
	ned to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect
means to look past and then treat that	plished our salvation through the blood of Christ. Mercy someone's faults to see their potential and possibility, person on that basis rather than on their faults. Mercy ce realities to what can be. A great thought, but what does
follow the values of and culture will pres need to justify their	sust not conform to this age, meaning, not to give in and sunbelievers. Rather, we follow God's truth. Our society source us to conform to their values, primarily because they behaviors, their existence, to convince themselves they soid the ravages of guilt. We must not conform to that.
work of transformat transformation is no visual. We see it in t	e must be transformed instead. The Holy Spirit does this tion by renewing, by making our minds new. This of just some esoteric life principle but is practical, real, and the exercise of our spiritual gifts. It is love expressed as out our spiritual gifts, we are expressing love for God and
and submit your mi	of God's grace and mercy, reject conformity to this age, nd to the transforming work of God's Spirit. All levels of e that we follow this path.
Prayer	
	eality of this truth, and help us to follow this path for the om and glory and Your church. In Jesus' Name. Amen.





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Day 7	The God of Hope
2 3 1	Charles Westbroo
Read Romans 15:13	
"Now may the God of hope fill you wit that you may overflow with hope by th	
What a verse! Look at the range of the peace, faith, power, Holy Spirit. This is believers, an expression of his hope fo that the God of hope would overflow Spirit so they would know joy and peathat something every individual and cl	a Pauline benediction to the Roman or them and for their church. He prays hope in them by the power of the Holy are through their faith in Christ. Isn't
Consider these understandings: Hope – the absolute certainty of our future with God. Joy – exuberance produced by hope, independent of circ Peace – the state of being at rest with God, others and sereconciliation. Faith – the unity with God that comes from believing. Power – the explosive capacity of God's Spirit to achieve influence change.	
The absolute future we have with God independent of circumstances, so that and ourselves because of the unity, the by the capacity of God's Spirit to transus.	we are fully at rest with God, others, e oneness, we have with Christ, sealed
This describes an individual Christian i church that is in the process of revitali and for our churches.	•
Prayer	
ord, God of hope, create in me and in that we may live out this joy as our tes Jesus' Name. Amen.	•

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Dav 8	The True Resource for Revitalization
	Charles Westbrook
Read Acts 3:6	
	on't have silver or gold, but what I do have I give you: In the t of Nazareth, get up and walk!"
A man lame from birth was daily taken to the tementering. When Peter and John were entering, he They looked straight at him and told him to look made the statement in the verse above. Peter the name of Jesus. Commotion followed. Then a serm	
better position final sometimes it seems resources. Zecharial Spirit, says the Lord resources God prov	longer say, "Silver and gold have I none." We are in a nicially to help those who suffer. Related to this, though, is as though the church of today has an over-reliance on the 4:6 reminds us: "Not by might, nor by power, but by My I of Hosts." We certainly have a stewardship to give of the rides, but it is equally important, if not more so, to primary Resource is the Spirit of God.
allow that to be det we are restricted to purposes and plans	evitalization, resources are important, but we must not terminative in our ministry and missions engagements. If resources only, we cannot possibly carry out God's at That can only be achieved when we rely on the Holy required. All other resources must be submitted to the
Prayer	
•	rn to rely on Your Spirit alone as the true Resource for we trust You to provide any other resources needed. In
	"But Peter said, 'I do name of Jesus Chris" A man lame from be entering. When Pet They looked straight made the statement name of Jesus. Com The church can not better position finates sometimes it seems resources. Zechariates Spirit, says the Lord resources God proveremember that our When it comes to reallow that to be detined we are restricted to purposes and plans Spirit for the power Holy Spirit. Prayer Lord, help us to lead revitalization. May we have the said of





"God's Grace & The Believer's Acts"

Day 9	Guilty of His Blood
	Charles Westbrook
Read Acts 5:38	
"Didn't we strictly order you not to teach Jerusalem with your teaching and are de man's blood."	
Peter got it, this blood thing. He had er boy that he understood its meaning. La said, "For you know that you were rede inherited from your fathers, not with pe but with the precious blood of Christ."	ater, when he wrote his first epistle he eemed from your empty way of life erishable things like silver and gold,
Peter's response to the high priest was century might have said, "What do you you ARE guilty of His blood." These me though technically the Romans killed H murdered Him, but God exalted Him to the dead."	n mean 'make' you guilty of His blood; en made the decision to kill Jesus, Him. Here's what Peter said, "You
The Sanhedrin had a different view. The head because they believed Jesus was a wannabe who got what He deserved. They were the head of the	a charlatan, an imposter, a messiah- Their opinion was unchanged. So was
So are we, aren't we? Aren't we all guilt shed for our sins just as it was for theirs be part of our proclamation if any revit	s? The blood of the cross must always
<u>Prayer</u>	
Lord, before You we plead the blood of	f Christ. In His Name. Amen.
	Read Acts 5:38 "Didn't we strictly order you not to teach Jerusalem with your teaching and are a man's blood." Peter got it, this blood thing. He had e boy that he understood its meaning. Le said, "For you know that you were rede inherited from your fathers, not with pobut with the precious blood of Christ." Peter's response to the high priest was century might have said, "What do you you ARE guilty of His blood." These methough technically the Romans killed Hamurdered Him, but God exalted Him to the dead." The Sanhedrin had a different view. The head because they believed Jesus was wannabe who got what He deserved. The Peter's opinion unchanged. They were So are we, aren't we? Aren't we all guilt shed for our sins just as it was for their be part of our proclamation if any revited. Prayer





"God's Grace & The Believer's Acts"

	Day 10 Stephen's Story	
	Charles Westbroo	
	Read Acts 7:56	
	"He said, 'Look, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"	
	What an interesting young man, this Stephen. He was probably very young. His name suggests a Hellenistic Jew who likely migrated to Israel. At some point he became a believer, one of the first seven deacons, evidently "full of the Spirit and wisdom." He argued forcefully for Jesus as Messiah in the Synagogue of the Freedmen. They finally reached total frustration and hauled him in front of the Sanhedrin and accused him of speaking against the Temple and the Law. The Sanhedrin allowed him to speak. Interestingly, Stephen never mentioned the name of Jesus. He just reviewed Israel's history of rebellion and mistreating the prophets. They were with him until he accused them of resisting the Holy Spirit and not keeping the Law. His statement, "Look, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" pushed them over the edge. That did it. They dragged him outside the city and gathered stones. They laid their robes at the feet of a young Pharisee named Saul of Tarsus as they then stoned Stephen to death.	
	So, what does Stephen's story have to do with church revitalization? Just this When it comes to revitalization, severe sacrifices may be required. Stephen's death served to advance the gospel. Then, secondly, never underestimate the transformative power of God. It could be your greatest mistake. I'm speaking here of Saul, not Stephen.	
	Prayer	
	Lord, help us to understand the costs that come with a revitalization, and help us recognize Your ability to transform those You intend to use in that revitalization. In Jesus' Name. Amen.	
	Lord, help us to understand the costs that come with a revitalization, and help us recognize Your ability to transform those You intend to use in that	

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Day 11	The Power of Prayer for Revitalization
_	Charles Westbrook
Read Acts 12:11	
	o himself, he said, 'Now I know for certain that the Lord nd rescued me from Herod's grasp and from all that the ted."
ensued, resulting in Antioch, and Barnab in Jerusalem, Barnab arrested James the k pleased the Jews he chained between tw mother of John Mar miraculous display o once outside the pri	ment declined in popularity, and a full persecution a scattering of believers. A church was planted in pass and Saul became primary leaders. Because of a famine pass and Saul were dispatched with a relief offering. Herodorother of John and beheaded him. When he saw that this arrested Peter and intended to execute him. Peter was no guards. Believers gathered at the home of Mary the ek to pray. An angel of the Lord, in a remarkable, of power, released Peter. Peter thought it was a vision, but ison he "came to" and knew it was real. He then went to ohn Mark's mother before departing.
we assume she was named. No other na	or that prayer meeting? Well, Mary owned the house, so there with her son, John Mark. Rhoda, a servant girl is times are mentioned, but since Barnabas and Saul were in sider they were there. Probably some of the other as well.
with prayer. When w	miraculous release points us to the power associated we think of church revitalization, we must recognize that sed into every part of that process.
Prayer	
Lord, may every pro Name. Amen.	cess of church revitalization be bathed in prayer. In Jesus'
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OTES		
	Day 12	Trust the Spirit's Lead
	Day 12	Charles Westbrook
	Read Acts 16:6	
	forbidden by the Holy Spirit	on of Phrygia and Galatia; they had been to speak the word in Asia. When they came to Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them."
	Early in Paul's second missionary journey, he, Silas, and Timothy traveled west searching for a place to preach the gospel. They were following the Spirit's lead. Surely, anyplace would do; everyone was lost. But they did not find a place to develop an evangelistic ministry.	
	With all those people there, be, but apparently it wasn't foundations there through at that time or that he was inortheast, only to be stoppe seems that Peter was involved.	d Ephesus. They Holy Spirit forbade that. Why? surely that was a harvest field. It certainly would the time because the Spirit was laying some a man named Apollos. Paul did not know Apollos in Ephesus, but the Spirit did. So, they headed ed by the Spirit of Jesus (the Holy Spirit). Why? It red in work in Bithynia. So, Paul and company here they met Luke, and from there they launched ope.
	know what He is doing. He He may be preparing the wa	ly Spirit is working. We may or may not see or may be building foundations for future ministry. ay. We must never assume He is not working. We m, and move forward whether we fully
		our Spirit is at work in all the processes of church
		w Your lead. In Jesus' Name. Amen.





"God's Grace & The Believer's Acts"

NOTES			
	Day 13	Look for Doors Already Open	
		Charles Westbrook	
	Read Acts 16:40		
	"After leaving the jail, they encouraged the brothers an	came to Lydia's house, where they saw and nd sisters, and departed."	
	"They" in this verse is Paul, Silas, and Timothy. Apparently, only Paul and Silas were imprisoned at Philippi. Somehow Timothy and Luke escaped that. The Philippian jailer, now a believer, took care of Paul and Silas' wounds and probably sent for Timothy and Luke. The city leaders requested they leave Philippi once they apologized, since they had learned that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens. They went to Lydia's home to tell everyone goodbye and then departed. Luke remained there.		
	relationship with Paul. So, include Luke and Lydia and Then, there's the Philippia (again, let's say 5-10 in his Church of Philippi was beg	was planted, a church that would have a special who were the members of this church? We would do her household (let's say 5-10 in her household). In jailer and his household who were all baptized household). So, that suggests the First Baptist jun with 13-23 members. If the young lady who was part of it, that would mean 14-24. Not bad for a	
	It all started when Paul and outside the city wall.	d his team heard about a place of prayer by a river	
		on, we learn that when we pursue the Lord's work, od is already doing. Sometimes the doors are need to go through.	
	Prayer		
		ave already set up, show us the open doors, so we our Kingdom. In Jesus' Name. Amen.	





"God's Grace & The Believer's Acts"

TES				
	 Day 14	A Spiritual Battle		
		Charles Westbrook		
	Read Acts 17:18-19			
	"And many who had become believers car practices, while many of those who had pr and burned them in front of everyone."			
	When someone decides to believe in Jess Him. They have chosen to turn away from incompatible with the Christian faith and which glorify God and magnify the name	n previous practices that may be engage in a lifestyle and practices		
	Luke tells us about some believers in Eph magic arts. This was not "sleight of hand" sorcery and witchcraft. Because of their re their incantation books publicly to demo	' magic we know today. It was more epentance and faith, they burned		
	a decision is essentially a battle of the he although we live in the flesh, we do not v since the weapons of our warfare are not through God for the demolition of strong every proud thing that is raised up againstake every thought captive to obey Christadvance of the gospel, whether the plant church, or a church revitalization, we must	A decision to follow Jesus is transformative, and we must recognize that such a decision is essentially a battle of the heart, the will. Paul wrote, "For although we live in the flesh, we do not wage war according to the flesh, since the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but are powerful through God for the demolition of strongholds. We demolish arguments and every proud thing that is raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to obey Christ." (1 Corinthians 10:3-5) In any advance of the gospel, whether the planting of a church, the re-planting of a church, or a church revitalization, we must recognize that it will be a spiritual battle. And our weaponry is spiritual in nature.		
	Prayer Lord, we acknowledge Your sovereign po			
	those who turn from sin and in faith turn Name. Amen.	to You as Lord and Savior. In Jesus'		



