

Compiled by Rev Dr J Jack for the Congregation of Duddingston Kirk

These guidelines may help you.

Set aside a special time each day to read the Bible, and stick to it!

Pray that what you have read will help you live according to God's wishes.

2John 12-13

3John 1-4

3John 5-8

3.John 9-11

3John 12-15

Jude 1-2

It is not known for certain who Jude was, but it is generally assumed that he was a younger brother of Jesus Himself. He claims only to be a brother of James, who we do know was a brother of our Lord. Of more interest is how Jude describes Christians. First God calls them. Second, they live in the love of God. And third, they live under the protection of Christ.

August 7th

Jude 3-4

Jude is writing because a matter of most urgent concern has arisen; godless persons are infiltrating the Church. Such persons are to be found in every generation, and in every congregation. The first thing to notice is that they 'distort the message' perhaps by trying to improve the message or, at least, make it easier to understand, but the end result is a distortion of the truth. The second thing is that they reject the Lordship of Christ. They relegate Christ to being a good teacher or a friend of the poor and needy. Christ is certainly these, but He is above all else the Lord and Master of His people.

August 8th

Jude 5-7

From these verses we find that there must have been some kind of rebellion in the angelic world, and that those who rebelled are bound in chains. Jude cites these as examples of rebellion against God, and the consequences of such rebellion.

August 9th

Jude 8-11

Jude now links those godless persons who have infiltrated the Church with those who rebelled against God and were punished for it. Notice that they 'despise God's authority'. This is perhaps the ultimate sin. A man may acknowledge God's authority yet allow himself to succumb to evil, but these people have no regard for Divine authority whatsoever. Here is sin at its worst, and by men and women who have slipped into the fellowship of God's people!

August 10th

Jude 12-13

Very often such people are found in positions of leadership, perhaps even in the pulpits, of the Church. They act with great enthusiasm and speak with great authority; they conduct themselves with great confidence, and give every indication of inspired leadership, yet they are so lacking in Christian grace that not only is their work useless, but it can even be positively harmful to the work of the Church.

August 11th

Jude 14-16

Genesis 5:24 says of Enoch, 'He spent his life in fellowship with God, and then he disappeared, because God took him away'. He was obviously a man of great saintliness. We know little of his life, though there is a book (not in the Old Testament) called The Book of Enoch, and it is from it that Jude quotes. What Jude means here is that even as far back as the time of Enoch, such godless sinners were known, and they will be condemned in the final judgement for the evil they have done. Judgement is inescapable for those who rebel against God.

August 12th

Jude 17-21

Note how the godless can cause divisions within the fellowship of the Church, and how they are controlled by their natural desire and not by the Spirit. Such people continue to do untold damage in the Church today. The passage ends with advice to the true followers of Christ – continue to grow spiritually, pray in the power of the Holy Spirit, keep in the love of God, wait patiently for Him who gives eternal life.

August 13th

Jude 22-25

Note what Jude says of God, 'He is able to keep you from falling, and to bring you faultless and joyful before his glorious presence.' Every true Christian is aware of two things. First, we are surrounded by so many temptations to sin that our own moral and physical strength is unequal to the task – but 'God is able to keep you from falling'. Second, we know that we

are quite unworthy even to think of heaven – but it is God ‘who is able to bring you faultless and joyful before His glorious presence.’

GOD’S PROVISION

August 14th Exodus 16:1-16

Today we begin a short series of readings showing how God provides for God’s people in many different ways. While in slavery in Egypt the Israelites had endured terrible hardship, but it was nothing to what they now endured in the wilderness. One of their problems was lack of food, and so they complained to their leaders, Moses and Aaron, about it. God knew of their hunger, and He provided food in a most remarkable way. When God calls His people to follow Him He provides for their needs.

August 15th Exodus 13:17-22

When the Israelites left Egypt they were uncertain where to go, none of them had ever been to Canaan, nor had they any experience of travel, but God provided them with a marvelous guide. In the very same way God provides us with two guides – the Word of God and God’s Son.

August 16th 1Kings 19:1-8

Elijah had just passed through a great spiritual crisis, and now he suffered spiritual exhaustion. In such a state Elijah fled into the wilderness and prayed that he might find release through death. God first provides rest, then food and drink, then rest again, then food and drink again – and in the strength which that rest and food gave him Elijah was able to travel to Sinai where he was to receive spiritual strength and nourishment. It does not help to ask where the bread came from God provided it.

August 17th 2Kings 4:1-7

Those who like a scientific explanation for everything must reject this incident as quite impossible! However, if we are to keep on building ourselves up in this most sacred faith we must accept that God is not bound by our human rules of logic and reason. Here is a simple record of God providing for one of God’s children in her hour of need.

August 18th 2Kings 6:24-26; 7:3-7,16

‘The Lord had made the Syrians hear what sounded like the advance of a large army with horses and chariots’. Of course there was no such army, but the Syrians thought there was, and so they fled. Here is another way in which God can intervene in human affairs and provide for people in time of need.

August 19th Matt 14:13-21

There is no reasonable explanation why 5 loaves and 2 fish should satisfy 5,000 men (not counting the women and children!), and still leave enough fragments to fill 12 baskets. We can do no other than accept that they saw it as a miracle – God once again intervening to provide for God’s people.

August 20th Phil. 4:14-20

Paul was making no empty promise, but knew that this was what God could, and would, do. If we remain faithful to God, we may have every confidence that God ‘will supply all our needs.’ Note that there is no promise that He will supply our WANTS – only our NEEDS!

August 21st Psalm 23

Every phrase, every word almost, points to some aspect or other of God's provision. Read it over very slowly and try to see which example of Divine provision might be referred to in each phrase. Our God is a generous God.

August 22nd Matthew 22:1-14

Here Jesus is speaking about the Kingdom of Heaven and He likens it to a feast. God not only provides for people during their lifetime, but has also provided something far, far richer for those who honour God in the life to come.

REVERENCE

August 23rd Exodus 3:1-10

Moses was commanded to take off his sandals because he stood on holy ground. Reverence is awareness that a place, an act, an experience has been touched by the presence of God. Reverence is a response to God, and not to man.

August 24th Eccles.5:1-7

One place to be revered is the House of God, whether it is a temple, a cathedral or a plain church hall. A plain barn may be a true House of God if God's people meet there regularly to praise, to offer their prayers, to hear the Word, to glorify God's Name.

August 25th 1Thess.5:12-28

Reverence ought also to be shown to those 'who guide and instruct you in the Christian life'. Note that they are to be respected only because of the work they do. A church leader may attain a high position and be a man/woman of great academic distinction, yet they are not to be revered for those reasons alone if they do nothing to guide or instruct in the true Christian faith.

August 26th Matthew 2:1-11

Christ is revered because He is the Son of God. So often our response to Christ is governed by what we believe He has done for us – He loved us, He died for us, He has opened the way to eternal life. All that is true, yet all that is only possible because He is the Son of God.

August 27th John 20:24-31

John tells simply why he wrote the gospel which bears his name, 'that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through your faith in Him you may have life.' The Bible is to be revered because it records God's dealings with mankind, and especially the coming of His Son, that through faith in Him we may have eternal life. We must never regard the Bible as a kind of magic talisman or lucky charm. The Bible must be revered only because of what it tells us about God, and about ourselves.

August 28th Exodus 20:1-17

There is some controversy as to whether the day to be revered is Saturday or Sunday. The important thing to note is that one day in seven is to be kept free, so far as is possible, of all other activities so that we may reflect on the great acts of God. The Sabbath is not a day of work; neither is it to be a day of idleness. It is a day that is to be set aside to the glory of God.

August 29th Exodus 20:1-17

Reverence is commanded not only for the Sabbath, the Bible, the sanctuary and Christ, but also for one's parents? This must never be seen as a whip to force obedience from children.

Rather, it is recognition that family life is important to the life of the community, and that God means it to be so.

THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

August 30th John 15:11-17

The word *love* is now so abused that it means almost anything, but Christ defines love at its highest as the willingness of a person to give their life for their friends. Love is therefore sacrificial.

August 31st 1Peter 1:3-9

How sad that joy is so often absent from our worship, and how sad that attempts made to recover it are so often artificial. Christian joy does not come from something that we add to our worship or service – it comes from the heart.