



FEBRUARY 2023

**Worship Service in our Sanctuary at 10:30am  
or watch our worship service LIVE! at:  
[www.fpcpunta.org](http://www.fpcpunta.org) and click on the logo "vimeo livestream"**

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## *Fruitful Vines: 7 Reasons to Read the Bible in a Year by Melissa Kruger*

I spent last week cleaning up the remains of tomato vines from my garden. It's easy work because once vines are dead, they lose all strength and break apart with little effort. While the remains of a tree can be made into a range of items from paper products to furniture, a detached vine crumbles to dust with the slightest touch. It has no use except kindle for the fire.

Perhaps that's why Jesus chose to use the image of a vine when He commanded us to abide in Him, warning that apart from Him, we can do nothing (John 15:1-6). Our best efforts will crumble to dust without the soul-strengthening power of time spent abiding in the word and prayer.

Today, we'll look at some of the specific benefits that happen as we delve into the entire text of the Bible, seeking to answer the question: *Why is it helpful to read the whole Bible in the course of a year?*

### **Reading the Bible through in a year helps you:**

#### **Go Places You Normally Wouldn't Go**

We all have books of the Bible that we naturally enjoy reading. The Psalms minister to our emotions, the Gospels teach us about Jesus, Paul's epistles deepen our theological understanding, and the historical books provide insight into the lives of real people as they followed God.

Yet, God also chose to include books like Leviticus with its many purity regulations, Numbers with its long genealogies, and Revelation with its somewhat confusing symbolism and imagery. These too are beneficial, profitable for teaching, correction, and training (2 Timothy 3:16). We need all of Scripture, not just the parts that may be personally interesting or easy to understand. As we read the Bible in a year, it naturally takes us to the places we may not usually go, allowing us opportunities to reflect upon the full counsel of God and consider: *Why did God include this passage? What does it teach me about God? How can I live in light of this truth?*

#### **See the Big Picture of Redemptive History**

Standing up close to an impressionist painting gives you one view of the master's work – the intricacies of design, the vibrant colors, and the individual brush marks. However, backing away from the painting allows you to see the picture in its entirety. Just as we need both perspectives to be able to appreciate a painting to its fullest, we need both types of views as we read our Bibles.

Taking a year to read the Bible in its entirety allows us the opportunity to back up and observe the full picture. We see the larger story of Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Consummation in the midst of all the individual stories. All scripture contains the same DNA – Jesus is on every page, present in every story. The Gospel is repeated in shadows-like accounts, preparing us for the ultimate rescue. Reading the Bible through in a shorter amount of time also allows us a better opportunity to connect what we learned in Deuteronomy with the message of Galatians. You will glean insights that you might have missed (or forgotten) if you read it over a longer timespan.

#### **Learn New and Unexpected Things About God**

Whether you've walked with the Lord for one year or for fifty, there is still so much to learn about God. Each time I read through the Bible I realize that the theological boxes I try to fit the infinite God of the Universe into are insufficient. We all have views of God that are skewed in some way. We must wrestle with the God who forgives David for murder, but condemns Uzzah for touching the ark when the oxen stumbled (1 Chron. 13:9). A full read through forces us to reflect upon all aspects of God's character and allows us to know Him in new ways.

Continued on Page 2

# Fruitful Vines (continued from Page 1)

## Avoid Reading the Bible as a Self-Help Manual

It's tempting to approach Scripture as a how-to manual for our lives. We want answers, and we'd like them now please. At times, we desire solutions more than we desire God, so we pick and choose what to read based on our current emotions or circumstances. Following a reading plan encourages a hopeful, listening posture that asks, "What do you have for me today?" We put ourselves under the Bible's direction, trusting that the passage we are reading is beneficial for whatever circumstances we are facing.

## Come Down From Your Theological Hobby Horse

We all have theological issues we like to emphasize. Reading the entire Bible helps each of us to stop and consider what we may be missing. Are we overemphasizing one truth while neglecting another? Are we defending a theological point that is true but in a manner that is wrong? Are we weak on a particular doctrine because we are afraid it will offend others?

The word of God sharpens our theological precision. It softens us in some areas and strengthens our resolve in others. Reading the Bible in a year guides our spiritual growth in a way that protects us from following the theological flavor of the month. It naturally corrects our rough edges of misapplication and misunderstanding.

## Enjoy the Surprising Ways God Meets You

This past year, I found myself weary as I got to the end of Leviticus. Weeks of all the various ways to be unclean left me burdened. *Unclean, unclean, unclean... I get it. Everything makes you unclean.* It felt heavy and didn't seem relevant to anything in my life at the time. At the same time, I was preparing to teach on John 15. I'd been studying the passage for months and was going through a final read through the week before the conference.

As I read it again, John 15:3 caught my attention in a new way: "*Already you are clean* because of the word that I have spoken to you." What precious truth these words must have been to Israelites wearied and worn down by purity regulations. I would have missed the glorious freedom of Jesus' words if I had neglected my study of Leviticus. I needed to read each and every regulation and feel the heaviness of their weight so that I could taste a bit of the joy: You are clean! God put me in just the right passage at just the right time so that I could experience the freedom of the gospel in a new way.

God's providence has met me each and every time I've read through the Bible in a year. Some days, the Psalm for that day helped me to pray for a friend in need. Other days, the passage convicted me of sin and led me to repentance. I can still remember the specific chapter that ministered to me years ago when my Dad was taken into emergency surgery. The Lord tenderly comforted me through His word. Like an old friend who knows just what you need when you need it, the Lord will meet you in surprising ways as you place yourself in His word.

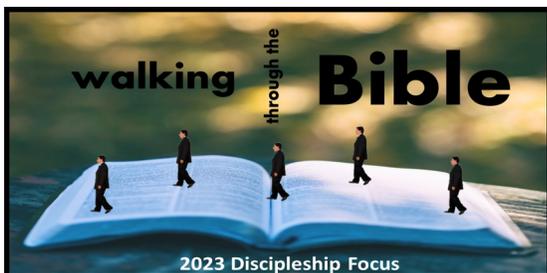
## Create A Healthy Habit of Daily Bible Reading

One of the best things about reading the Bible through in a year is that it builds a regular habit of daily Bible reading. Having a certain amount apportioned for the day makes it easier to pick it up and read. Following a yearly plan also acts as a built in accountability marker. Many of us overestimate our faithfulness to read the word daily. However, as we follow a daily plan, we notice if it's been four days since we last read, because we'll be that far behind. Having a daily reading plan helps to make it a habit of our life.

My question for you today: *What is keeping you from committing to a Bible plan for the upcoming year?*

*(taken from [www.thegospelcoalition.org](http://www.thegospelcoalition.org))*

In Christ, Barksdale



## The One Year Chronological Bible Reading Plan for February 2023

Pick up a copy of the Reading Plan in the church foyer

For February, we will read:

Exodus 1 - 40

I Chronicles 6:1-3

Numbers 1 - 5 and 7 - 9

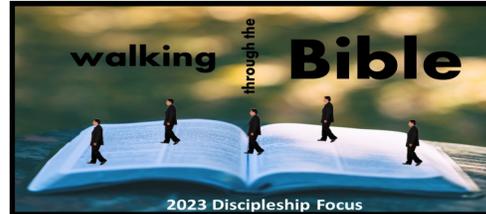
Leviticus 1 - 27

# WORSHIP MINISTRY



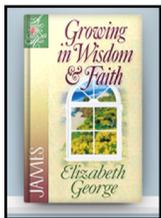
*Sunday Mornings - 10:30am Worship Service (Also Online)  
Sunday Evenings - 6:00pm Prayer Meeting (On Facebook)*

*Winter  
Sermon  
Series*



*Fellowship Time  
Join us for beverages, cookies and treats after Sunday's Worship Service*

## DISCIPLESHIP 2023



### PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

*Tuesdays, February 7th (Lesson 17) and February 21st (Lesson 18)*

*"Growing in Grace" James 4:4-6 / "Drawing Near to God" James 4:7-10*

*10:00am at the church*

*Growing in Wisdom & Faith, a study of James by Elizabeth George  
from "A Woman After God's Own Heart" Series*

*Call Kathy Belville at 508-733-0546 for more information - All are welcome!*

### DONUTS & DOCTRINE Bible Study

*Wednesday mornings at 10:00am*



**Donuts &  
Doctrine**

*The Book of Job*

*The Book of Job presents us with several tough questions about life:  
Why does evil happen? Is God just in His rule? Is God sovereign?  
What is wisdom? What is a person's true motivation for serving God?  
Why has God done these things to me? Is a faith that is not tested fully valid?  
We look forward to some good discussion around God's Word,  
and we trust that at the end of our study we can say with Job,  
"The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away;  
blessed be the name of the Lord."*



### Church Membership CLASS

*Next class scheduled for Sunday, May 21st at 9:30am  
Sign up to attend a one-class introduction to FPC*

# FPC ACTIVITIES AND OUTREACH



**PRAYER SHAWL GATHERING**  
*Monday, February 13th, 10:00am*



## GAME FELLOWSHIP

*Thursday mornings at 10:00am in Fellowship Hall All are welcome!*



## LADIES LUNCH BUNCH

*1st and 3rd Friday of each month*

*Sign up in the church foyer*

*Friday, February 3rd  
12:00pm  
Riviera Bar & Grill  
5500 Deltona Drive  
Punta Gorda*

*Friday, February 17th  
12:00pm  
Peter's Family Restaurant  
2200 Kings Highway  
Port Charlotte*



## PULLEN UP A CHAIR

*Barksdale and Bo will host get-together dinners for groups of eight at their home*

*Wednesdays, February 1st and March 1st at 5:00pm*

*Sign up in the church foyer or call/email the church office*

*There is no agenda, lesson, or study, just a time to get together for fellowship*



On *Sunday, February 5th*, we will have our **Congregational/Corporation Annual Meeting** at 11:30am. Please plan on attending.  
*Annual Reports are available on the table in the back of the sanctuary.*



Our **Annual Valentine Memorial Service** will be held on  
*Sunday, February 12th at 11:30am*

This is a short service of remembrance for those who passed away in 2022 from our church family and in memory of other loved ones. We will begin in the Sanctuary and move to the Lowell Kvam Memorial Garden.



## Valentine Pot Luck Dinner and Movie

*Tuesday, February 14th, 5:00pm*

Sign up now for this annual Valentine Dinner!  
Stay for the movie



## St. Patrick's Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner

*Wednesday, March 15th, 5:00pm*

Special Desserts - "Green"  
Suggested Donation - \$7.00

# FPC'S ANNUAL CONCERT SERIES 2022 - 2023



**\*\* Sunday, October 23, 2022, 3:00pm**

## *The Dunnemans*

*Reg and Gretchen Dunneman sing their own special blend of gospel music, including southern gospel, traditional, hymn, and classical Christian styles. Their full-time ministry presents concerts from Ontario to Florida, to Maine, to Texas.*



**\*\* Sunday, December 4, 2022, 3:00pm**

## *The Two Piano Group*

*The Cultural Center's Two Piano Group unites once again to perform their traditional mix of contemporary and traditional favorites, plus some new and innovative selections. These area musicians come from a professional pianistic musical background and are joined together by their love of playing the enhanced orchestral like sound created by the two-piano repertoire.*



**\*\* Sunday, January 15, 2023, 3:00pm**

## *Matrick Thorpe and Ann Alton, Cellists*

*Matrick Thorpe is a 15 year old cellist from the Sarasota area. He is a classical student who recently toured abroad in 11 countries and has his own YouTube channel, [Matrickplayscello](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMtrickplayscello). Matrick will be joined in this concert by his teacher and returning artist Ann Alton.*



**\* Sunday, February 12, 2023, 3:00pm**

## *The Goldtones*

*The Goldtones are one of Florida's premiere vocal harmony groups singing songs ranging from the traditional doo-wop tunes of the 50s and 60s to those melodies sung by later groups of the 70s and 80s. Audiences love them not only for their vocal talents, but for their humor and their audience interaction.*



**\*\* Sunday, March 12, 2023, 3:00pm**

## *Patti Page and the Joyful Ringers*

*Patti Page is a Handbell Soloist, playing her own set of 30 English Handbells along the East Coast. The Joyful Ringers are a Handbell Choir from Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Port Charlotte.*

**\* Goldtones - Ticketed Event - \$15.00 Donation Tickets available in the church office**

**\*\* All other concerts - Free Will Offering - \$15.00 Suggested Donation**

# MISSIONS MINISTRY



First Presbyterian Church proudly supports  
Missions from our church budget.  
If you would personally like to make additional  
donations, please make checks payable to FPC  
and indicate the mission on the memo line.



## CROSSROADS Bar-B-Que

Stay tuned for our rescheduled date!

Join us for a Barbecue lunch with the boys from  
Crossroads Hope Academy at our church's barbecue pit.

### Monthly Mission Support



## CROSSROADS HOPE ACADEMY (PUNTA GORDA, FLORIDA)

[Crossroadspg.org](http://Crossroadspg.org)



## JESUS LOVES YOU MINISTRY (PORT CHARLOTTE, FLORIDA)

[Jesuslovesyouministryinc.com](http://Jesuslovesyouministryinc.com)

Shower & Lunch  
Ministry



## MISIÓN PENIEL (IMMOKALEE, FLORIDA)

[Misionpeniel.com](http://Misionpeniel.com)

## ANTIOCH PARTNERS MISSIONARIES

Eric and Debbie Stone, Guatemala

Lisa Alfonsi, Lima, Peru

[theantiochpartners.org](http://theantiochpartners.org)



## MISSIONARY VENTURES INTERNATIONAL

Chasen and Katie Brokaw

Nicaragua

[mvi.org](http://mvi.org)

[breakingborders.org](http://breakingborders.org)



# MILITARY PRAYER LIST

## Prayer

O Prince of Peace, we humbly ask Your protection for all our men and women in military service. Give them unflinching courage to defend with honor, dignity and devotion the rights of all who are imperiled by injustice and evil. Guard our churches, our homes, our schools, our hospitals, our factories, our buildings, and all those within from harm and peril. Protect our land and its people from enemies within and without. Grant an early peace with victory founded upon justice. Instill in the hearts and minds of men and women everywhere a firm purpose to live forever in peace and good will towards all. Amen.

- \* Major John McPherson, Air Force, great nephew of Marguerite O'Brien, stationed at Sheppard Air Force Base in Wichita Falls, Texas
- \* Major Ryan Swisher, Army Ranger, grandson of Rachel Pfaender, stationed in North Carolina
- \* Major Eric Engstrom, Army Intel., son of Alan Engstrom, stationed at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
- \* Captain Zadick Self, Marines, grandson-in-law of Ron Beasom, stationed in Peoria, Illinois
- \* Navy Seaman Tyler Beasom, Navy, grandson of Ron Beasom, stationed in San Diego, California
- \* MSgt. Nick Weiss, Air Force, grandson of Gail Thornton, is home based
- \* Lt. Col. David Sifferd, Jr., Army Reserve, son of David Sifferd, stationed in Ft. Knox, KY
- \* Pvt. Michael Robert Wagner, U.S. Marine Corp., great-grandson of Robert and Jean Humphreys

*Do you have a family member serving in the military?*

*If so, we'd like to add them to the newsletter prayer list. Fill out the form that's on the sign-up table in the church foyer and place it in the HELMET or let the church office know.*

# DISCIPLESHIP MINUTE

## THE MASTER PLAN

It is hard to be discipled by a cloud, a burning bush or a quaking mountain. Discipleship needs a body. It needs someone we can see and touch and follow. It needs someone to demonstrate things and help us learn how to do what we see them doing. God started his kingdom mission by sending Jesus the Christ. He sent him in the flesh. He sent him bodily in order to reach people who are embodied.

This is a great read: *THE MASTER PLAN OF EVANGELISM* by Robert E. Coleman

## Eight Principles of Discipleship

1. **Selection** - MEN WERE HIS METHOD; MEN WILLING TO LEARN
2. **Association** - HE STAYED WITH THEM; TO KNOW WAS TO BE WITH
3. **Consecration** - HE REQUIRED OBEDIENCE; THE WAY OF THE CROSS
4. **Impartation** - HE GAVE HIMSELF AWAY; THE COMPULSION OF EVANGELISM
5. **Demonstration** - HE SHOWED THEM HOW TO LIVE; THE PRACTICE OF PRAYER
6. **Delegation** - HE ASSIGNED THEM WORK; FIRST EVANGELISTIC MISSION OF THE TWELVE
7. **Supervision** - HE KEPT CHECK ON THEM; CONTINUOUS REVIEW AND APPLICATION
8. **Reproduction** - HE EXPECTED THEM TO REPRODUCE; VICTORY THROUGH WITNESSING

Coleman would add a ninth principle, **The Incarnation**, which the eight principles are all based on.

# MEMBER CARE



*Prayer Requests and Hospital / Rehab Information*  
*Address, Phone, Email changes*  
*Birthdays and Anniversaries*  
Email to [first@fpcpunta.org](mailto:first@fpcpunta.org)



*First Pres is on Facebook!*

Go to:  
[facebook.com/FirstPresbyterianChurch-PuntaGorda](https://facebook.com/FirstPresbyterianChurch-PuntaGorda)



*Giving to FPC - In person*  
*Mail to the church office: 25250 Airport Rd; PG, FL 33950*  
*Online Giving through our website: [fpcpunta.org](http://fpcpunta.org), click Donate*



*Pray for Frances Frost and family,*  
*whose son Andy went home to the Lord on January 22, 2023*  
*A Memorial Service is on Saturday, February 18th at 3:00pm at FPC*



*Congratulations to Barksdale and Bo on the birth of their second grandchild!*  
*Bailey Nissi Brokaw was born on January 16th to Katie and Chasen*



## GOD'S LOVE

GOD'S LOVE IS EVERYWHERE  
IN THE DARKNESS AND IN THE LIGHT  
WHERE WE GO THROUGHOUT OUR LIFE.

IN BIRDS ON FLIGHT  
AND FLOWER BLOOMS  
THE MIRACLE SUNSETS BRIGHT.

OUR FRIENDS NEXT DOOR  
THE GROCERY CLERK  
THE SICK AND POOR.

IN TROUBLED TIMES  
AND FEARFUL DAYS  
IN SUFFERINGS OF EVERY KIND.

IT IS WRAPPED AROUND US  
AS WE GO OUR WAY  
FILLING US WITH HOPE EACH DAY.

THANK YOU GOD  
FOR YOUR EVERLASTING LOVE  
MAY WE SHOW YOUR LOVE FROM UP ABOVE.

HOLY SPIRIT AND NANCY BEASOM

# FEBRUARY 2023

## CHURCH PRAYER CALENDAR AND CELEBRATIONS

**Prayer is the place where burdens change shoulders - We pray for....**  
*The elderly, the infirm, the hospitalized, those in nursing homes, the homebound and lonely,  
 and all those who have requested our prayerful support.*

Each month we remember church members and friends on a rotating basis...



1 Andy & Katie Schulte	11 Richard & Linda Wagar	21 Ron Beasom
2 Elaine Schultz	12 Don & Mary Anne Washabaugh	22 Roy & Kathy Belville
3 Jean Shafer	13 Dave Woods	23 Shirley Berg
4 Dave Sifferd	14 Teri York	24 Rick & Kay Berner
5 Ron & Billie Sixt	15 Carol Zutter	25 Duane & Wanda Boyles
6 Andy & Nancy Smith	16 George & Sharon Albright	26 Bonnie Brown
7 Margie Smith	17 Jay Aldridge	27 Marion Brown
8 Bo & Karen Sostar	18 Rex & Helen Anderson	28 Ray & Joan Byron
9 Gail Thornton	19 Laurel Aumend	
10 Larrie & Marjorie Tisdale	20 Denny & Minty Ausman	



2—Debbie Rostad	16—Sharon Albright
8—Doris Costa	17—Margie Smith
8—Gene McPherson	25—DeAnn Lehman
15—Jene Shafer	28—Roy Belville



9—Denny & Minty Ausman      14 yrs.