

THE ONE YEAR BIBLE Reading For August 19:

Esther 4:1-7:10:

Today's text contains a very powerful account of how Esther agreed to involve herself in seeking to thwart the heinous plan of Haman to destroy the Jews, even though she knew her involvement may be dangerous, if not fatal. We also see how God works in hearts and situations in such a way that instead of Haman being honored and Mordecai executed, the tables were turned. Mordecai is honored and Haman executed. God, working behind-the-scenes, not only displays His provision for His people, but also His mercy and justice.

Like Esther, we should have the courage born by faith in God that we can step out into difficult and even dangerous situations for God's glory since we know whatever happens, the LORD will ultimately take care of us.

1 Corinthians 12:1-25:

With 12:1, Paul moves on to another matter the Corinthians had brought up to him in correspondence, the subject of spiritual gifts (or literally "spiritual things"). Evidently, the term "spiritual things" had come to refer to demonstrations of spiritual ability and power, which would include spiritual gifts. The Corinthians had lived in a culture where sensational spiritual displays had been part of pagan and cultic practices. They were used to these things and expected them to be present among them as Christians. Paul makes it clear in this chapter that: (1) Spiritual manifestations/things do not come by mindless rituals or observances, but at the decree of God the Father through the Holy Spirit to the glory of Jesus Christ as our Lord (1-6); (2) Different gifts are given to different people (each one has at least one) and these empowerments are by the sovereign will of the Spirit, for the benefit of each in the body of Christ (7-11); (3) Though there are different kinds of spiritual empowerments/gifts (no one gift is possessed by all believers), we are not to conclude that one or a few (the more sensational ones) are more important than the others. All are important and needed for the entire body (12-30)

However God has graciously gifted us to serve Him and others, we should carry these out in such a way we honor Him and benefit others. At the same time, we should realize that all of us are needed, not just those who have the same gifts as ourselves or who are just like us. As we will see in tomorrow's reading (1 Corinthians 13), love should drive our exercise of spiritual gifts and our ministry.

Psalms 36:1-12:

Psalms 36 speaks of God's steadfast love in the midst of opposition from the wicked. This steadfast love is a frequent theme in the psalms. It is the eternal love with which God has loved the elect and by which He has made covenant with His people and remained faithful to them.

Proverbs 21:21-22:

These two verses remind us of one of the key themes in Proverbs, namely, that the God-fearing life which is skillful at godliness (in other words, the wise life) will bring great fruit. So, seek the wise life!