



### Things Could Be Worse

Living in Puerto Rico these days, it seems there is a new installment of bad news with every issue of El Nuevo Dia. For example, in recent months we have been hearing about the mass exodus of islanders leaving PR at the rate of 3,000-4,000 per month. Of course, at 2UC we can verify this trend by the unusual number of people to whom we have recently bid farewell. As we know, many of these good folks have been squeezed out by a contracting economy that has not seen growth in almost a decade. Add to that the quasi-public corporations that are on the verge of bankruptcy such as AEE, AAA, Mi Salud, the Department of Transportation, and the public pension funds. Add to those the poor quality of our public schools, the burgeoning drug trade, corruption in the judiciary, and the ongoing violence that plagues our beautiful island and it all becomes down-right depressing.



**Pastor Bob Zoba**

Thus, we cannot sugar-coat reality. It is what it is. We are in a heap of trouble.

However, as bad as it is, I cannot help but remind myself that compared to almost half of the rest of the world population, we are still faring quite well. Indeed, even the poor among us usually have DVRs and cable TV, cell phones, adequate food, subsidized medical care, free education, and modern kitchen appliances like refrigerators and microwave ovens. So too, I am continually amazed by the hordes of people who still throng to Plaza on any given day. (My stateside visitors always wonder if Puerto Rico has an eternal Christmas season as Advent season is the only time in the States when malls are so crowded.)

Likewise, as Christians we ought to be especially grateful to be here on this Enchanted Isle in light of the spate of recent news stories about Christians in the Middle East who are being told to either move, convert, pay a heavy tax for being a Christian, or die. Thankfully, we don't have to choose any of those options.

However, in studying the lectionary text for this week, I read where Jesus tells his disciples (including you and me) that each of us must take up our cross and follow Him. Of course, we like to spiritualize this text and turn it into mere metaphor as we have all heard people say that their mother-in-law, or

**Sunday Services**  
10:00 a.m.

**Adult Sunday School**  
9:00am

**Sunday School**  
PK-12  
10:30am

**Choir Practice**  
Sundays 12pm  
Thursdays 7pm

#### Weekly Activities

**Ladies Bible Study**  
Tuesdays noon-2pm

**Small Group**  
@ the Rivera's  
Tuesday 7pm

**Men's Breakfast**  
Wednesday 7am

**Women's Study**  
Wednesday 7pm

**Prayer Service**  
Thursday 7pm

Second Union Church  
Ave. Apolo esq. Mileto  
Guaynabo, PR 00969  
787-720-4423  
secondunion.org

Rev. Robert Zoba

their rheumatoid arthritis, or their insensitive boss is the “cross they are called to bear”. Of course, I do not mean to demean the suffering that any of those sources might present to an individual; however, when Jesus made this statement in its original context, He meant it literally, not metaphorically. He really was calling his disciples to come and die with him.

When I was a new follower of Christ back in the 70s, there was a famous Christian book called “The Normal Christian Life” by Watchman Nee. One of the interesting things about this was that in reading the book you realized that what Watchman Nee described as the “normal” Christian life was not normal at all as compared to what we modern Christians would deem normal. Instead, what Nee regarded as normal, you and I would regard as extraordinary, heroic, and incredibly demanding. However, the point is: Nee was far closer to the truth as to what Jesus regards as normative than you and I do. Indeed, for many Christians today in various parts of the world, the choice between life and death, faith and persecution, belief in Jesus or martyrdom are very real choices. In fact, that is their norm, even as it was the norm of the early disciples.

Thus, I thank God that presently in Puerto Rico, martyrdom is not a normal part of our Christian life. Instead, it is very remotely distant reality. Therefore, I believe we should remind ourselves of that fact daily and thank God accordingly for the blessing of enjoying a life of religious peace and security. Likewise, we should pray for and fight for both the preservation of our religious freedom, but even more so, for the religious freedom of our brothers and sisters who are living the “normal Christian life” so very, very heroically.

Blessings!

*Pastor Bob*



**New Staff-Congregation Relations Chair**

Second Union Church announces our new Interim Chairperson of the Staff-Congregation Relations committee, Madelyn Vega. We are blessed that she accepted the position. Welcome, Madelyn!

**2014-2015 Second Union Church Council & Staff**

Pastor  
Rev. Robert Zoba

President  
David Román

Vice President  
Julio Rodríguez

Treasurer  
Stan Pinkerton

Secretary  
Ari Tester

Worship  
Maylie Colón

Outreach  
Edda Sustache

Property  
Juan Gonzalez

Christian Education  
Elsy Perez

Staff-Congregation Relations  
Madelyn Vega

Membership  
Eze Ebube

Fellowship  
Rosa Trinidad

Nominating  
Janette Quiles

Forward Planning  
Joe Calcolli

Women’s Ministries Team Leader  
Anita Rodriguez

Men’s Ministry Team Leader  
John Alberts

Office Manager  
Mabel Varela

Minister of Music  
Luis Manuel Tirado

Choir Director  
Carlos Rivera

Newsletter & Website Editor  
Christie Zoba

## Small Group Study Opportunities

<u>Time</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Description &amp; Subject</u>	<u>Place</u>
9:00 am	Sundays	Adult Bible Study	Bazaar Room at 2UC
noon-2pm	Tuesdays	Women's Bible Study: Gideon	Fellowship Hall at 2UC
7pm	Tuesdays	Adult Bible Study: Genesis	Rivera's home in San Francisco
7am	Wednesdays	Men's Breakfast	Fellowship Hall at 2UC
7pm	Wednesdays	Women's Bible Study	Anita Rodriguez' home Rio Piedras Hts.
7pm	Thursdays	Adult Prayer Meeting	2UC Conference Room

## 90 Days on the Job



This past August 1st was my 90 days mark as 2UC youth leader. I think I'm so used to the private sector that somehow it feels like a milestone. It has been an amazing experience. Since the very beginning I felt that we, as a family, arrived to a special place and that, if accepted, it was going to be an exceptional time of learning and growth.

Folks like, Pastor Bob and Christie, the Strong brothers, Don Julio, Ramon and Mabel, Anita, Cadiz, Elsy, Mannie and a lot of others have made us feel like we belonged. On a curious note, I recently found out from my mom that I've been at Second Union when I was a child. She told me that we liked it! That is very interesting to say the least.

I'm very excited with what God is doing in the youth ministry and I can truly feel the prayers for our family and the ministry. So keep them coming gang!

There's a lot that the Lord has placed in my heart for this time: I would like to strengthen the connection with the parents of the youth, start meeting with the young adults, work with other youth ministries in favor of our youth, etc. I look forward for whatever God have planned for us. Please pray to the Lord that He place in these young folks' hearts a true dedication to His work among their peers.

*Gustavo*

## Yesterday When I Was Young

The Puerto Rico I remember . . .

During the 60's the Road though Pinones was mostly dirt. Even today it hasn't changed much as you drive past the people selling bacalaitos and alcapurrias, except that today the road is completely paved. Keep on driving that road and you will reach the Rio Grande.

Today a modern bridge spans the river, but this wasn't always so. I remember when a private wooden ferry was poled and pulled along ropes, taking one car at a time, across the river to Loiza. The cost was a quarter. On the Loiza side another dirt road would take you into town. There were few cars, and therefore very little waiting. Today with the advent of the bridge, rush hour traffic makes things different and the road side stands do a thriving breakfast business. I guess San Juan needs all the entry points it can get, but we lost something in the transition.



*Brother Joe*

**Dave & Cheryl Virginia** welcomed two new grandsons into the world recently. Luke Robert Bara (July 29) and Caleb Thomas Fain (Aug 15). Caleb already experienced his first earthquake, but slept through it. (Congrats!)

**The Yost's** dear daughter **Emily** is working in Napa Valley in restaurant management? (No problems with the earthquake there, thankfully ;-)

**Marlene Williams** is planning a trip to the Holy Land in the fall?

**JB & Audrey Wilcox** married off one of their two daughters recently in Pittsburg? (We are glad to have them both back.)



**Waldemar & Clara Velez's** son, Mateo, is an expert at building Legos?

**Jeff Cherok** has been working on the upcoming Emmaus Leadership Training sponsored by Emmaus International for all Emmaus Alumni here at 2UC, September 1st, 2014 2:00PM-6:00PM with Potluck afterward?

**Mabel Varela** and the **Chris and Mike Strong** have been very busy cleaning out and organizing our Christian Education closets? (We discovered we have a ten-year supply of crayons and markers ;-)

**Risa Tobin's** USTA tennis team is going to the nationals...again? Congrats Risa! This time she will be going to Indian Wells, one of the greatest tennis venues in the world...created by one of Puerto Rico's finest, Charlie Pasarell.

**Ron & Raquel Seely** will be back on the island for a visit, as are **Christopher & Becky O'Meara**? Welcome home, ya'll!

**Cadiz Rodriguez** and **Natalia McCormack** are now officially college students! Cadiz is studying at Southeastern University and Natalia is at the University of Tennessee!



**Anita & Joaquin Rodriguez** were in Florida launching **Cadiz** in her college career? They also squeezed in a MLB game between the Marlins & Joaquin's beloved St. Louis Cardinals.

**Kathryn & John Robinson** are adjusting well in Spokane, Washington where they have been attending a Presbyterian Church and enjoying the great outdoors? Kathryn may be back to visit soon in order complete a book project about Puerto Rico.

**Brenda Ferrer** has been traveling across the US and hopes to visit with Recie in New York?

**Joe Ramos** is still going strong at Palmas Community Church?

**Edwin Perez** recently arranged a surprise birthday party for his wonder mom, Lidia, who turned 90? She was also a part of the dedication of her great-grandson, Edwin Javier.



**Hector Pages** accepted the new position of Project Manager for "Haifa General Contracting", in West Palm Beach, Florida This company imports limestone, granite, marble, sea glass and other surfacing materials from around the world. Hector will be in charge of the installation of these products at their various projects. Congratulations Hector!! The down side is that we will no longer see Hector (& Susan) as often as we have. But we are happy for Hector. Congrats!



**Daryle Parker** preached at 2UC this summer and shared how God is working through him in Harbin, China?

**Mike & Christopher Strong's** mom, Lilian, is from the same hometown as Susanne Myles, in Canada?

Also, **JB Wilcox** and **David Benson** recently discovered they were in the same graduating class of the US Naval Academy?

**Kris Adams** is taking an optometry class from our own John Mordi?

**Alison Moran** has been enjoying a visit from her dear daughter, Jackie, and her three, wonderful grand-children?

**Pablo & Elsa Melendez** were also visited by their children and grandchildren this summer?

**George & Joan McMurray** recently returned from a McMurray family reunion near Asheville, NC? George put together a family history and enjoyed being the eldest member in attendance. They also visited the Biltmore Estate.

**Anna McGuire** was back to 2UC with her two beautiful grandchildren? Also, it was great to hear her voice on WOSO once again as she hosted a Speak Out...just like old times.

**Dell McCarley** survived hip surgery and is recovering well? Praise the Lord!

**Eduardo McCormack** is getting married to Betsy in October? (Congrats, Eduardo!)



**James & Coralie Martinez** are heading up our next Dave Ramsey Financial Peace University starting September 4th? (Thanks youse guys!)

**Dennis & Amarilis** are attending the US Tennis Open in NYC and Dennis is racing in Watkins Glen, NY?

**Gustavo & the Yutes** had a great summer farewell on Condado Beach? A good time was had by all!!!



**Carlos & Debbie Garcia** are enjoying their new digs in Houston as both have jobs as translators? God is good.



**Matt & Laurie Foster** are awaiting their next addition to give sweet William a little company?

**Manny Fernandez & Pastor Bob** recently played basketball with **Yoav Cohen** (our fresh fruits and vegetable supplier to our Backpack program) and his son, Gil?

**Edwin Ebube** had a stupendous summer as he represented the Puerto Rico U-17 team at the basketball "world cup" in Spain and Dubai? The Puerto Rican team surprised everyone by beating both Spain and Italy. They ended up fifth in the world! Amazing!!! (The next time Pastor Bob plays against Manny he is drafting Edwin as his teammate;-)

**John Doncel** has graciously been providing chauffer service to our buddy Bill Stowell as he recovers from his recent neck surgery?

**Tom and Patricia** tied the knot in Isabela, PR on August 9th! Congrats to Mr. & Mrs. Engfer!



**John & Evelyn Alberts** are celebrating their 25th wedding anniversary with a trip to Australia?

**Rashel Krankovic** got to have breakfast with **Raquel** and baby **Leah Seely** last month when they went to Columbus, Ohio for a conference!

**Joanne Gonzales Varon** and daughter **Rosabella** spent some time in New Jersey with her parents at the end of July. They celebrated **Milton's** Colegio San Ignacio (high school) 20 year reunion at Rincon Beach Resort the first weekend of August. Milton has been working diligently, tackling orthodontic problems, with his father at their office in Bayamon. **Rosabella** just completed her first week of Pre-Kinder with the help of grandparents, **Freddie & Rosa Gonzales**, who were visiting from New Jersey.

## The Blessing of Fellowship and Service

Each Sunday, we have a wonderful time immediately following the worship service, as we gather to meet with one another and share coffee, bread and snacks in the Fellowship Hall. On Sunday, August 17, during the worship service, the Sunday School students learned a valuable lesson in serving others as they prepared the refreshments for the coffee Fellowship time. Under the guidance of Risa, Catalina, Ramon, Adriel and Mabel, the students worked silently and diligently as they washed their hands, set tables, and prepared the snacks, coffee and juice. The students formed a welcoming 'tunnel' as the adults entered the Fellowship Hall. It was amazing to see the smiles on their faces and most important that it was a wonderful surprise for everyone at church.



## Sunday School Teacher Training

The Christian Ed Committee hosted a training session for Sunday School teachers in August. Thanks to Elsa, Mabel, Manny, Ramón, Sasha and Gustavo for their leadership during this activity. The new curriculum from Group is divided into modules rather than months, and it is filled with great ideas for teaching God's Word to our children.



Please pray for our first module teachers & for our Sunday Schools students.

- Pre-K & K - Rosalind Robles**
- 1st & 2nd - Janette Quiles**
- 3rd & 4th - Laurie Yost**
- 5th & 6th - Loraine Colon**





## The End of Summer Blast

Gustavo and the youth group along with members of Ramon China's football team and youth from Mar Azul met for a Goodbye Summer activity on the beach in Condado! A great time was had by young and old alike!

Stay tuned for upcoming youth activities in congregation members' homes! If you are willing to host an event, please contact Gustavo!



## Financial Peace University



DAVE RAMSEY'S  
**FINANCIAL *Peace***  
UNIVERSITY  
**hosted by Second Union Church**  
**Thursdays at 7pm**  
**September 4 - October 9, 2014**

The third Financial Peace University will be held at Second Union Church beginning the first Thursday of September. James Martinez is our new FPU Coordinator, and we are grateful that he has agreed to lead this next series.

All are welcome, and we encourage you to invite your friends to this event. This is great Bible-based teaching about getting out of debt and starting the road to true financial independence.

You can register online at the following link:

<http://www.daveramsey.com/fpu/locations/org/42659/class/258453>

For more information visit the 2UC website at [secondunion.org](http://secondunion.org)

The fruit of the Spirit is

**LOVE**  
**JOY**  
**PEACE**  
**PATIENCE**  
**KINDNESS**  
**GOODNESS**  
**FAITHFULNESS**  
**GENTLENESS**  
**SELF-CONTROL**

Galatians 5:22-23

## BATHSHEBA

(Part 1 of 2)

Who is this woman whose name is surrounded by scandal, murder, intrigue, seduction, and adultery? The Holy Spirit doesn't reveal her name in Scripture identifying her in Messiah's bloodline as "her who had been the wife of Uriah" (Matt. 1:6). We know her as Bathsheba, the beautiful woman who committed adultery with King David and the mother of Solomon, God's appointed successor to the throne. She was the most powerful woman in Jerusalem at the time when the monarchy reached its zenith, and occupied the most prestigious position a woman could ever aspire to hold; that of Queen Mother. Bathsheba was the first woman in Israel's history to hold this title. Many consider her to have been the power behind the throne. Isn't it like God to choose another sinful woman, an adulteress this time, to establish Messiah's royal lineage? Both Joseph and Mary, Jesus' earthly parents, were her direct descendants. After the death of their firstborn, Bathsheba bore David four sons: Shimea, Shobab, Nathan, and Solomon (1 Chr. 3:5). Solomon and Nathan went on to be the forefathers of Joseph and Mary. Joseph, Messiah's earthly father by adoption (Joseph had adopted Jesus as his firstborn Son) was a direct descendant of King Solomon (Matt. 1:6). Mary, the virgin mother of our Lord and Savior, was a direct descendant of Nathan (Luke 3:31). Both Joseph and Mary had to be direct descendants of David, an Old Testament requirement for kinship. The inclusion of this adulteress woman in Christ's bloodline reveals the fourth truth about salvation: salvation is one of forgiveness.



Bathsheba's story in the Bible can be easily divided into two distinct episodes in Israel's history: Bathsheba and King David (2 Sam. 11:1-26; 12:15-25); and the struggle for the throne (1 Kings 11:1-37; 2:10-25). We are most familiar with the story of David and Bathsheba and their sinful act of adultery. This was a dark blot in the life of David, and marked the downward spiral of one of God's saints, a "man after God's own heart." Even though David received forgiveness after confessing his sin, he suffered the consequences of his disobedience: "You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife to be your wife... Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife" (2 Sam. 12:9-10). There was strife within David's family among his rebellious children until after his death.

Bathsheba was a very beautiful woman who belonged to an "elite warrior family." Her father, Eliam, was one of David's strongest men and a personal bodyguard, one of David's "thirty." Her grandfather Ahithophel was David's shrewd military and political advisor, and her husband, Uriah the Hittite, was one of David's most respected warriors, a mighty man skilled in battle, and one of David's personal bodyguards as well. All the men in Bathsheba's family were members of the king's intimate inner circle. For a reason not revealed to us, David didn't go to war with his men but chose instead to stay behind at the palace: "In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army... But David remained in Jerusalem" (2 Sam. 11:11). Pacing on the terrace of the palace roof one afternoon, David saw the beautiful Bathsheba bathing. It was customary for the women of those days to purify themselves by washing after their menstrual cycle, so in no way was her behavior inappropriate. So far we know these facts: David stayed home from war; Uriah did not; Bathsheba wasn't carrying Uriah's child; and it was the time in her menstrual cycle when she would be most fertile and easily conceive. Can you see where all of this is going? It's getting more intriguing by the minute! Smitten by her beauty and young body, David burned with lust for her and sent to inquire about her. Word quickly came back to him of her identity: "This is Bathsheba daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite" (2 Sam. 11:3). How many red flags went up for David in that report? How often does the Lord send us red flags and we refuse to heed them? Well, David just had to



have her. The forbidden fruit. Someone else's wife whom he had no right to take. Burning with passion and desire, he caved in to the temptation, something we can identify with and aren't immune to as God's children, and sent messengers for her. It is difficult to discern from Scripture whether out of duty and loyalty to her king, or for some ulterior motive, perhaps in search of power and status, Bathsheba willingly made her way to the king's chamber and engaged in sexual immorality with him.

Can you guess the consequence of this passionate encounter, of this heinous sin of adultery? Sometime after their sexual fling, Bathsheba sent word to David that she was with child. What was David's response to this most unfortunate, untimely bit of news? He sent for Uriah to be brought back from war, and devised a plan to have him sleep with Bathsheba. In this way, he could pass the child off as Uriah's. Unfortunately for David, his plan backfired. Loyal to his king, Uriah couldn't be persuaded to break the rule of soldiers on active duty who were required to abstain from sexual intercourse. He never went home to enjoy the pleasures of his wife, choosing instead to sleep at the entrance to the king's house along with all the other servants. Now backed into a corner with no possible way of covering up his sin, David had Uriah killed in battle. Now add murder to the sin of adultery, all committed by a man and woman in Messiah's bloodline. How ugly can it get? Scripture tells us that after Bathsheba mourned the death of her husband, she married David and went to live in the royal harem. The child born out of adultery died shortly after his birth.

Before I condemn anyone in this story, I have take a good, hard look at myself in the mirror. Many times what I see is the ugly side of my own sinful nature. I don't always own up to my sins. Instead of confessing my wrong doings, I find myself trying to justify them by blaming someone else. It is so much easier this way to ease my own guilty conscience. How about you? Well, David was so consumed by the weight of the sins he had committed that he felt sapped of strength and his bones wasting away (Psalm 32). Sound familiar? Finally confronted by Nathan the prophet, he confessed his transgressions to the Lord and received forgiveness. It was during this time David penned the beautiful penitential Psalm 51 where he pours out his soul to God in prayer for mercy and grace. We are assured that same forgiveness, mercy, and grace. Indeed, salvation is one

## IF MY PEOPLE . . .



**. . . will humbly pray and turn back to me and stop sinning, then I will answer them from heaven. 2 Chronicles 7:14**

**2UC PRAYER SERVICE  
THURSDAYS 6 PM  
Conference Room**

## Tuesday Lunchtime Bible Study

Tuesdays from noon - 2pm  
Fellowship Hall

We gather together on Tuesdays at midday to share a meal and to share our lives with one another as we seek God and seek to grow in His love.

One Thousand Gifts, is the title of the study we are currently engaged in, and it is about finding joy in what really matters.

You can join in any time - and you will find a group of women who want to pray for you and encourage you!

Bring your own lunch, or you may purchase lunch from Anita for \$8. Contact her at [anita00926@aol.com](mailto:anita00926@aol.com)

If you have any questions, call Christie 787-717-4001



I recently shared the following post with the women in our Bible study Facebook group:

*What do you look forward to when you wake up?*

*This morning, I was thinking about a time in my life when I was doing a semester abroad in Aix-en-Provence in Southern France while I was in college. I lived in a sort of 'housing project' - government subsidized housing for students and young workers. It wasn't very luxurious - one coed bathroom per floor. (I digress!) Anyway each morning in the basement of the building, they served a breakfast which consisted of a half of a baguette of French bread (these baguettes were one meter long!) and a steaming cup of cafe au lait in the largest coffee cup you can imagine. We would spread the bread with butter and jam and dip it in the coffee. It was so delicious, and to this day, I remember waking up very early before the sun rose and thinking "It's almost time for breakfast!"*

*This morning as I awoke, my first thought was not of breakfast, but of the word of God. This has been happening a lot lately. While I'm still groggy and drifting from dreams to waking, my mind begins to wonder "what treasures will I find this morning as I opened my Bible?"*

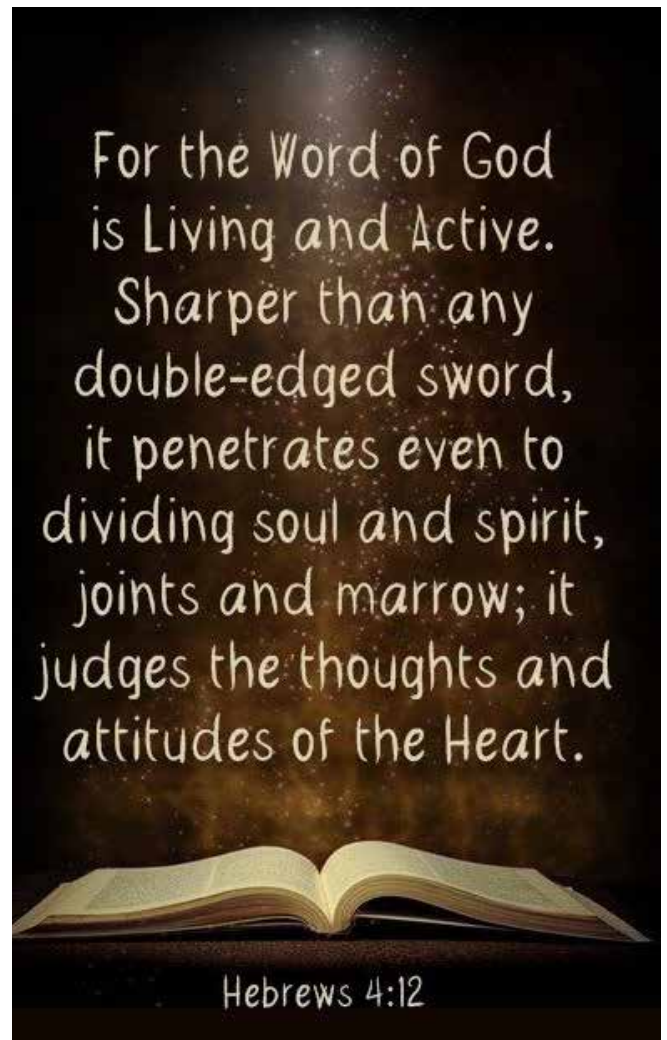
I wake up with a desire and an anticipation of what God will reveal. This morning, I turned on the lamp next to my bed and read from the pages of 2nd Chronicles in chapters 13 and 14. It recounted the history of the kings of Judah, Abijah and Asa. They trusted God and sought him. They faced enemies and armies much mightier than theirs, yet they called on God and they were miraculously triumphant.

That's great, you say, but how does that apply to my life? For me, I find it very encouraging to see that when people fully trust the Lord, He provides for them. So I am challenged to consider my walk with God and decide on ways I can live in a more authentic relationship with Him.

Reading through the Bible is a challenge and a commitment. Setting aside time each and every day to read several chapters seems simple enough, but ask anyone who has tried to read through the Bible and you'll find that in the beginning they struggle to keep up. Some give up, because they fall so far behind and are frustrated. However, if you make the commitment and rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to encourage you and guide you, I know you will find it to be richly rewarding and inspiring. You will wake up and the first thing you will look forward to is the time spent in God's letter to you.

If you're interested in reading through the Bible in a year, begin to pray about it now. We begin on January 1st. You will receive a list of the daily reading schedule for the year and each week you will receive an email with the weekly readings and questions or a note of encouragement for your journey. If you sense God leading you to make this commitment, contact me! [zoba129@gmail.com](mailto:zoba129@gmail.com)

May the Lord bless you as you seek Him,  
*Christie Zoba*





Can anyone identify this dynamic duo?

