

## DAILY DEVOTION 1

### Scripture Reading: Luke 24:13-35

*Neither sugar nor salt tastes particularly good by itself. Each is at its best when used to season other things. Love is the same way. Use it to “season” people. —Vera Nazarian*

Jesus said, “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot” (Matthew 5:13, NIV).

If you are like me, perhaps you think that the *primary* use for salt is in food preparation, or as a seasoning for food.

According to salt experts, however, food preparation and seasoning accounts for only 6 percent of salt usage. In fact, salt can be used in more than 14,000 different ways. These applications can be sorted into five major categories: Water conditioning, food grade salt, agriculture, highway deicing and industrial chemicals. Salt is used in the making of products as varied as plastic, paper, glass, polyester, rubber and fertilizers. It is used in household bleach, soaps, detergents and dyes.

I read recently of another use for salt. In Jordan, a country that borders Israel in the Middle East, salt is sometimes used to help the cooking process. In rural Jordan, the Jordanians put salt on fire to increase the temperature of the rocks for baking bread. When the salt they use for this purpose is no longer effective, it’s taken away and thrown onto the path, just as Jesus said in his Sermon on the Mount.

Jesus said that we are the salt of the earth. What I really like is that this metaphor leaves a lot of space *for us to all have different “uses,” functions and purposes.* Some salt is used as seasoning. Salt is sometimes used as a preservative. Salt can also be used to thaw ice. Salt can also be used to make water potable.

As Christians, we do not all look alike, nor do we have the same function. We have our own ministries and things we do well, just like salt!

So, let’s be salty Christians this week! Let’s be the salt of the earth! Let’s be the person Jesus wants us to be, and bring glory to God!

—Timothy Merrill

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, keep me from getting in the way of the blessing you have for others. Instead, help me to be the seasoning and love to make their blessing even better! In your name. Amen.*

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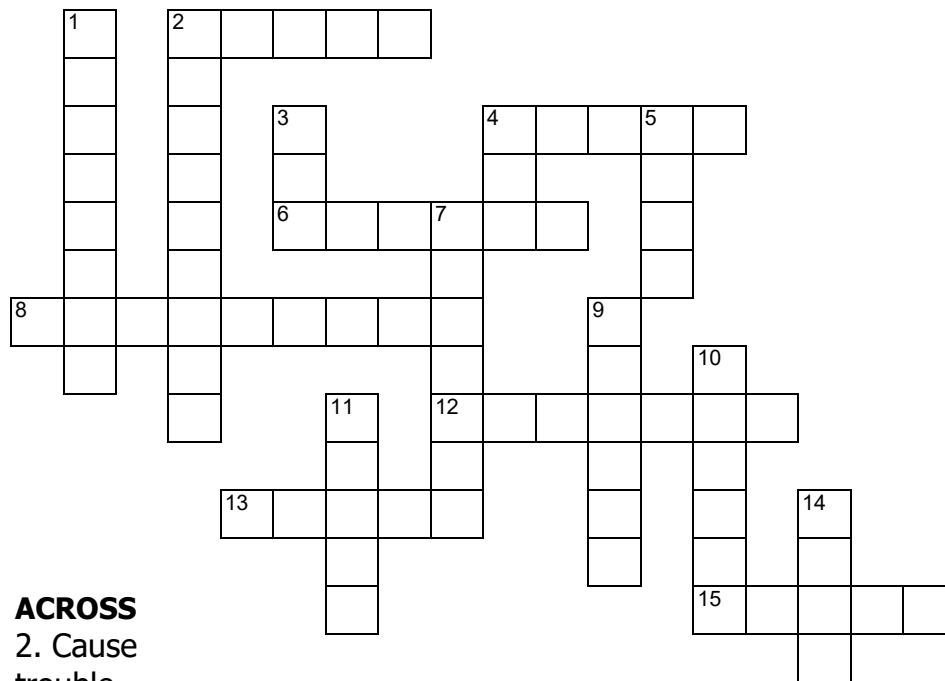
# DAILY ACTIVITY PAGE—DAY 1

## Verse to Remember

Those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

—Isaiah 40:31

**CROSSWORD:** All of the clues and answers are taken from the story of Job, the book in the Bible that comes right before Psalms.

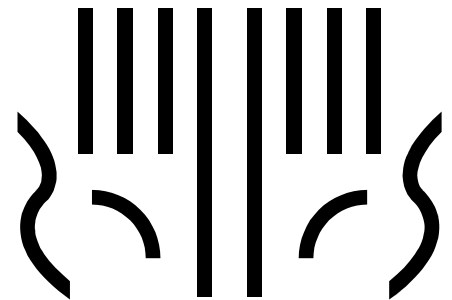


### ACROSS

- 2. Cause trouble
- 4. Twinkling, heavenly lights
- 6. The Shuhite, a friend (2:11)
- 8. Creature of the deep, (41:1)
- 12. The Temanite, a friend (2:11)
- 13. Sores
- 15. Job had 7,000

### DOWN

- 1. The One who ever lives (19:25)
- 2. Affliction
- 3. Had seven sons
- 4. Ocean
- 5. Precipitation
- 9. The Naamathite, a friend (2:11)
- 10. Job had 3,000
- 11. Job's 4th friend (32:2)
- 14. Job had 500 yoke



Nevertheless, the righteous will hold to their ways, and those with clean hands will grow stronger.

J o b 1 7 : 9

### Solution:

#### Across

- 2. Satan
- 4. stars
- 6. Bildad
- 8. Leviathan
- 12. Eliphaz
- 13. boils
- 15. sheep

### Solution:

- #### Down
- 1. Redeemer
  - 2. suffering
  - 3. Job
  - 4. sea
  - 5. rain
  - 7. donkeys
  - 9. Zophar
  - 10. camels
  - 11. Elihu
  - 14. oxen

## DAILY DEVOTION 2

### Scripture Reading: Romans 6:1b-11

*When the world says, "Give up," Hope whispers, "Try it one more time."* —Author unknown

Niccolo Paganini was a well-known and gifted 19<sup>th</sup>-century violinist. He was also well-known as a great showman with a quick sense of humor. His most memorable concert was in Italy with a full orchestra. He was performing before a packed house and his technique was incredible, his tone was fantastic and his audience dearly loved him.

Toward the end of his concert, Paganini was astounding his audience with an unbelievable composition when suddenly one string on his violin snapped and hung limply from his instrument. Paganini frowned briefly, shook his head, and continued to play, improvising beautifully.

Then to everyone's surprise, *a second string broke!* And shortly thereafter, a third!

Almost like a slapstick comedy, Paganini stood there *with three strings dangling from his Stradivarius!* But instead of leaving the stage, Paganini stood his ground and calmly completed the difficult number on the one remaining string.

This is a wonderful story, but in actuality, Paganini occasionally broke strings during a performance on purpose so he could further display his virtuosity.

What do you think is the lesson from this story?

There's no one correct answer, but, for me, the story reinforces the importance of *perseverance under duress*. It might have been easier for Paganini to walk off the stage and demand a different violin, disrupting the concert, or perhaps cancelling it altogether. But he didn't.

It's also a lesson in *courage*. It took courage for him to persist when he could not be at his best.

It's also a lesson in *humility*. Not being able to play at his best, he had to be willing to play as well as he could with only one string.

It is important to remember during this present crisis, that God knows how many strings we have at our disposal. God knows if we have four, three, two or only one. Perhaps we're in such a crisis that we feel as though we don't have any strings at all!

God knows and God understands. Let's just tell God that we are willing to serve God with as many "strings" as we have left, and we can also say the prayer below.

—Timothy Merrill

*Prayer: Lord, I am out of strings. I am out of energy. I have nothing left. But what I have, I give to you. Amen.*



## DAILY DEVOTION 3

**Scripture Reading:** Matthew 6:7–15

*We humans spend too much time thinking about the past, complaining about the present and fearing the future!* —Antoine Rivarol

Wise men and philosophers throughout the ages have disagreed on many things, but most agree on one point: “We become what we think about,” Ralph Waldo Emerson said. “You are what you think about all day long.” The Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius put it this way: “Your life is what your thoughts make of it.” In the Bible we read, “As a man thinks in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7).

One Sunday afternoon, a cranky grandfather was visiting his family. As he lay down to take a nap, his grandson decided to have a little fun by putting Limburger cheese on grandfather’s mustache.

Soon, grandpa awoke with a snort and charged out of the bedroom saying, “This room stinks.” Through the house he went, finding every room smelling the same. Desperately he made his way outside only to find that “The whole world stinks!”

This is a silly story, but it sort of illustrates what happens when we fill our minds with negativism. Everything we experience and everybody we encounter will carry the scent we hold in our mind.

It is quite possible that the challenges of living with an epidemic make it difficult to be thankful and to see what God is doing in our lives. That why —

*When we see the same blessings every day, we eventually stop noticing them.  
When we stop noticing, we quit appreciating  
When we quit appreciating, we stop thanking.  
When we stop thanking, we start complaining.*

May we all find the grace, patience and love to appreciate God’s presence in our lives.

—Timothy Merrill

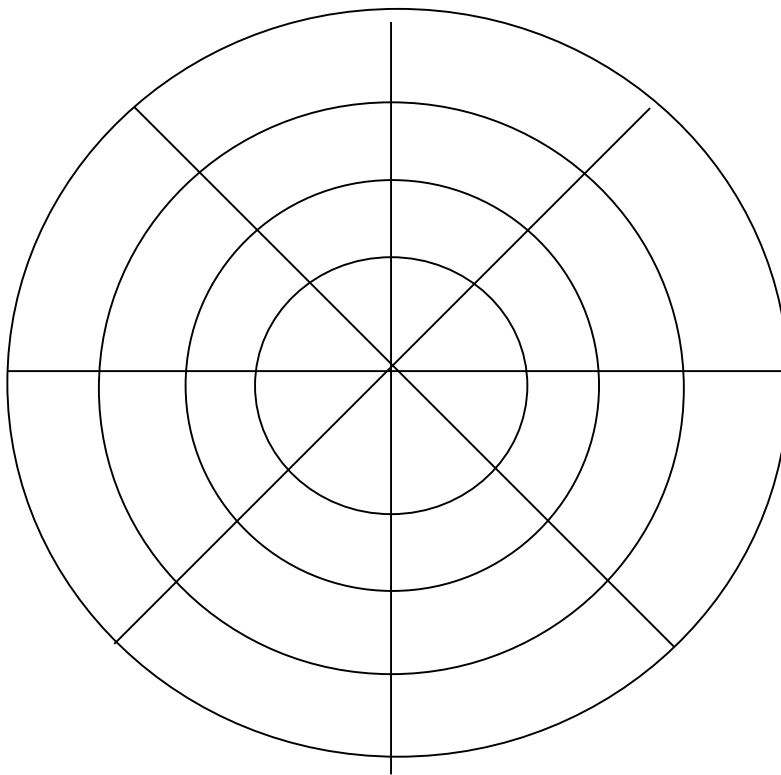
*Prayer: O God, help me to see the wonders of your blessings in a new way. Amen.*

# DAILY ACTIVITY PAGE—DAY 3

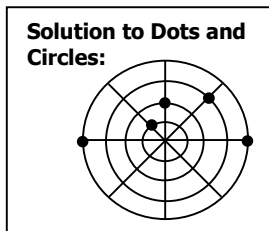
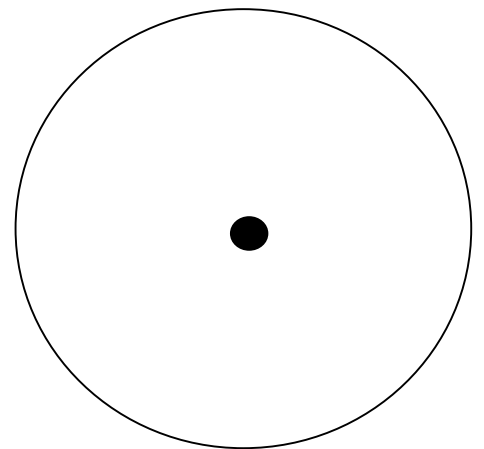
## Verse to Remember

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things.” —Galatians 5:22-23

**DOTS and CIRCLES:** Can you place eight dots on the target below in such a way as to have two dots on every circle and two dots on each straight line?



**The Dot in the Circle:** Draw the figure below (a circle with a dot in the center) with one continuous line, that is, without lifting your pencil from the paper.



**SOLUTION TO THE DOT IN THE CIRCLE:** Fold one corner of the paper up into the middle (center) and make a dot with your pencil on the paper, and then continue to draw from the dot on to the folded corner and bring your line down to where it can leave the folded paper and begin to draw a circle on the face up side and continue drawing the circle, flattening your paper until the circle is complete.

## DAILY DEVOTION 4

**Scripture Reading:** Psalm 138

*Only in the darkness can you see the stars.* —Martin Luther King Jr.

They still tell the story at William and Mary College of daffy, magnificent President Ewell. For a century and a half, this prestigious Virginia school had been a leader among American universities. Then came the Civil War. In the hard days of reconstruction that followed, William and Mary went bankrupt. Soon it had a deserted campus, decaying buildings and no students.

As with so many Southern schools after that tragic war, everyone wrote it off as dead. Everyone, except its president. He had given his best years to advancing the liberal arts through that school. He refused to give up now. So, every morning, President Ewell went to the deserted campus, climbed the tower of its main building, and rang the bells, calling the school to class.

He behaved *as though the school was still there*.

People thought he was crazy. Nevertheless, every day for seven years, President Ewell rang the bells at William and Mary, in defiance of the despair and hopelessness that would destroy everything he held valuable.

Eventually and miraculously, it worked. Others caught his vision. Students, teachers and money returned. Today, America's second oldest university thrives again, because of the hope of a single man.

Today, people suffer all around the world. Churches are shuttered by the threat of disease and uncertainty and scattered by the fear of disease and uncertainty.

Many people are shut up in their homes or apartments having no else to go: no work, no restaurants, nor entertainment venues. It's such a different atmosphere from the bustle and high-energy life we're used to.

But we persist, wherever we are.

We worship God in our homes and online with a virtual community of believers. We read the Bible. We pray on bended knee. We give thanks. We help others in their time of need. We walk humbly with God.

We're ringing the bells of hope.

And someday, we shall have our reward.

—Timothy Merrill

*Prayer: God of grace and mercy, you are our hope. We cast ourselves upon you in utter faith and confidence. There is none besides you! In Jesus' name. Amen.*

# DAILY ACTIVITY PAGE—DAY 4

## Verse to Remember

You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, will say to the LORD, “My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust.” —Psalm 91:1-2

**Saturday:** Psalms 100-102

## Global Awareness

**Directions:** This is a rearrangement or unscrambling exercise. Each set of letters when rearranged will spell out the name of a country. Answers below.



1. A D E K M R N \_\_\_\_\_

2. G R B A A I L U \_\_\_\_\_

3. H P E I T I A O \_\_\_\_\_

4. D A U R O H N S \_\_\_\_\_

5. O A N M A R I \_\_\_\_\_

6. G L E D A N N \_\_\_\_\_

7. S H I N I N E C L T E E T \_\_\_\_\_

8. H F N N A A S T G A I \_\_\_\_\_

9. Y N G A R M E \_\_\_\_\_

10. S A T N K P I A \_\_\_\_\_

## BRAIN STUMPER

What lives in winter, dies in summer and grows with its roots upwards?

### ANSWERS to Global Awareness:

1. Denmark, 2. Bulgaria, 3. Ethiopia,
4. Honduras, 5. Romania, 6. England,
7. Liechtenstein, 8. Afghanistan, 9. Germany,
10. Pakistan. **BRAIN STUMPER:** An Icicle.