

C.R.O.S.S.

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January Lessons:

Sharing Our Joys and Sorrows

The five January lessons deal with occasions for sharing joys and sorrows, especially those found in marriage and death. We see an example of a bride worth waiting for in the life of Jacob, who worked an additional seven years for the hand of Rachel. We rejoice with the bridegroom of the Song of Solomon over the incomparable beauty of his bride. We empathize with the Prophet Hosea as he endured the unfaithfulness of his wife in order to picture God's dealings with apostate Israel.

In a more joyful setting, we see how Jesus graced with His presence a wedding in Cana of Galilee, where He performed the first of His many miracles. We also join Him in the more somber setting of the death of Lazarus, which He transformed into rejoicing by raising him from the dead. In both of these instances, we observe the Son of God's identification with our joys and sorrows.



A New Year's Prayer

Lord, You make all things new
You bring hope alive in our hearts
And cause our Spirits to be born again.

Thank you for this new year
For all the potential it holds.
Come and kindle in us
A mighty flame
So that in our time, many will see the wonders of God
And live forever to praise Your glorious name.

Amen

(A modern prayer for the New Year from www.lords-prayer-words.com)

Scriptures of the Month

*"I will praise Thee oh Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify Thy name for evermore."
- Psalm 86:12*

"A time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance." - Ecclesiastes 3:4

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." - Matthew 5:4

"Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn." - Romans 12:15



Matthew 7:1-5 Reminder

A young couple moves into a new neighborhood. The next morning while they are eating breakfast, the young woman sees her neighbor hanging the wash outside. "That laundry is not very clean", she said. "She doesn't know how to wash correctly. Perhaps she needs better laundry soap."

Her husband looked on, but remained silent.

Every time her neighbor would hang her wash to dry, the young woman would make the same comments.

About one month later, the woman was surprised to see a nice clean wash on the line and said to her husband: "Look, she has learned how to wash correctly. I wonder who taught her this."

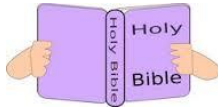
The husband said, "I got up early this morning and cleaned our windows."

And so it is with life. What we see when watching others depends on the purity of the window through which we look.



Bible Study Tips

What's the best Bible version to use – one you will understand. Here is a list of the most popular versions of the Bible sold in English today:



English Standard Version—an “essentially literal” update of the widely used Revised Standard Version.

New International Version — a standard translation using universally used English (thus, “International”).

New Living Translation—an easy-to-read thought-by-thought translation from Hebrew and Greek.

King James Version—the classic 1611 translation that is a landmark in English literature, but far removed from contemporary English.

New King James Version—a very literal translation, updating the language of the King James Version.

Common English Bible—a new translation blending word-for-word and thought-for-thought approaches.

New American Standard Bible—widely seen as the most literal translation produced in the 20th century.

The Message—a free translation by Eugene Peterson using everyday modern English, idea for idea.

Salt and Light by Jonny Hawkins



"After I gave my heart to Christ, my Fab Four became Matthew, Mark, Luke and John."

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Love & Marriage: Bible Quiz



1. What was the name of Abraham's wife?
2. How was Isaac's wife chosen?
3. Which of his wives did Jacob love the most?
4. Where did Moses meet his future wife?
5. What was the name of Ruth's second husband?
6. What was the name of Abigail's first husband?
7. Who did Amnon love, and then hate even more than he had loved her?
8. What was the occupation of Hosea's wife?
9. In the love poetry in Song of Solomon how is the lady's hair described?
10. Of what is the husband's love for the wife a symbol?



GOT JOKES!

Sam shows up at a revival meeting, seeking help. "I need you to pray for my hearing," he tells the preacher. The preacher puts his fingers on Sam's ears and prays and prays. When he's done, he asks, "How's your hearing now?" "I don't know," says Sam. "I don't go to court till next Tuesday."



By the time Bobby arrived, the football game had already started. "Why are you so late?" asked his friend. "I couldn't decide between going to church and going to the football game. So I tossed a coin," said Bobby. "But that shouldn't have taken too long," said the friend. "Well, I had to toss it 35 times."

Test Your Knowledge Answers

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| 1. Genesis 11:29 | 6. 1 Samuel 25:18-19 |
| 2. Genesis 24:2-4 | 7. 2 Samuel 13:1, 15 |
| 3. Genesis 29:28-30 | 8. Hosea 1:2 |
| 4. Exodus 2:15-16 | 9. Song 4:1 |
| 5. Ruth 4:13 | 10. Ephesians 5:25 |