

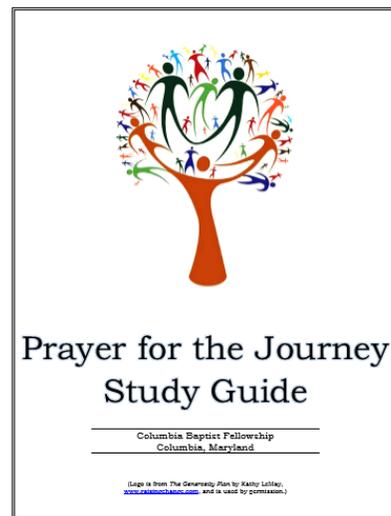
I'm writing this from "Shepherd's Rest," the retreat house for pastors at Skycroft. Most of you know that Skycroft is the state assembly for the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware, located on South Mountain between Frederick and Hagerstown. The retreat house is located at an altitude of 1334 feet, and it's snowing.

Skycroft is only 18 miles from Camp David, so I drove over there yesterday afternoon to check things out. They wouldn't let me in . . . imagine that! I'll be home tomorrow.

I use these times of spiritual retreat to evaluate recent events in personal and church life and to get my bearings for what's ahead. And as it happens, there's quite a lot ahead between now and summer.

This week is the first week of our "Prayer for the Journey" small group emphasis for the Lenten season. I'm aware of about 50 people in prayer triplets at this point, which is wonderful indeed. I've also attached the prayer guide with this *Laptop* so that if you're not in a group, you can still participate with the rest of us. There are plenty of printed copies of the *Study Guide* at the office for all who might like one.

If you're not in a group, why not get a *Guide* and ask another person or two to meet to pray and talk with you during the next seven weeks? If meeting in person doesn't work for you, you could also create a group via phone, email, Skype, etc. We need as many hearts listening for God's guidance as we can gather!

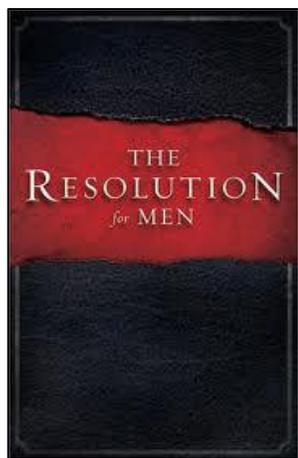


I've included below the schedule for many (certainly not all) of the congregational events that are coming during the next ninety days or so, with brief descriptions of those things that may not be self-evident. I hope you'll be able to benefit from many of these opportunities . . .

Week of February 3: *Prayer for the Journey*: **The Kingdom of God**

Saturday, February 9 (**THIS SATURDAY**)

Men in Ministry – *The Resolution for Men*, chapters 1-3: **A Call to Men!**



This Saturday Men in Ministry will begin a study of the book *The Resolution for Men*, using the schedule listed here and distributed at last month's meeting. It's not necessary to have the book to profit from the discussion.

Week of February 10: *Prayer for the Journey*: **The Sacrifice of Confession**

Monday, February 11: **CLASS 101**

This class is an orientation to what it means to be a Baptist and what it means to be a CBFer. The class will include a brief history of our church and suggestions about how to live out your gifts in this congregation. While this session is particularly focused on those who joined CBF in recent months, it would also be very useful for persons considering membership.

Over time, we'll be developing not only CLASS 101, but also 201, 301, and 401, each of which will move us farther "around the baseball diamond" in terms of becoming Great

Commission Christians. Because *every CBFer will be strongly encouraged to participate in each of these classes*, CLASS 101 will be offered again on April 22, 29, and May 13.

Week of February 17: *Prayer for the Journey*: **Pleasing God**

Sunday, February 17: **Invite-A-Friend Day**

This service will provide a wonderful opportunity to invite your friends to experience the gladness of worship at CBF! Light refreshments will follow the service.

Week of February 24: *Prayer for the Journey*: **Faith Anchors**

Week of March 3: *Prayer for the Journey*: **New Wineskins**

Monday, March 4: *Survival Kit*: **The Indwelling Christ**

One of the best short studies that LifeWay has ever produced is called *Survival Kit: Five Keys to Effective Spiritual Growth*. This six-week study is open to anyone and will be a wonderful encouragement in your walk with God. A \$5 workbook will be necessary for the best experience of this study. We'll meet in the Chapel at 7 p.m.



Saturday, March 9: Men in Ministry – *The Resolution for Men*, chapter 4:
Resolve to be a Man of Responsibility

Week of March 10: *Prayer for the Journey*: **On Getting What You Expect**

Sunday, March 10: Our preacher for March 10 will be **Dr. Neville Callam**, General Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance. A native Jamaican like our own Neville, Dr. Callam will bring a message you'll not want to miss! Our spring Quarterly Business Meeting will follow the service.

Monday March 11: *Survival Kit*: **1 Body**

Week of March 17: *Prayer for the Journey*: **Divine Discontent**

Monday, March 18: *Survival Kit*: **2 Natures**

Week of March 24: HOLY WEEK - *Prayer for the Journey*: **God Has Something for Us to Do**

Sunday, March 24: **Palm Sunday**

Monday, March 25: *Survival Kit*: **3 Aspects of Salvation**;

March 25th is also the **40th anniversary** of the founding of our congregation!!!

Thursday, March 28: **Maundy Thursday**

Friday, March 29: **Good Friday** – Our preacher for the Good Friday service will be our own Dawn Howard-Davis!

Sunday, March 31: **RESURRECTION SUNDAY** will begin with our SonRise Service that will include the baptisms of Larry Davis, Nesa Herring, and Ken Ndiang, followed by breakfast together between the services.

Monday, April 1: *Survival Kit: 4 Sources of Authority* (no foolin'!)

Sunday, April 7: **Triplet Reporting** following worship

Monday, April 8: *Survival Kit: The Five-and-Five Principle*

Saturday, April 13: Men in Ministry – *The Resolution for Men*, chapters 5-7:
Resolve to Lead Your Family

Sunday, April 14: **L.O.V.E. Tea**

Wow. That's a LOT of things to do! It's a good thing that **We Love This Stuff!**

Dave



We Love This Stuff!

P.S. It's been a while since I've included any of the "standard tithing excuses," so here's one more:

Tithing Excuse #8 – Personal need:

AKA "I'm on a fixed income, or I have lots of medical expenses."

While much of our financial bondage comes from having chosen to spend or to obligate God's resources in ways that God never intended, it's also true that we sometimes find ourselves strapped for cash due to circumstances beyond our control.

Even so, the tithing principle is 10% of our "increase"—the first 10%. Do you remember Elijah's instruction to the nearly-starving widow in 1 Kings? Elijah told her to "Go ahead and cook that 'last meal,' but bake me a little loaf of bread first. Afterward there will still be enough food for you and your son" (1 Kings 17:13). Many folks can testify—and I am among them—that if we return the tithe to God as the first check we write, somehow there's always a way to get through the pay period; but if it's not the *first* check, usually there will be *no* check. God honors obedience.

The Bible says, "Give whatever you can according to what you have. If you are really eager to give, it isn't important how much you are able to give. God wants you to give what you have, not what you don't have. . . . You must each make up your own mind as to how much you should give. Don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. For God loves the person who gives cheerfully. And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others" (2 Corinthians 8:11-12, 9:7-8).

Remember . . . this is a LOVE THING. "No one can serve two masters," Jesus said. "For you will hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money" (Matthew 6:24).