

*Acts 24:* Paul must have found it difficult to know that his freedom was not granted because Felix was hoping for a bribe. Paul remained in prison for two years. His friends took care of his needs but freedom was only one payment way. Like Esau, Paul was given a difficult sentence. He accepted that evil had been done to him but God would use it. He humbled himself and accepted his situation. Sometimes the foundation we trust in crumbles even when we have done nothing wrong. God still remains.

### Thursday Pray for “My World”

- Neighbors • People who live around me.
- People at Work • Others God brings into my life. Begin to take note of specific needs around you and ask God what he wants you to do to help.
- Ask God to bring revival and a spiritual awakening to Branch County. Pray for the area churches and a greater spirit of unity and cooperation.
- Continue to pray for the nation, our national leaders and a revival in America.

Friday, Oct. 27: Read [Genesis 37](#), [Acts 25](#)

*Genesis 37:* Jacob was given the worse deception possible and is caused to live under it for many years: his son had been killed and lost to him forever. At that time lions, bears and hyenas lived in the area. The brothers’ envy of their younger brother was deadly. Not accepting God’s plan as creator leads to demise. It was true with Cain, Esau, and now the brothers. God’s plan does not have to be rejected. If one humbles himself and receives it, he will find God’s plan is to bring blessing.

In *Acts 25*, we see what it is to surrender to God’s plan. It did not look pretty as Paul was subject to prison. God could have released him as when He caused an earthquake to break the prison gates. Paul accepted that God was in control. “To live is for Christ, and to die is for gain.” Read [Philippians 1 :20-22](#).

### Pray for Our Missionaries

**Juan & Adriana Palacios** (Angola, Africa), **David & Miriam Trott** (Cochabamba, Bolivia), **Mario Bloise** (Argentina), **Dan & DeAnn Gerard** (San Antonio, TX), **Robert Newkirk** (Jesus Film), **Craig & Shelly Shafer** (Sentani, Indonesia), **Mike & Fran VanBruggen** (S. Africa), **Sue Sanders** (Detroit, MI), **Matt Kooi** (Tijuana), **Daniel Jezonski** (Wycliffe), **Danielle Tucker** (France), **Andrew & Sara Williams** (New Tribes), **Salomon and Megan Guzman** (Spectrum Ministries), **Brad Babjack** (InterVarsity), **Alvaro and Rachel Garriga** (Interserve, USA)



## Spiritual Disciplines

- *Invite the Holy Spirit to guide your reading each day.*
- *Read the chapters and underline any meaningful verses and take note of specific advice or wisdom gleaned from your reading.*
- *Note any unclear passages or teaching and seek insight, answers or help.*
- *Think about what you’re reading. Ask:*
  1. *How does this apply to me?*
  2. *Are there any temptations to avoid, sins to confess, commands to obey or promises to claim?*
  3. *What insight do I gain on God, myself, others, or life?*
- *Ask God to show you any specific action you need to take as you read.*

## Weekly Readings

Monday, Oct. 23: Read [Genesis 33](#), [Acts 21](#)

*Genesis 33* records reconciled relationships of Jacob. In the previous chapter Jacob had first sent gifts to Esau to win his favor. Now, after Esau refused the gift because he had plenty, Jacob insist that Esau accept his gift. “No, if I have found favor with you, please accept this gift from me. And what a relief to see your friendly smile. **It is like seeing the face of God!**” Read [Matt. 5:23-25](#). In [Romans 3:25](#) we read how God passes over our sins because of the gift of Christ. In like manner, as Jacob saw on the face of his brother Esau forgiveness, so we see on the face of God forgiveness. “Esau threw his arms around his neck, and kissed him. And they both wept.” God gives us a picture of reconciliation.

*Acts 21:* Paul was warned or foretold of what was to happen. Instead of weakening Paul’s resolve, it only strengthened it. It wasn’t just a cautionary message but a preparatory message. Read [John 15](#) to better understand Paul’s commitment to go. However, we will see Paul needed to listen to others as well.

**Prayer Request Next Page**

### ***Monday Pray for:***

1. *My relationship with God.*
2. *My life roles*
3. *My personal needs/weak areas*
4. *Goals and objectives*

### **Tuesday**, Oct. 24: Read [\*Genesis 34, Acts 22\*](#)

[\*Genesis 34\*](#): The narrative moves from Jacob to his children. His daughter is raped and her brothers move into action as Jacob remains cautious (possibly to prevent war and defeat). Taking vengeance into their own hands, Simeon and Levi go into the village and kill all the men, taking their wives and children as captives. In essence, they did as was planned against them (v. 23). The idea to pay for sin and reconciliation with money is seen as prostitution. Read [\*Romans 2:17-29\*](#).

[\*Acts 22\*](#): Paul is able to quiet the crowd as he spoke to them in Aramaic and then referred to his experience on the road to Damascus. Unlike the Greeks who prided themselves on logic and the Romans who prided themselves in glory of might, the Jews took pride that God spoke the world into existence and created light as a metaphor for understanding. The metaphor of light is an important symbol to the Jews. Therefore, Paul, being struck by a great light and then God speaking to him on the way, gets their attention. Read [\*Genesis 1:3-5\*](#), day 1. This was before God created the Sun on the day 4 (vs. 14-19).

Despite Paul's zeal, God protects him. In true fashion, Paul angers the Jews by sharing God's vision to go to the Gentiles. Paul just can't keep quiet and has a hard time listening to advice. Read [\*Matthew 10:16\*](#).

### **Pray for family and friends by name.**

### **Wednesday** Oct. 25: Read [\*Genesis 35, Acts 23\*](#)

[\*Genesis 35\*](#): It is time to return to Bethel (the House of God). Jacob finally gives orders to get rid of the foreign gods. It was at Bethel where God told Jacob He would bring him back after his journey. It was also here that Jacob swore to make the God of Abraham and Isaac his God when God brings him back. A lot has happened on this journey to bring Jacob full circle. Jacob receives the blessing promised to Abraham and Isaac to make him a great nation. God changes his name to Israel, which means "Prince of God." However, we will see both Jacob and Israel used back and forth. Jacob is both a man who wrestles with his humanity and a "Prince of God." Read [\*Romans 7:14-25\*](#).

[\*Acts 23\*](#) Paul plays it smart and causes division among the Jewish leaders, know-

ing there were both Pharisees and Sanhedrin. A great dispute broke out and Paul was removed into protective custody. God "stood near" Paul and spoke to him. The comfort that comes when God doesn't speak from a distance but stands near us and tells us to "take courage!"

From Jerusalem to Rome, the frying pan to the fire. God uses human events to move Paul along. Paul is protected by secular government from the religious elite. Read [\*Deuteronomy 31:6, Isaiah 41:10, Proverbs 4:6\*](#). The God that Paul knew so well from his Jewish upbringing is now speaking to him. However, the message, although the same in that He will be with him, is promising a different Promised Land. Read [\*John 15:19-21\*](#). Paul may have been knew to the Christian faith but he understood the teachings of Jesus.

### ***Wednesday's Notes:***

### **Wednesday: Pray for Bethel Gilead Community Church (Consider fasting one, two, or all meals this day.)**

- a. Pastors: Pray for God's grace and guidance in Pastor Jim and Pastor David's ministries and families. Pray for Linda Penn in her work at BGCC.
- b. Worship: Ask God to strengthen our devotion to Him, in prayer, praise, and thanksgiving.
- c. Fellowship: Ask God to deepen our love and commitment to one another as a family of believers.
- d. Discipleship: ask God to develop the faith, dedication, and leadership of our people. Pray for the children and youth ministries here at BGCC.
- e. Outreach: Pray that God will use Bethel Gilead to make a positive impact on our community so that many would come to Christ.
- f. Future Faith Goals: Ask God to give our congregation a united vision for the future. Pray for God's clear leading in 2017 and beyond.

### **Thursday**, Oct. 26: Read [\*Genesis 36, Acts 24\*](#)

[\*Genesis 36\*](#): The sons of Esau were many. God blessed him as a son of Isaac even though Esau, in spite of Isaac's wishes, took for **himself** wives from Ishmael. The physical blessings remained but the spiritual blessing was despised and lost. Read [\*Hebrews 12: 4-17\*](#). God disciplines his children to bless them. Esau refused to accept the discipline of Isaac and God. It was not for evil but for good when God withholds from us the things we desire or believe life owes us.