

The Knucklehead Gospels



A Simple Faith 2021



By
Arnulfo D. Ayala

The Knucklehead Gospels

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Foreword

I was ordained a permanent deacon in the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Angelo, Texas in 2004, but I was introduced to prison ministry in the fall of 2000, working as a volunteer at a Kairos retreat at the Lynaugh Unit in Ft Stockton, Texas. From my first visit to the prison, I knew this is where God called me to serve. Many people have no knowledge of or experience with the prison system, so they have a great misconception of the individuals who reside behind those walls. Some may think that people in prison have no value and don't deserve a second chance. I can firmly attest that in ministering to our incarcerated brothers and sisters, I have witnessed the power of God working through many of these gifted humans. It has been transformational for me and has helped me to deepen my relationship with Christ. I am blessed to be able to call them my brothers and sisters.

I first met, Arnulfo, the author of this book in 2016 while serving in prison ministry for the Archdiocese of San Antonio. He, along with a core group of devoted Catholic men, are in the maximum-security prison. They have each had a profound experience at a Kolbe Catholic retreat and decided to dedicate their lives to Christ: praying, studying, and working tirelessly to be better men and to inspire their fellow inmates to do the same. I soon realized that Arnulfo, a self-confessed Knucklehead, had the talent, the faith, the experience, and the humility to help other incarcerated men find a way to walk in God's light in this dark place. Like a sponge, he worked to absorb all he could learn from other Catholic volunteers and ministers to be able to deepen his own spirituality and to help his brothers find theirs. His honesty and his consistency in his walk led both the men inside and the outside volunteers to trust and respect him. Whether it is teaching a lesson in faith-based Life Skills, or writing a reflection on Scripture, his message is creative, relatable, clear, thought-provoking, and inspired. I am blessed to have the privilege of working in ministry with him and was delighted to hear he had felt called to begin this series of reflections.

Repentance comes from a Greek word 'metanoia', which means a change of mind and heart. Our behavior reveals our thinking, and in any situation, we have two options – to react or to respond; responding requires forethought and can be achieved with practice and looking within. When Jesus said to repent and believe in the Gospel, He was saying to demonstrate your belief in Him through actions of repentance. TKG reflections can be a tool to assist in spiritual transformation to get your life in order and help you prepare for life both in and out of prison.

For those incarcerated this is a great opportunity to reflect on your past and make plans to change. God's Word teaches us that it is in expressing faith and obedience in Jesus that He affords us the gift of salvation (Romans 10-9-10). There is no better time than the present to begin a new journey leading to eternal life with Our Father in heaven.

In 1 Cor 7:29, St. Paul says, **"I tell you, brothers and sisters, the time is running out."** So PLEASE don't 'procrastinate' but act now and devour the TKG material.

What do you have to lose?

Deacon Bob Leibrecht

**Director of Criminal Justice Ministry
Archdiocese of San Antonio, Texas**

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Note from the Author

Brothers and Sisters, incarcerated and free,

Thank you for sharing time with our Lord through these pages. Jesus had been calling me to do this work for several years now, but the request didn't make sense to me at the time. I'm not a traditional Bible-thumper in any sense of the word. How could He expect me to write a book of scripture reflections? I understand He uses the dumb to confound the wise; but even this was a stretch. I rejected the idea.

A spiritual desert quickly evolved before my eyes when the prison system locked down due to COVID 19. I saw brothers from different faith communities struggle in ways I had never seen. Jesus called me again. This time I sat and reflected.

I'm not a scholar or theologian, but I have taught some classes, and I am a certified Knucklehead. I thought about presenting things in a way that men and women in jail and prison can relate. And, about how we did not become knuckleheads in prison; we entered that way. I began to see how others could get something out of these reflections from the comfort of their bedroom or on a street corner as well. I

The result was TKG Advent 2020. From the onset, I grumbled because I didn't know what I was doing, where to start, what angle to take, nothing! I complained, "You are going have to take the lead God because I am going to screw it up!" I knew Jesus sent the Holy Spirit as a guide when ideas started forming in my mind. First, came the main theme: Preparing your heart for the love of Christ. Then came the reflections and images to the Sunday Readings – the bus, the sufferer, the coach, the mountain. Finally, Daily Journal Reflections based on 1 Corinthians 13.

Am I mad? Plum loco? Maybe, but it worked! It worked so well that we are here for another round. All Scripture passages are from the *Holy Bible: Good News Translation, Catholic Edition American Bible Society 1992*, and follow copyright requirements.

I thank God for granting me the opportunity to be a part of TKG. I am grateful for the support and assistance I received from my beautiful Leticia, and Jerry, Larry, Clair, Robert, Kathleen, John, Chris G., Deacon Bob, Kolbe Prison Ministries, and St Pius X Prison Ministry. Without them TKG would be gathering dust along with other project ideas that never left the ground.

And thank you, the reader; many of whom have expressed they enjoyed The Knucklehead Gospels. TKG 2021 was written for men and women, incarcerated and free alike, but for simplicity sake, the setting is in prison, and the characters are masculine (he/his/him/etc.) unless the reference is specifically feminine.

I pray that God continues to bless you with His love, peace, and abundance.

OOO-G Knucklehead and Brother in Christ,

Arnulfo

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INTRODUCTION

by Arnulfo D. Ayala

Imagine you are a candy apple red Corvette designed to reach 180 mph. Although you can reach that speed in seconds, maximum speed limits exist to prevent you from doing so when the urge sets in. It is the same with sin. You are able to act out anger, sloth, lust, greed, gluttony, envy and pride shooting out of the gate at 250 mph at will, but God gave limitations to help protect us from harm like maximum speed limits protects us while on the road.

Life is full of limitations, dos, and don'ts. Most of us are in prison or in a miserable place in our lives because we practiced more dos than don'ts. Even those in the free world can receive help from this book. We started out where you are standing. We broke the same speed limits you are breaking today. The difference is that you have not been caught.

We do not want you to wind up in prison or jail. We hope that TKG will motivate you to slow down and bit. Take it from someone who lost everything, the risks you are taking are not worth it.

God does not set limitations, or speed limits, to enslave us. God's limitations are to maximize our life experience. Think of it as a motor that will burn out if you run it too hard or seize up if it is not run enough. Somewhere in the middle is a sweet spot that will give the motor a good, long life. We should all want a good, long life.

In this edition of TKG 2021, we will explore ways of overcoming the Seven Deadly Sins: Anger, Sloth, Lust, Greed, Gluttony, Envy and Pride. All sin has a deadly sin at its foundation. We all can reach dangerous speeds on any road these sins lay out for us. Once we choose a sinful road, exiting this path is very difficult. It is here that we become enslaved to our sins. We become so lost and aimless that there is a real risk of prison or death.

TKG 2021 offers a tool to help you take back control of your life. Be the captain of your ship and follow the star that will lead you to a wonderful life. A better life is there for the taking. Many complain they do not know what a good life looks like. They see a good life as a work of fiction, so far-fetched that there is no use thinking about it, much less wanting it. Nothing could be further from the truth.

A good life is simple; it is not bad. Every good life is unique to the one living it. You need to focus on building the tools that will protect you from negative influences and actions, with an openness to positive influences and actions. Choosing a good life is a choice and a life-long process. There is no better guide than the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. God is where all good things come from, and all bad things end.

Let us begin.

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METHODOLOGY

TKG will consist of seven weeks of reflections that focus on conquering one of the seven Deadly Sins:

Anger

Sloth

Lust

Greed

Gluttony

Envy

Pride

Each day promotes ideas on how to conquer a Deadly Sin with the components of the Armor of God:

“So STAND READY,

with TRUTH as a belt tight around your waist,

with RIGHTEOUSNESS as your breastplate,

and as your shoes the readiness to announce

the GOOD NEWS OF PEACE.

At all times carry FAITH as a shield; for with it you

will be able to put out all the burning arrows shot by the evil one.

And accept SALVATION as a helmet,

and the WORD OF GOD as a sword which the Spirit gives you” (Ephesians 6:14-17)

Sunday - Stand Ready

Monday – Belt of Truth

Tuesday – Breastplate of Righteousness

Wednesday – Announce Gospel of Peace

Thursday – Shield of Faith

Friday – Helmet of Salvation

Saturday – Sword of the Spirit

THE KNUCKLEHEAD GOSPELS
Daily Journal Reflections
WEEK 1—Overcoming the Sin of Anger
SUNDAY

“So stand ready...”

Here’s a knucklehead idea!

Recognize what you’re up against this week. That means that you are going to have to dig deep into yourself to find what triggers your anger.

The easiest way to figure this out is to focus on one thing that angers you and put a face on it. WHO makes you angry? WHAT does s/he do to make you angry? And WHY does it make you angry? Only then can you understand HOW you can overcome it.

I’ll go through it first!

(WHO) There are several who live around my residence that anger me ever day for the same offense. (WHAT) They crank their music up while I’m asleep. (WHY) Because I have terrible work hours (1:30 am) and I feel they’re testing me; my pride swells up.

This is what I’ll be up against this week and I PRAY TO GOD that His armor will help me overcome it very, very soon!

Now, it’s YOUR turn:

Who?
What?:
Why?

And pray that by the end of the week you’ll understand HOW it can be beaten.

THE KNUCKLEHEAD GOSPELS
Daily Journal Reflections
WEEK 1—Anger
TUESDAY

“...With RIGHTEOUSNESS as your breastplate...”

Here’s a knucklehead idea!

Righteousness means right choices. Right-choice-ness! Hah, I like it. *“If you are sensible, you will control your temper. When someone wrongs you, it is a great virtue to ignore it.”*
(Proverbs 19:11)

Whoa! “Ignore” is a big word when we’re dealing with pride issues, inferiority complexes and childhood traumas that have haunted us our whole lives. How can we ignore acts that trigger these negative reactions?

Let’s start by replacing “ignore” with “put things in perspective.” It’s a practice I put into play with the annoying music issue that keeps me up at night.

First, I’ve had to accept that I’m the cause of my anger, just as you are the cause of yours. Then I turned to God and asked Him to help me deal with it. He helped me realize that these individuals were living life, just like I am. Their life will include loud music whether I exist or not; whether I work normal or night hours; whether I like the music or not; whether I’m awake or asleep (obviously). Their lives do not revolve around my life. In other words, they’re not jamming to anger me. I’m angry because they’re jamming.

Putting things in the proper perspective helped me realize that they’re not trying to offend me. So, the little man in me settled down, a good thing. Now all I have to do is handle the loud noise. I figure if I could get a peaceful night sleep living near an air force base, I surely can handle a little music.

In short, I’m able to “ignore” the problem, not because I’m weak or defeated, but because I choose to put things in perspective.

Are you willing to accept that you are the cause of your anger? Will you go to God and ask that He help you put things in the proper perspective so that you can overcome it?

THE KNUCKLEHEAD GOSPELS
Daily Journal Reflections
WEEK 1—Anger
WEDNESDAY

“...And as your shoes the readiness to announce the
Good News of PEACE.”

Here’s a knucklehead idea!

“Hot tempers cause arguments, but patience brings peace.” (Proverbs 15:18)

Patience is a cold drink on a hot day. Who will not enjoy such a thing? After putting things in perspective, you should have a little more peace in your heart than you did yesterday. Maybe you can smile a little more, or spend the day doing something you enjoy without thinking someone is going to ruin it for you.

I had a hard time with thinking that if I put my guard down there would be someone ready to trample over me. But that’s not true. The only way I can be trampled is if I allow it to happen. And this understanding has brought strength to my peace.

So, yea, the neighbors still blare their music. But God helped me realize how to deal with it by watching the movie ‘The Accountant’ where a young autistic character had serious trouble with bright light and loud noises. The mother wanted to commit him to a “home” to get treatment. But the father refused, saying that if light and sound bothered him then he needed more of it, not less, in order to overcome it.

That night I slept with my earbuds and blasted my own music. I still slept with blaring sound, but I was in control and that made all the difference. Now, no matter what my neighbors are doing I get a good night sleep and am at peace.

The great Saint Francis of Assisi exhorted: “Preach the Gospel always, use words when necessary.” The truest way to announce the Good News of my newfound peace is in my daily interactions with the ones who offended me, in my greetings and conversations. This is proof of my peace and that I am overcoming the sin of anger.

Concentrate on the simple act of smiling more with the people that anger you. A genuine smile. How difficult will that be?

THE KNUCKLEHEAD GOSPELS
Daily Journal Reflections
WEEK 1—Anger
THURSDAY

“At all times carry FAITH as a shield; for with it you will be able to put out all the burning arrows shot by the Evil One.”

Here’s a knucklehead idea!

A peaceful person is a tempting target for the devil, especially if there is much misery around. Only God can give someone that much peace. That will anger the Devil and make others around you uncomfortable, because they’re forced to realize the pit of misery they are trapped in. You know the old saying, “Misery loves company.” It’s only a matter of time that you are attacked by those burning arrows. Raise your shield and don’t let their attack get the best of you.

“If you become angry, do not let your anger lead you

into sin and do not stay angry all day. Don’t give the devil a chance.” (Ephesians 4:26-27)

The shield of faith holds God’s truth in that you weren’t made to live in anger and misery, but in love and joy. There may be some who listen to the devil and shoot arrows at you. You will know them when you see them. Don’t give in and you’ll not only win the day, but also win them over to desiring the same peace you have. Then they will betray the evil one and strengthen your freedom.

“Get rid of all bitterness, passion, and anger. No more shouting or insults; no more hateful feelings of any sort. Instead, be kind and tender-hearted to one another and forgive one another as God has forgiven you through Christ.” (Ephesians 4:31-32)

What are the challenges in your life that put your peace at risk? What will it take from you to keep your peace?

THE KNUCKLEHEAD GOSPELS
Daily Journal Reflections
WEEK 1—Anger
FRIDAY

“...And accept SALVATION as a helmet...”

Here’s a knucklehead idea!

Your salvation is a reality. Christ died for it. As a helmet, these truths protect your thoughts and actions from falling into the sin of anger. How so?

Have you ever been invited to a big party or important event and expected to have a miserable time? Of course not! You invest time to look good, smell good and feel good about yourself. So much so, that you even tell others so they can share the joy and excitement. Well, salvation is the biggest and most important party you will ever be invited to. It’s joy and excitement are not only the truest and most genuine you can experience, but there’s also a heck of an after party that lasts forever. That is, unless you fall into too much sin that you lose your invitation.

That’s how salvation protects your thoughts and actions. The joy and excitement it promises motivates you to do the right thing (right-choice-ness) so that your salvation is secure.

“What human nature does is quite plain. It shows itself in immoral, filthy, and indecent actions; in worship of idols and witchcraft. People become enemies and they fight; they become jealous, angry, and ambitious. They separate into parties or groups; they are envious, get drunk, have orgies and do other things like these. I warn you now as I have before: those who do these will not possess the Kingdom of God.” (Galatians 5:19-21)

At any given time, we have several of these arrows piercing our heart. These are a few things that threaten our salvation. For many of us anger runs deeper into the heart than the others. Anger has a face. But so does forgiveness. Whenever you see the face, real or imagined, and you become angry, think of forgiveness. It’s probably a hard thing to do at this point in time. But it will get easier if you continue. The real question is, are you willing?

THE KNUCKLEHEAD GOSPELS
Daily Journal Reflections
WEEK 1—Anger
SATURDAY

“...And the WORD OF GOD as a sword which the Spirit gives you.”

Well, my trial by fire (music) has been put out. I can enjoy my days and nights without stress or anger and sleep well regardless of what goes on around my residence. I’m at peace and can focus on the good things in life, like writing these reflections. Here are a few verses from the Word of God that can strengthen your peace and overcome the sin of anger.

“But the Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility, and self-control. There is no law against such things as these.”
(Galatians 5:22-23)

Love - John 13:14-17; Galatians 5:13-15; 1John 4:20-21

Joy - John 16:20-22; Luke 6:22-23; Ecc. 2:26

Peace - Job 22:21; Psalm 23:1-4; Luke 1:78-79

Patience - Psalm 37:7-9; Ecc. 7:8; Luke 8:15

Kindness - Matt. 25:35-37; Luke 6:34; Colossians 3:12

Goodness - Proverbs 11:3; 13:2; 14:11

Faithfulness - Psalm 31:23; Matt. 10:22; Matt. 25:14-30

Humility - Psalm 69:32-33; Proverbs 27:2; Matt. 20:26-28

Self-Control - Proverbs 4:20-27; 12:14; 3:18

THE KNUCKLEHEAD GOSPELS
Daily Journal Reflections
WEEK 2 - OVERCOMING THE SIN OF SLOTH
SUNDAY

“STAND READY ...”

Here’s a Knucklehead Idea!

GET MOVING! If you don’t, sloth will produce a hole on the side of your ship that will cause you to sink. Get up and get busy doing what you need to do to stay afloat.

Let’s look at the one habit you can develop this week that will help you stand ready against the gentle winds that convince you to “do it later.”

I’ll admit that until recently I struggled with prayer and studying Scripture. I was content with living out basic Christian principles and attending Mass. Looking back, I can see that I was trying to build my ship without blueprints or even consulting with the One who designed it. That doesn’t make much sense. Only by God’s grace did my faith grow; but there was no nourishment. That’s like building the shell of a ship and launching out to sea without a motor or crew!

Every living thing needs nourishment. A living faith is no different. Now I read Scripture and pray to God every morning. I’m grounded, fed and ready to take on the challenges of the day. These habits have enriched and nourished my life. Before we explore the habits that will help enrich and nourish yours, pray that God grants you the wisdom and understanding to determine what you are lacking. Is it prayer, study, fellowship or evangelizing? Maybe God is calling you to something, but you are dragging your feet. Pray that God will paint a picture in your mind and take that first step: write it down.

THE KNUCKLEHEAD GOSPELS
Daily Journal Reflections
WEEK 2—Sloth
SATURDAY

“...And the WORD of God as the sword which the Spirit gives you.”

Here’s a Knucklehead Idea...

Sloth will ruin your life! “I walked through the fields and vineyards of a lazy, stupid person. They were full of thorn bushes and overgrown with weeds. The stone wall around them had fallen down. I looked at this, thought about it, and learned a lesson from it: Go ahead and take your nap; go ahead and sleep. **Fold your hands** and rest awhile, but while you are asleep, poverty will attack you like an armed robber.” (Proverbs 24:30-34)

REFLECT ON THESE SCRIPTURE

- Proverbs 6:6-11 Matthew 25:26
- Proverbs 10:4-5, 26 Romans 12:11
- Ecclesiastes 10:18 2 Thess. 3:10-12
- Isaiah 56:10 Hebrews 6:12

Don’t be lazy about writing your journal entries! How will sloth slow you down from here on end?

THE KNUCKLEHEAD GOSPELS
Daily Journal Reflections
WEEK 3—Overcoming the Sin of Lust
SUNDAY

“STAND READY...”

Here's a Knucklehead Idea!

Master yourself or be a slave to the most powerful weapon the devil has at his disposal. Why it is so powerful? Because it feels good, like sweet poison.

Lust reveals a twisted hunger within us - a giant, dark hole in our soul. Some are deeper than others. Whether you're young or old, rich or poor, lust corrupts good intentions, twists reality, and betrays commitments in its hunger to be filled from one act to the next.

It's so powerful that we're having to send reinforcements to help you overcome this sin. They are: **values, virtue, character, dignity, integrity and honor**. Four of these we discussed previously, and we are adding two. They will support the Armor of God in this journey of self-mastery.

But first, let's put a face on it!

Have your good intentions ever been corrupted, like a friendship gone too far; or wanting to help someone in need and ending up in bed; or delivered a product or service and then some, like the proverbial mailman?

Have you ever twisted reality by justifying sex with someone, knowing it wouldn't be right, maybe even illegal?

Have you ever betrayed commitments to the one you love to gratify a sexual desire?

Have you ever had daydreams of attempting one of these?

The only way you can overcome this sin is to be honest with yourself. Are you?

THE KNUCKLEHEAD GOSPELS
Daily Journal Reflections
WEEK 3—Lust
TUESDAY

“...With RIGHTEOUSNESS as your breastplate.”

Here’s a Knucklehead Idea!

Virtue is a commitment to your F⁴ Values. It’s the choice that strengthens your foundation whereupon a good, long, and happy life can be built. Virtue is a quality that sets moral standards to your journey.

For example Virtue commits you:

...In FAITH you are called to pray daily for God’s grace and guidance; to be patient, always searching for his blessings and to be thankful for them.

...In FAMILY, you are called to commit or prepare to commit to uphold your role in your family; honoring your mother and father; being loyal to your spouse and a good role model to your children.

...in FRIENDSHIP you are called to be honest and loyal to friends; encourage good things in their lives and discourage bad; help in time of need without expecting anything in return.

...In FREEDOM you called to be self-possessed, self-controlled and self-mastered. If you lack these, you do not enjoy true freedom.

What do these standards do to help you overcome lust? It sets boundaries and commitments that keep you on course to your destination. By falling to lust, there’s no way you will reach it. You’ll be lost as long as you remain in its haze.

Faith, family, friendship and freedom. Which is the most difficult to commit to? Which is the most difficult?

THE KNUCKLEHEAD GOSPELS
Daily Journal Reflections
WEEK 4—Overcoming the Sin of Greed
SUNDAY

“SO STAND READY...”

Here's a Knucklehead Idea!

Greedy is wanting more than you need. It attacks the positive qualities presented last week (value, virtue, character, etc.) in an attempt to gain not only more money, but possessions and power, too.

*“Will you gain anything if you win the whole world
but lose your life? (Matthew 16:26)”*

This week we will explore ways greedy can corrupt your positive qualities and share ideas on how the Armor of God can help protect them on your way to overcoming this sin.

PAINT A PICTURE. Who comes to mind when you think of a greedy person? What does she/he do to make you think so?

THE KNUCKLEHEAD GOSPELS
Daily Journal Reflections
WEEK 4—Greed
FRIDAY

“...And accept SALVATION as a helmet...”

Here’s a Knucklehead Idea...

Integrity stands when ... (you know the answer?)

“Whatever is hidden away will be brought into the open, and whatever is covered up will be found and brought into the light.” (Luke 8:17)

It’s Jesus who will make it known. You can’t hide from God, Knucklehead. It’s hard staying on course, even harder when no one is seemingly paying attention to us. But God is.

I was once offered contraband by a cellie. I declined. He said, “Come on, no one’s going to know about it!” “God will know,” was my only response. He is the only one that matters. Why? Because my salvation depends on him; so does yours.

“Final judgement must wait until the Lord comes; he will bring to light the dark secrets and expose the hidden purposes of people’s minds. And then all will receive from God the praise they deserve.” (1 Cor. 4:5)

So, what are you plotting greedily in the dark right now that will offend God?

THE KNUCKHEAD GOSPELS
Daily Journal Reflection
WEEK 5 Overcoming the Sin of Gluttony
SUNDAY

"SO STAND READY..."

Here's a Knucklehead idea...

Balance. Gluttony is an experience of temporary fulfillment and our thoughts and actions become centered on the next experience once the fulfillment subsides, almost like a drug induced high. For some it's food, for others it's drink or sex, or shopping, thrills, adrenalin rushes, etc. Like greed, gluttony abuses good things and they turn bad. The key is to find a balance that enjoys a good thing without abusing it through overindulgence.

Is there something you overindulge in? I tend to overindulge in two good things: coffee and ideas. I've been known to drink up to 12 cups of coffee a day. I've stopped everything to drink a cup, even preparing a cup before Mass so it can be enjoyed immediately after. Yea, that's pretty bad. And then there's ideas. There are several Chapel volunteers who will testify to my hunger to produce and develop new ideas. I love the experience just as I'm sure you love yours.

This week we'll work at establishing a balance that will keep good things good. But first, what do you overindulge in?

THE KNUCKHEAD GOSPELS
Daily Journal Reflection
WEEK 5—Gluttony
TUESDAY

"...With RIGHTEOUSNESS as your breastplate..."

Here's a Knucklehead idea!

Don't get distracted from your mission. Are you surprised to learn that you have a mission? Yep, just by being here you are accepting the mission of transforming your life from a glutton for misery and emptiness to one of joy and fulfillment. **BE CAREFUL.** Satan uses lies to distract you from making the right choices to help accomplish your mission.

PAINT A PICTURE: You eat more than your fill while your neighbor goes hungry. What's the right choice? Would it be sharing a portion of your meal? Maybe inviting him to sit for a meal? Maybe giving him food to making his own meal?

What if you're the neighbor going hungry and have nothing to share other than the complaint of going to bed hungry? Don't be a glutton for misery. Share the time you would've spent on complaining by indulging instead in positive conversation with others. Maybe you can come up with an activity that will keep your mind from sinking to the gutter and bring a smile to your face. This will make you spiritually rich.

"Give to the poor and you will never be in need. If you close your eyes to the poor/ many people will curse you." (Proverbs 28:27)

Be true to God by sharing your goodness and He will be true to you. What can you share today?

THE KNUCKLEHEAD GOSPELS
Daily Journal Reflections
WEEK 6 – Envy
MONDAY

“...With TRUTH as a belt tight around your waist...”

Here’s a Knucklehead Idea...

Dogs don’t chase parked cars. People need to be out and about to get attention. It’s this movement – the joy, contentment, peace or love expressed in the life of another – that catches your eye like a cherry red Corvette driving up a street.

Sheryl Crow said it best in one of her songs: “It’s not having what you want, it’s wanting what you have.” That’s a very powerful thought, to actually enjoy what you have. Maybe you can look around to see the good things you have lying around in your life.

For me, I really can’t say I’m hurting in a material sense. Where I am lacking, as I noted yesterday is personality. Those who know me will certainly agree that I lack charisma. It’s something I definitely envy and appreciate in others. But even though I am not the center of attention when I enter a room, I can obviously write and develop ideas that attract people in ways others cannot. This is something that I highly value and nourish in my life.

What do you see that’s valuable in your life?

THE KNUCKLEHEAD GOSPELS
Daily Journal Reflections
WEEK 7—Pride
WEDNESDAY

“And as your shoes the readiness to announce the Good News of PEACE.”

Here's a Knucklehead Idea!

“Now, Job, make peace with God and stop treating him like an enemy; if you do, then he will bless you. Accept the teaching he gives; keep his words in your heart. Yes, you must humbly return to God and put an end to all the evil that is done in your house.” (Job 22:21-23)

Peace can be made through conflict. In our case, there's often an inner conflict in which we blame God or other. An act of humility is accepting responsibility for our actions. Once we do that, we can begin to clean out the crud we have in our heart.

It's like cleaning a bowl; throw water and soap in it and crud will float to the top. Same is true as you begin to clean the bowl of your life. There may be a few things held deep down that will float up to the top and bring anger and resentment toward God or others. Don't let it fester. Remember, you're cleaning your bowl. Keep His words in your heart and get rid of the crud once and for all. You will be blessed for it.

Think about your current circumstances and determine if there's anything causing you to hold anger or resentment toward God or others in your life. What are they?

THE KNUCKLEHEAD GOSPELS
Daily Journal Reflections
WEEK 7—Pride
THURSDAY

“At all times carry FAITH as a shield; for with it you will be able to put out all the burning arrows shot by the evil one.”

Here’s a Knucklehead Idea!

“Unfaithful people, don’t you know that to be the world’s friend means to be God’s enemy? If you want to be the world’s friend, you make yourself God’s enemy. Don’t think that there is no truth in the scripture that says, ‘The spirit that God placed in us is filled with fierce desires.’ But the grace that God gives is even stronger. As the scripture says, ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’ So then submit yourself to God. Resist the devil, and he will run away from you. Come near to God, and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners! Purify your hearts, you hypocrites! Be sorrowful, cry, weep; change your laughter into crying, your joy to gloom! Humble yourselves before the Lord and he will lift you up.”

Don’t be stubborn, Knucklehead. **There are things that are hard to let go.** But how much sense does it make to hold on to something that is holding you down? Really, think about it. There’s no doubt that you have successfully let some things go, or you wouldn’t have made it this far in the TKG journey. But there’s something deep down that you’re keeping there. Consider letting that go, too.

Why has it been so hard to let this issue go?
