

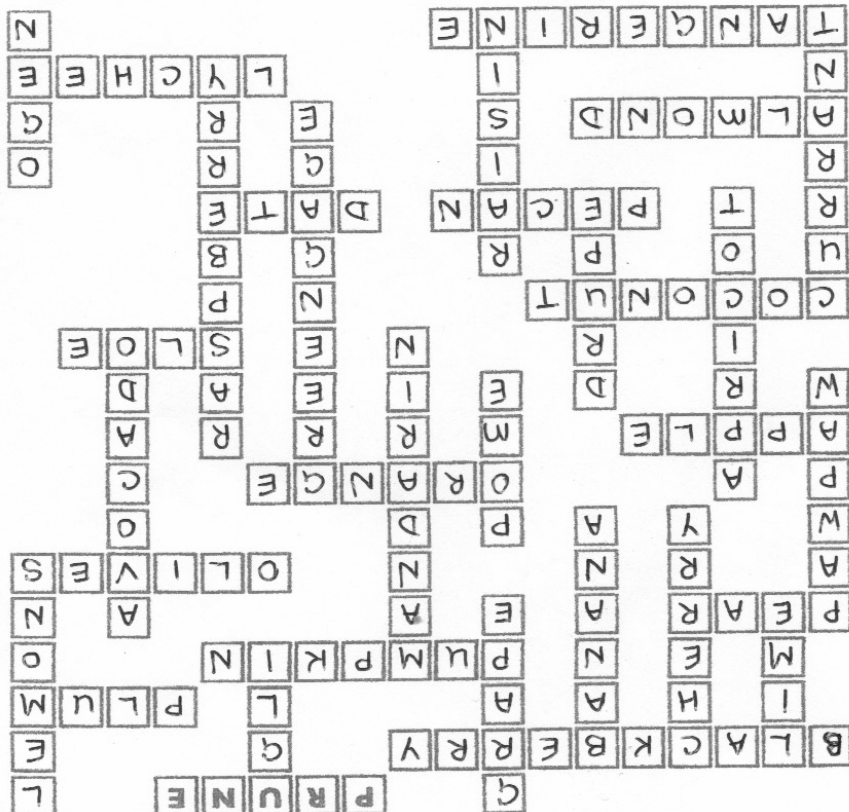
SUMMER RENDEZVOUS At Home

Look at the birds, free and unfettered, not tied down to a job description, careless in the care of God.

Matthew 6:25-26

DAY 2

Answers to yesterday's quiz: **FRUIT BOWL**



BIRD FEEDERS & GIRAFFES

My oldest grandchild, Akari, lives in South Africa. During one visit, when she was 3 or 4 years old, she and I made a bird feeder out of a plastic drink bottle, two sticks and some wire. We bought some seed, filled it and hung it in a tree outside the kitchen window. My wife and I came home a day or two later, leaving her to look out for birds. I was thrilled, sometime afterwards, to receive a recorded WhatsApp message from my daughter's phone. The excited voice was that of Akari: "Granddad, we've seen birds on the bird feeder."



Last Christmas, for some of her cousins in this country, I made up packages of bird seed and peanuts, decorated with cut out pictures of birds and a guide to the most common birds seen in this country. It is always a great thrill when they call me to say that they have seen a new species of bird in the garden. Sometimes they know what it is called. Sometimes they describe it and I try to tell them what it is. I want them to grow up sharing the joy I experience from

watching birds.

And not only birds, but wildlife generally. A week or so after I saw the amazing South African butterfly migration that I mentioned in yesterday's reflection, I took my two older South African granddaughters, Akari and Nozipho, on a game drive in one of South Africa's national parks. It was a great joy to see their excitement at the various animals we saw.

At one point during the drive, Akari, aged 6, announced, "I know the difference between the boy giraffes and the girl giraffes!" I was aware that the other people on the safari vehicle were listening to us, but I asked, hesitantly, "So what is the difference between the boy giraffes and the girl giraffes?" I was all too aware that what followed might be embarrassing. She gave me her answer: "The girl giraffes are the ones with longer eyelashes!" I wonder whether that's true, whether anyone has researched it.

May we all learn to look at every aspect of the natural world, wherever we encounter it, and whether we see it directly or on a screen, with the awe and wonder of a child. We should delight in creation in the same way that God did when, as we hear at the end of the creation story in the book of Genesis in the Old Testament:

"God saw everything that he had made, and it was very good."



Ask the animals what they think
- let them teach you;
let the birds tell you what's going on.
Put your ear to the earth
- learn the basics.



Listen -
the fish in the ocean will tell you their stories.
Isn't it clear that they all know and agree
that GOD is sovereign,
that he holds all things in his hand
Every living soul, yes,
every breathing creature?

Job 12:7-12



Worth a watch: **Life**
Episode 2: **Birds** on BBC iPlayer

The nature documentary looks at birds with slow-motion cameras and aerial photography.

It's not just wildlife that benefits when we take an interest in nature ...

The Wildlife Trusts and University of Derby look at the benefits of daily nature contact

The feel-good factor from simple daily contact with nature can last for months. This is a finding from a new Wildlife Trusts review.

The review is based on surveys completed by people taking part in *30 Days Wild* – the UK's biggest nature challenge. The challenge is run by The Wildlife Trusts. People take part by pledging to do one wild thing each day during the month of June.

The University of Derby has looked at survey responses from more than 1,000 people over five years. They discovered that people who took part in *30 Days Wild* continued to feel positive effects two months after the challenge was over. For example feeling happier and more relaxed.

30 Days Wild participants are provided with ideas, wallcharts and activity sheets that give everyone easy ways of enjoying nature whatever their location. These 'random acts of wildness' range from walking barefoot on grass, to sitting beneath a tree or watching birds on a feeder.

Key findings

- People felt more connected to wildlife
- People felt healthier
- People felt happier
- People were more likely to want to help wildlife



Looking after our planet one small step at a time!

We can see and hear God's natural world around us

- from our window
- out on a walk
- in our garden

You could make a bird feeder to attract birds to your garden.

- Tie a ribbon or pipe cleaner around a pinecone so that you can hang it up.
- Mix some bird seed or chopped nuts into some lard/fat/butter.
- Or you could simply use peanut butter
- Press the mixture into the pinecone.
- Hang your bird feeder somewhere you can easily see it. Or put the remaining seed in a small dish where you can watch who comes to feed.



Use the bird spotting sheet and a notebook to record what birds you have seen each day.

Use a notebook to also record other blessings that you notice each day that you can thank God for.

Garden bird detective



Chaffinch



Greenfinch



House sparrow



Blackbird



Blue tit



Goldfinch



Great tit



Collared dove



Starling



Wood pigeon





I pray that God
will speak loudly
And that you

will hear humbly.

I pray that God
will act mightily

And that you
will receive graciously.

I pray that God
will bless amazingly

And that you
will share freely.

I pray that God
will be close

And that you will walk
safely.

GOD IS ABLE

O	E	D	G	B	T	O	G	E	I	N	O	I	M	D	L	S	E	B	
I	L	O	O	D	E	Y	A	M	S	I	D	E	B	T	O	N	O	D	V
W	B	G	I	H	A	V	E	C	H	O	S	E	N	Y	O	U	A	O	E
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L	S	U	O	E	T	H	G	I	R	D	V	L	T	H	A	I	G	A	S
L	S	O	E	Y	M	P	Y	Y	I	R	E	A	I	D	R	P	U	E	E
U	O	Y	N	E	H	T	G	N	E	R	T	S	L	L	I	W	I	F	N
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H	M	A	C	H	I	R	Y	O	M	H	R	I	E	O	L	N	T	O	P
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L	E	R	H	M	E	I	L	O	O	G	E	.	C	W	M	S	H	O	E
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U	O	Y	H	T	I	W	M	A	I	R	O	F	A	E	G	M	G	H	S
Y	D	W	H	N	N	E	I	D	E	H	O	B	L	R	L	U	S	T	P
A	O	E	E	M	N	A	N	D	H	E	L	P	Y	O	U	R	I	H	A
Y	G	S	E	T	S	L	O	S	S	E	S	S	A	L	M	D	M	G	G
S	S	S	M	I	S	M	H	O	L	H	M	S	E	G	E	N	E	I	S
I	D	F	R	R	U	W	R	E	I	L	M	E	A	H	O	O	T	R	I

ISAIAH 41.10.
 I HAVE CHOSEN YOU
 FOR I AM WITH YOU
 FOR I AM YOUR GOD
 AND HELP YOU
 WITH MY
 RIGHT HAND
 LOSSES
 GUILT
 PAIN
 BOREDOM
 GOD OF THE IMPOSSIBLE

YOU ARE MY SERVANT
 DO NOT FEAR
 DO NOT BE DISMAYED
 I WILL STRENGTHEN YOU
 I WILL UPHOLD YOU
 RIGHTEOUS
 DIFFICULTIES
 BEREAVEMENT
 FEAR
 LONELINESS
 LIMITATIONS
 HE IS ABLE

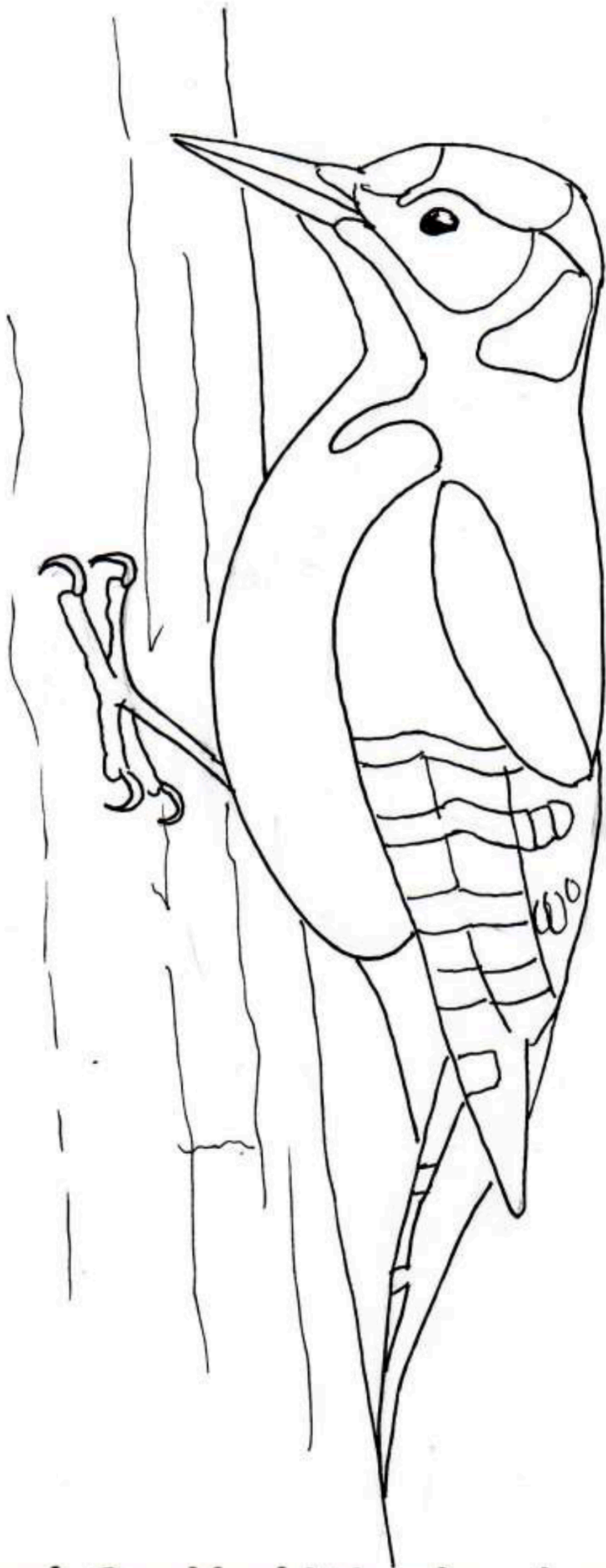
Bible Books Puzzle.

Can you find 30 books of the Bible hidden in this passage?

This is a most remarkable puzzle. It was found by a gentleman in an airplane seat pocket on the flight from Los Angeles to Honolulu, keeping him occupied for hours. He enjoyed it so much that he passed it on to some friends. One friend from Illinois worked on his, whilst fishing from his John-boat. Another friend studied it while playing his banjo. Elaine Taylor, a columnist friend, was so intrigued by it she mentioned it in her weekly newspaper column.

Another friend judges the job of solving this puzzle so involving that she brews a cup of tea to help her nerves. There will be some names that are really easy to spot. That's a fact. Some people, however, will soon find themselves in a jam, especially since the books are not necessarily capitalised. Truthfully from answers we get, we are forced to admit it usually takes a minister or scholar to see some of them at the worst. Research has shown that something in our genes is responsible for the difficulty we have in seeing the books in these paragraphs. During a recent fundraising event, which features this puzzle, the Alpha Delta Phi-Lemonade booth set a new sales record.

The local paper, the Chronicle, surveyed over 50 patrons who reported that this puzzle was one of the most difficult they had ever seen. As Daniel Hurnana humbly puts it, "the books are all right here in plain view, hidden from sight". Those able to find all of them will hear great lamentations from those who have to be shown. One revelation that may help is that books Timothy and Samuel appear with their numbers. Also, keep in mind, that punctuation and spaces in the middle are normal. A chipper attitude will help you compete really well against those who claim to know the answers. Remember, there is no need for a mass exodus, there really are 30 books of the Bible lurking somewhere in these paragraphs waiting to be found.



Great Spotted Woodpecker

