


# July 2026

## True Freedom: The Power of Tested Understanding

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>July Birthdays</b> 1—Cathy Filippone 1—Billie Shawl 6—Betsy Timmerman 16—Stan Shawl 22—Melvin Johnson 24—Marillyn Moore 25—Marilyn Michaelson 28—Bette Ryan			<b>1</b> 10am SW Vly Enlightenment Metaphysical Grp	<b>2</b> 10:30am AA 10:30 Practicing the Presence book study with Rev Robert Test 6pm OA	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>  10:30am Women's Group Rising
<b>5</b> 10:30am <i>Standing for Freedom</i> Rev Billie Martini Birthday/Anniversary Sunday 11:45 Independence Day Fellowship	<b>6</b> 4:30pm TOPS 5pm ACA	<b>7</b> 10:30am A Course Of Love 10:30am AA 5pm Healing Hands	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> 10:30am AA 10:30 Practicing the Presence book study with Rev Robert Test 6pm OA	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>12</b> 10:30am <i>The Power of 8: Group            High Watch - When two or more            gather</i> Cerise Patron 11:45am Fellowship Noon Town Hall Meeting	<b>13</b> 4:30pm TOPS 5pm ACA	<b>14</b> 10:30am A Course Of Love 10:30am AA	<b>15</b> 10am SW Vly Enlightenment Metaphysical Grp	<b>16</b> 9am Men's Breakfast 10:30am AA 10:30 Practicing the Presence book study with Rev Robert Test 6pm OA	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 10am Choir Practice
<b>19</b> 10:30am <i>Carry Your Own Water!</i> Rev Jimmie Scott 11:45am Fellowship Noon Line Dancing Lessons	<b>20</b> 4:30pm TOPS 5pm ACA	<b>21</b> 10:30am A Course Of Love 10:30am AA 5pm Healing Hands	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> 10:30am AA 10:30 Practicing the Presence book study with Rev Robert Test 6pm OA	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b> 10:30am <i>The Power of            Understanding, The Key to            Freedom's Door</i> Rev Charli Tupper 11:45 Fellowship Noon Board Meeting	<b>27</b> 4:30pm TOPS 5pm ACA	<b>28</b> 10:30am A Course Of Love 10:30am AA	<b>29</b> 4pm Wellness Drum Circle	<b>30</b> 10:30am AA 10:30 Practicing the Presence book study with Rev Robert Test 6pm OA	<b>31</b>	

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your ways straight.” Proverbs 3: 5-6

Dear Partners on the Path,

I’ve always noticed doors wherever I’ve traveled. Go through my photo albums or even the photos on my phone and you’ll find photos of doors and doorways. In fact, on my refrigerator, I keep a photo of a doorway to one of the magnificent Egyptian temples in Luxor. It is bathed in golden light, the vibration of divine understanding. Twenty-five-meter (82ft) obelisks welcome you into the history of the lives of the people as told in hieroglyphics on each of the massive columns. To me, the temples of Egypt acknowledge the marvels of human creativity and honoring of all of the colors of life.

My fridge also displays a photo of an open doorway atop the Greek island of Santorini. The view looks out to the Mediterranean Sea with a cruise ship afloat in the distance. Then there is the photo of a narrow doorway into a marketplace in Cairo with people milling around at the fruit, vegetable and trinket stands.

Doors and doorways are metaphors for possibilities; for invitations; for reflecting on desires and what matters. This is true of spiritual understanding as well. It is a door and a doorway to seeing through the visible to the invisible.

I think often of the doors I’ve opened and those I have not; of doorways that I’ve dared to walk through and those I have not – and what invisible beliefs motivated me. Fortunately, the doors I’ve walked through, while testing my faith in God and myself, have brought a greater sense of freedom – to create, to be bold, to be present, to keep growing and expanding myself and my life.

Spiritual understanding is a doorway to freedom from fear and its many disguises. It is a doorway to peace in the midst of difficulties, delays, disappointments and external chaos. The disciple Thomas represents spiritual understanding. His earned nickname is “doubting Thomas”. He refused to believe that Jesus had risen – until he saw him in person. In other words, until he personally experienced the risen Jesus. When he did, he got it. Jesus invited him to touch his wounds. Spiritual understanding is developed through life’s tests. It grows through learning to see through the circumstance to a spiritual principle that empowers an enlightened response. It grows through trusting God in you when you stand in the unknown or in a dark place because you have come to believe that what God has done, God can and will do in this too.

The location of the spiritual power of understanding is in the frontal lobe of the brain, the center of most of the dopamine-sensitive neurons. The frontal cortex governs actions of all kinds, including speech and emotions. It gives you the ability to “see” the consequences of what you are about to say or do. It governs your capacity to choose what truly gives you life. When you do that your dopamine-sensitive neurons say “yippee” and expand themselves for more joy – more freedom.

This month is an opportune time to reflect on the doors you have and have not opened, the doorways you’ve walked through or chosen not to. In your reflections, consider what beliefs, emotions or perceptions motivated you one way or the other. Reflect on how being tested in life impacted you and your faith in the God within you and everywhere present. Consider how spiritual principles undergird your choices and ways of being today as a result of being tested and passed the test with flying colors. Has your tested understanding grown an optimistic, positive, “wisened” mindset?

Historically considered the wisest of wise, Solomon, when offered anything he desired, asked God for an understanding heart. Solomon saw through experience how God worked wonders in his father’s life. Seeing this, he humbly asked that God guide his decisions from an understanding heart. That request commanded all the powers of heaven to bless Solomon. And, when you seek God’s guidance from an understanding heart, God will do the same for you.

Always Loving You,

P.S. For a more detailed description of the spiritual power of understanding, read *Adventures in Resilience*.

Rev. Sharon