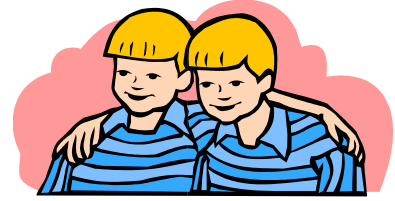


The Family Together - Week 15

Daily Devotions For The Family



Sunday

Read together Mark 2:15-17

Hymn for the day: Nearer, Still Nearer

OUR MOST SERIOUS AILMENTS ARE NOT PHYSICAL, BUT SPIRITUAL. We are hurt far more by the malignancies in our character than by the illnesses in our body. And it is the removal of these sins in the heart that God is concerned with. The Great Physician desires to restore our spiritual health and wholeness. If we want to improve, we must be honest and open to the truth about our character right now. Not even the Great Physician can help us if we're not willing to be examined. Trying to hide our symptoms and pretending that nothing very serious is wrong will only result in our getting worse. An accurate diagnosis will be humbling, to be sure, but we should still want to know the whole truth. David's prayer is that of an honest man: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; . . . see if there is any wicked way in me" (Psalm 139:23,24). We must desire to see ourselves as God sees us. But more than that, we must cultivate confidence that God knows what He's doing. Whether we understand the wisdom of His plan or not, we must trust both the accuracy of His diagnosis and the effectiveness of His treatment. We must also have the courage to submit to the healing process that He prescribes. The cancer cannot be cut away from our character without radical surgery. Because sin is so entangled in our thinking, the purging operation is always painful and often lengthy. But as with physical disease, if we're not willing to endure momentary pain in order to become healthy later on, our only option is to get sicker and sicker. We can stay in our sickly "comfort" zone or we can move toward greater health, but not both at the same time. "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live" (Deuteronomy 30:19). How much commitment do we have to the truth about ourselves? For all our talk about loving the truth, do we really desire to see all that God sees when He examines our hearts? There will be no redemption for those unwilling to face reality. - Gary Henry

"When we go to our meeting with God, we should go like a patient to his doctor, first to be thoroughly examined and afterwards to be treated for our ailment. Then something will happen when you pray" (O. Hallesby).

Pray together: Search me, O God, and know my heart; see if there is any wicked way in me

Monday

Read together Nehemiah 5:1-13

Hymn for the day: "Oh The Things We May Do"

Blest Be The Tie

How sad it is when behavior that characterizes the world and the worldly-minded invades the family of God. It's true that the people of God are people. But people are made in God's image. And those people who are destined to populate heaven ought to have their affections set on still higher principles. We ought to behave differently. Many of the people who returned to Jerusalem in Nehemiah's day came out of slavery. They came with nothing. They found nothing when they came. The difficulty of raising a city from the ashes reduced many of them to still deeper poverty. Some of the Jews who were in better straits than their contemporaries offered assistance but with interest. They did nothing uncommon by worldly standards, and thus the problem. The kinship of believers and their brethren is uncommon. "Do good to all," said Paul, "especially to those who are of the household of God" (Gal. 6:10). How do you treat your brethren in the Lord? Do you treat them differently? Do you show them more courtesy, more warmth, more genuine affection? Do you have more time for them, more patience with them, more sympathy for their circumstances? "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called 'benefactors.' But not so among you" (Luke 22:25-26). Let it not be so among us. - Jason Moore

Pray together: Help me today O God be a fervent brother or sister to my brethren

Tuesday

Read together Matthew 14:22-23

Hymn for the day: "Master, The Tempest Is Raging"

The Storms Of Life

Storms are part of life. Experience teaches that fact. The storm in this story becomes a teaching tool for the Savior, giving Him the opportunity to show His disciples how they need to trust Him who calms the stormy sea. The story tells us something about life's storms and how to deal with them. First, it tells us there will be some storms. The wise man said, "in the day of adversity, consider" (Eccl. 7:14). Jesus said, "sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." Both indicate that storms are part of life. They come to all of us, no one is exempt. Second, it tells us where to put our faith. We sometimes lose heart because we try and handle our storms by ourselves. We need not fear the storms if we have our trust in Jesus and His power. "Be of good cheer," He said as He came, "It is I." Third, it tells us to stay focused. We are not to lose heart, even though the winds be ever so fierce. We need not fear if we watch where we are going. Peter walked on the water,

but only so long as he was focused on Jesus. When he began to consider the storm as it raged around him, he lost his way. He lost his focus, so he lost his way. We know Him who calms the stormy sea. We need to trust Him to care for us, even in the storms of life. - Dee Bowman

Pray together: Give me faith to trust in you, O Lord, when the storms come in my life.

Wednesday

Read together Acts 10:1-48

Hymn for the day: "Stand Up, Stand Up For Jesus"

A Sermon For Today

Peter's sermon to Cornelius' house needs an audience today as much as when he first spoke it. "God shows no partiality." Let us not either. Let no prejudice cause you to refrain from doing good to another when it's in your power to do so. "Whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him." A healthy dose of fear and a generous portion of righteousness will keep you in God's favor today. The former will keep you out of trouble. The latter will keep you on task. "The word which God sent...that word you know." God has spoken. We don't have to guess what He thinks, what He wants. We can read. We can know. Thank God for such a privilege today. "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power." Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Good news can. The good news of God tabernacling among men, suffering between thieves, sleeping beside the dead, bursting from the tomb, reigning above the heavens. That came from Nazareth and equips us for Eternity. "He commanded us to preach to the people." He still does. "And the things you have heard from me...commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2). If you want to strengthen your commitment today commit someone else to following the Lord. Shall we stand and sing? - Jason Moore

Pray together: Today I will share the good news with someone as I follow Jesus.

Thursday

Read together Mark 5:1-20

Hymn for the day: "I Gave My Life For Thee"

Feeling With The Less Fortunate

Look around you today. Look at the people who are unfortunate - those who are crippled, or blind, or otherwise infirm. It's easy to dismiss their presence, to ignore their maladies, to push compassion aside and think about more positive things. Jesus saw a man crazed by possession, not of one, but a host of demons. He ran around in the dark among the graves, and was so tormented that he cut himself with sharp stones. Can you imagine how bad that

must have been? Enter Jesus. The man was so strongly possessed that the demons spoke for him. They recognized Him immediately as the Son of God. I say "they" because the man was possessed, not of one, but of a legion of devils. Jesus said, in love and compassion, "come out of him!" and He sent them into a herd of swine. Jesus performed this act of sincere compassion, casting out the demons into the herd of swine, and what was His reward? He was asked to leave the area. It's not easy to be compassionate. You run the risk of getting hurt. You run the risk of being refused. Sometimes folks won't like it. The risk is worth the taking. There is great satisfaction in being a part of someone's misery, of being involved in someone's hurt, of being part of another's problems. To do so is to be like the Master. Look around you today. Find someone to help. Get involved, even if it means you may have to hurt a little. After all, you're just being like the Savior. - Dee Bowman

Pray together: May I follow the example of Jesus today; even if it causes pain.

Friday

Read together Proverbs 15:31-33

Hymn for the day: "Live For Jesus"

Pearls Of Wisdom For Living

The Proverbs are general truths that are stated in memorable ways. They form deep impressions on our minds, providing easy access to what we know to be right and compelling us to conform. Notice this simple little context. The value of hearing. The hearing referred to here is more than just listening. It has to do with paying careful attention, giving heed to what one hears, and making applications of it to life. That person who learns from experience or "heareth the reproof of life" will not make the same mistakes over and over again. The value of good impression. The person who refuses to be instructed ends up hurting himself. He falls victim to his own devices. On the other hand, the person who listens carefully and responds accordingly gets understanding, making him less likely to have troubles. The best instruction of all. There is no knowledge as high, no information as valuable as that which comes from God. When we humbly allow His instruction, we become what He had in mind when He created us. Let us strive diligently to hear Him and do what He says. Let us honor Him by living right. Let us accord to Him the kind of respect He so rightfully deserves by being as much like Him as we can. - Dee Bowman

Pray together: Let your word teach me the fear of Jehovah

Saturday

Read together Matthew 6:19-34

Hymn for the day: "Trust And Obey"

Confidence In The Lord

If you are living, you are laying up treasures somewhere. There is a strong tendency to put our confidence in things of little value, things that in the ultimate reality don't matter too much. Things like wealth, fame, and power have no value at all if you lose your soul. Every person will finally figure that out when he faces death. If you lay up treasures in heaven you are making an investment of the right things and in the right place. To lay up treasures here causes worry and anxiety. It's hard not to worry. Life is filled with "reasons" for anxiety - family relationships, friends, work, school and your health. It's hard not to worry. But excessive concern for worldly things is sinful; it displays a lack of trust in God. He has promised to supply all our real needs, making sure we have what we really need; and when we have undue concerns about those things it hurts His feelings. It looks as if we don't really trust Him. The real duty of us all is to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." When we do that, all the other things will be given in due time. To seek the kingdom first is to "set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." God will provide. He adorns the fields, He refreshes the earth with timely rain, He brings food for the birds. It is foolish to worry, to put our confidence in things that have only relative value. It is foolish not to put our confidence in Him who is able to meet our every need. -

Dee Bowman

Pray together: Help me learn to trust you completely and not trust in the things of this world.