

The Family Together – Week 18

Daily Devotions For The Family



Sunday

Read together James 1:21-27

Hymn for the day: Higher Ground

Higher Ground

“But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does” (James 1:25).

IT IS NOT FROM THINKING ALONE THAT WE MAKE SPIRITUAL PROGRESS, BUT RATHER FROM THINKING, DOING, AND THEN LEARNING FROM WHAT WE’VE DONE. Whoever makes an honest attempt to do what God’s word has taught him to do, that person, James says, “will be blessed in what he does.” We get to higher ground not by meditation alone, but by movement.

Our conscience is a cautionary faculty that warns us when we’re about to violate our principles. It was given to restrain us. But sometimes we need to be stimulated, and our conscience should do that also. It should move us to act in ways that ARE consistent with our principles. Often, however, we fail to act. Afraid of making a mistake, we do nothing. And consequently, we LEARN nothing. By failing to act on the best of our present understanding, we forfeit the opportunity to grow in that understanding.

Improvement is the result of examining what we’ve done. The more we do, the more we have a chance to improve. But if we wait to do anything until we think we can get it exactly right, we’ll probably do very little. Perfect conditions for action rarely present themselves, and the person who waits for them is wasting valuable time. “He who observes the wind will not sow, and he who regards the clouds will not reap” (Ecclesiastes 11:4). In the real world, we have to go ahead and do the best we can.

Spiritual growth has more than one dimension. On the one hand, it requires that we eschew evil. But on the other, it requires that we do the good that we know to do, and then learn to do even better. “You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:17,18). Maturity comes from actions carefully considered beforehand and then carefully evaluated afterward. – Gary Henry

Pray together: Give me more faith, Lord in my worship today.

Monday

Read together Matthew 5:6-12

Hymn for the day: More about Jesus

O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee

There is more to being a disciple of Jesus than just saying it. You have to want to walk with Him. The true disciple will be hungry to hear. This hunger is not merely a “Frito-snack,” mind you, but the kind of hunger one has to stay alive. The spirit of a man must be nourished just like his body. And the true disciple is always famished for more food. He will show mercy. Mercy is part of who the Master is. He is the personification of mercy. The disciple has to show a sincere regard for others, whether they care or not, else they are not like their Master. He will have a pure heart. A pure heart is one devoid of prejudices, preconceptions, selfishness, and a host of other impurities. It is a heart set on things above, one consecrated to higher thinking. He will be a peacemaker. Peacemakers are rare today, but if one is to follow Christ he must be such. I think this beatitude is included because God knew there would be a lot of wars. But if it’s not possible to live in peace - He will live with persecution. Be forewarned – if you live for the Master, you will suffer for it. Persecution is the lot of the disciple. It is a given. The true disciple is not just a learner, one who hears the Master, but one who is determined to follow Him no matter what it takes. - Dee Bowman

Pray together: Guide my steps today, Lord to THY GLORY!

Tuesday

Read together Acts 13:44-52

Hymn for the day: “Far And Near”

Reasons To Keep Preaching

The episode of Paul’s preaching in Antioch of Pisidia began with such hope but ends rather sadly. But despite this pessimistic ending, we find here compelling reasons to keep preaching. The devil hates nothing worse than an evangelistic people. The stubbornness of the Jews was only an indication that the gospel was working. When we’re confronted with obstacles, it’s because we’ve invaded the devil’s territory. He’s on the defensive. It’s not time to quit, but to press on. The Lord can turn dead ends into open doors. Finding the Jews unreceptive, Paul turned to the Gentiles who “were glad and glorified the word of the Lord” (vs. 48). If the Lord could turn Calvary, the dead of all dead ends, into an open tomb that bore witness to victory, then can He not make a way for the gospel? He did for Paul. The preached word is always effective. It always does what it was intended to do. It convicts some. It persuades some of those convicted. But it renders all who hear it accountable whether they are convicted or persuaded. All we can do is let men hear. The word will do the rest. The reproach of the cross is the Lord’s greatest strategy. Paul’s stripes told the world that his message was worth hurting for. When we are rejected but keep preaching, we say to the world that this gospel is worth

hurting for. The world can't ignore such dedication. That's precisely the point. In season. Out of season. Keep preaching. - Jason Moore

Pray together: Let me press on today to share my life of Christ with others.

Wednesday

Read together Deuteronomy 34:1-12

Hymn for the day: "God Will Take Care Of You"

Overcoming Yourself

I've been to a lot of funerals and heard quite a few eulogies, but I doubt I'll ever listen to anything more powerful than what was said after Moses died. "Since then no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face." What makes that tribute so remarkable is that this is a man who first asked, "Who am I, that I should go" (Exodus 3:11)? But he was able to put himself at the disposal of God who can quickly turn fear into faith. He'll change a "who am I" into a "here am I, send me." This is also a man who said, "I have never been eloquent...for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue" (Exodus 4:10). Yet, by the time God was through with him, Stephen testified that he was powerful in "words and deeds" (Acts 7:22). He was molded and made into a great orator because he got into the hands of the Molder and Maker. Just because you come up with some excuse does not mean that you're excused. If the Lord has blessed you with some opportunity, He's going to bless you with some ability to get the job done. You'll have to work at it, but trust Him to see you through. He can make your weakest disability your greatest ability. Moses is revealed as a man of faith and doubt, anger and restraint, patience and impulsiveness. But more than all, as a "man of God" (Joshua 14:6). How else would you want to be remembered? - Bubba Garner

Pray together: Lord, give me more opportunities today to be thy mouth piece.

Thursday

Read together Proverbs 31:10-31

Hymn for the day: "God Give Us Christian Homes"

God's Crowning Jewel

God never made anything more beautiful, more wonderful, more needed than a good woman. She is a crowning jewel in His creation. Solomon is well within the mark when he describes her as a "virtuous woman." What is she like? She is trustworthy. You can count on her. She will do good to her husband. You need not doubt her faithfulness or the sincerity of her love. She is industrious. She will work as long and as hard as is needed to provide all she deems necessary for the good of her family. She is frugal. She is never wasteful. She will not waste time. She has time for things that are right and no time at all for the things that aren't. She is concerned for her family. She is not afraid of bad weather because she has prepared her family ahead of time. She is praiseworthy. Her children speak of her industry and concern. Her husband praises her

for her faithfulness and provisions. Her reputation tells of her years of faithfulness and service. Favor fades. Beauty is never permanent. But the woman who fears the Lord and does His WILL will always be favored and her beauty will never fade. May God increase the number of virtuous women! - Dee Bowman

Pray together: Thank you God for all the righteous women who show your glory.

Friday

Read together 2 Kings 4:8-37

Hymn for the day: "Faith Of Our Fathers"

Elisha And The Shunammite

The story of the Shunammite woman and the prophet Elisha is an oasis in a desolate period of Israel's history when such faith was rare. True righteousness is best expressed in the unsolicited, habitual sacrifices of a solitary life. Elisha did not ask for the woman's help. She offered it. She went to great trouble and expense on his behalf. Here is a woman for whom kindness was a habit. Can't you see her picking out the guest bed, buying a suitable lamp and table and chair for the prophet? She took upon herself the care of God's spokesman and asked him for nothing in return. Opportunities for service in the kingdom abound for the observant eye and the willing soul. Folks who can find nothing to do for the kingdom's sake will have to answer on the judgment day to the example of this woman. Criminals can be so creative in folly. Oh, that men would exercise the same creativity and industry in the business of the kingdom! There is work in the kingdom for all. This woman proves that. The Hebrew writer speaks of the fathers "who through faith subdued kingdoms...stopped the mouths of lions" and among other great deeds, "women received their dead raised to life again" (Hebrews 11:32-38). Behind the small kindnesses of the Shunammite woman lay a great faith. Could it be that such great faith is cultivated by such small, regular, selfless sacrifices? Go and do likewise. - Jason Moore

Pray together: Give me the heart of a servant today to help someone.

Saturday

Read together Matthew 16:13-20

Hymn for the day: "The Kingdoms Of Earth Pass Away"

The Carpenter's Construction

People were saying all kinds of things about Jesus when He polled His disciples in Caesarea Philippi. He had been called a "gluttonous man," a "drunkard," and a "friend of sinners" in Matthew 11:19. Still others thought he was John the Baptist, Jeremiah or Elijah. But Peter confessed that He was "the Christ, the Son of the Living God." From that statement, Jesus identifies three things about His church. "Upon this rock." No man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 3:11). The only reason this structure has been able to withstand death, hell

and the devil himself is because the church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord. "I will build." Since He was given "head over all things to the church" (Ephesians 1:22), He is the only One qualified to be the founder and architect. And he used the finest materials imaginable to assemble her – His own blood. "My church." Any church that has not been built by Christ has not been built on the foundation of Christ. The danger of this is seen in Jesus' warning that "every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be rooted up" (Matthew 15:13). These truths have not changed, no matter what people may still be saying about Jesus and His church. Make Peter's confession your own today. - Bubba Garner

Pray together: I believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God.