

The Family Together – Week 5

Daily Devotions For The Family



Sunday

Read together Isaiah 59:1-2

Hymn for the day:

Nothing Between Us?

If anything at all stands between us and the fullness of our Father's fellowship, the removal of that hindrance ought to be a matter of great concern to us. On any scale of importance or urgency, our relationship to God must rank first. If we're cut off from Him, how can we concentrate on anything else? It is sin, of course, that alienates us from God. We can be thankful that by the atoning death of His Son, God has made it possible for us to be forgiven. By virtue of His Son's death for us, He is able to justify us without being unjust Himself (Romans 3:26). But God has moved as far in our direction as He can without overriding the freedom of our will. As things stand now, the next move is ours. The process of reconciliation cannot even begin until we openly acknowledge, without excuse, that we NEED to be forgiven. And God's requirement of repentance (Luke 13:3) means that we must make a radical turn, not just feeling sorry for our sin but actually committing ourselves to its removal from our lives. We can't have our sin and be forgiven of it, too. In Isaiah's day, the spiritual conditions in Jerusalem were deplorable. Continuing to practice flagrant sin, the people still came to the temple to worship. But their sins, unacknowledged and unrepented of, stood between them and God: "When you spread out your hands," God said, "I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not hear" (Isaiah 1:15). The problem lay not in God's inability to forgive but in their unwillingness to repent. So Isaiah said, "The Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear." Who among us can read these words and not think of penitent steps that we need to take so that God can show His love to us? - Gary Henry

"Nothing has been capable, dear Lord, to hinder you from being all mine, neither heaven, nor your divinity, nor the gibbet of the cross; grant me the grace, that nothing may hinder me from being all yours, to whom I owe myself both for creation and redemption" (Lucy Herbert).

Pray together: Give me courage this week to mold my life to the love of God.

Monday

Read together: Exodus 33:7-11

Hymn for the day: "How Long Has It Been?"

Knee Mail

We live in a communication age. Cellular phones, pagers, and wireless E-mail have made their way into our lives - in the car, in the restaurant, the elevator (even the worship service!) Communication is the bedrock of any relationship; it's how we stay connected. Businesses collapse, marriage crumble, friendships die without it. Why is it that we see its importance in every relationship but the one with God? We ought to strive for the same connection that Moses had with Him. "Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend" (vs. 11). Just consider what He has already communicated to you. A message 1,500 years in the making, preserved through every generation. Do you think it is enough to utter a few trite phrases in response? You've stayed up all night on the phone, when was the last time you stayed up all night on your knees? He has given everything. How can we get by giving nothing? Aristotle is known to have said that a friend is "one soul in two bodies." Perhaps he borrowed that idea from the great friendship passage: "the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David" (2 Samuel 18:1). How can we expect to have such a relationship with God when we don't stay in touch with Him, when we don't share ourselves with Him, when we don't pour out our hearts to Him? There's no communion with God without communication. - Bubba Garner

Pray together: Lord, today I will make you my constant friend and companion.

Tuesday

Read together: Ephesians 5:1-8

Hymn for the day: "Purer In Heart, O God"

A Plea For Purity

It is too easy to be bad in our day. There is no shame in ungodliness. Impurity is flaunted, applauded, and praised as normal - as American. There is no stigma attached to sexual perversion. Tolerance is the supreme virtue in our times. There are few social consequences to be suffered from indulging your appetites. We live in an age when it is more socially acceptable to live together than to smoke a cigarette. What are we to do? Keep our innocence. "Be followers of God as dear children." If it's not fit for the children's eyes, ears, and tongue, it's not fit for your own. Watch our motive. "Walk in love." Love has an evil twin called Lust. They sometimes look the same and feel the same. True love is moral and intellectual at its base. It performs not what feels right but what is right. Ask, "What price?" The Devil sells his wares at seemingly bargain prices. Men don't consider that they cheapen Christ's blood by their indulgence. "Christ also has loved us and given Himself." Let then not be named. Fornication, uncleanness, and covetousness are dirty words. They describe dirty deeds. We have heard them

too often for too long. They are not fitting for saints. In an age of easy sin, we need to build fences for ourselves - high fences, broad fences - that keep us from wandering into dangerous territory. - Jason Moore

Prayer together: I promise to make my mind pure for you today, Lord.

Wednesday

Read together: Proverbs 5:15-20

Hymn for the day: "Blest Be The Tie"

Private Property

There are some things that are not to be shared. The sexual relationship of man and wife is one. It is for them alone. The wise man pictures it euphemistically as a private well or cistern. Most wells in ancient cities were public domain. There were too rare to be owned privately. So the wise man's image suggests what a privilege and rich blessing the union of man and wife is. The marriage bed is their wonderful oasis and one that unlike the public cistern is peculiarly their own private drink. To open the cistern to strangers is to spoil the fountain, to pollute its waters, and to spill its streams into the streets. It renders the giver a betrayer of secrets and the taker a thief for having stolen a drink from that which belonged to another. There is no pretty picture of adultery. It is the worst kind of trespassing. There is no way to soften the sin of unfaithfulness. It is the most heinous kind of lie, the most contemptible violation of trust. But how charming is the picture of the secret well that is enjoyed by the man and woman joined by God. How romantic is the rural image of the stone well and wooden bucket from which only two lips dare to drink. Be sure and post by yours a sign with large letters, easy to read, "Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice with the wife of your youth." - Jason Moore

Pray together: Make my love for my family with the will of my Father.

Thursday

Read together: Habakkuk 3:17-19

Hymn for the day: "Higher Ground"

Real Faith

What is faith? Is it trusting in God? Precisely. But it's trusting in God not just when the barn is full but especially when the barn is empty. What's faith? Is it believing God answers your prayers? Yes sir. But it's still believing when His answer is, "No," or "Not yet," or when His answer is not forthcoming. Explain faith. Is it obeying God? Certainly. But especially is it obeying God when there are consequences to suffer, enemies to face, storms to weather, and when you walk the pathway of duty alone. Faith? Is it attending the services? Surely. But also attending the services when another venture competes for your attention and perhaps when

brethren pay you no mind. Faith. How do you measure it? By the dollars you place in the collection plate? Perhaps. More so when you like the widow give from your poverty. What is real faith? The prophet said that the test of real faith is that it's still there when spring never comes, when the harvest fails, when the land is barren, when the stalls are empty and the well is dry. When life is void of all comfortable reasons to believe, and faith persists, you know you've got it. That's hard. That's real hard. That's faith. Real faith. It's the real thing. - Jason Moore

Pray together: Lord, give my more faith today.

Friday

Read together: Romans 16:1-16

Hymn for the day: "A Beautiful Life"

A Golden Deed

In the final chapter of this great epistle, Paul sent some greetings to the members of the church in Rome. They are not the people who would make up the All-star Team; for most of them, it's the first and last time they're ever mentioned. But they are mentioned nonetheless. In some way, small only in their own eyes, they contributed to the cause of Christ. The kingdom of God cannot thrive without those who enter the stage, play their part, and then quietly exit. They go about their work without much fanfare, seeking only the approval of God. They don't feel like they've done much, but they have captured the attention of heaven and will have their names mentioned in the Lamb's book of life. Phoebe, "a helper of many." Paul asks the Christians in Rome to receive her, as she was probably delivering the letter to the church. She had long come to the assistance of her brethren, a servant in the truest sense of the word. Priscilla and Aquila, who "risked their own necks." The image is that they put their heads on the chopping block, ready to sacrifice their lives for life eternal. Tryphaena and Tryphosa, "workers in the Lord." You just have to think that these two tried really hard. And what about Persis, "who has worked hard in the Lord," and Rufus, a "choice man in the Lord." Can you think of a better commendation? They're all heroes in my book. May God increase their tribe. - Bubba Garner

Pray together: Thank you God for all those people of God who left me example to follow.

Saturday

Read together: Matthew 10:24-33

Hymn for the day: "Each Step I Take"

Courage For The Disciple

It is the disciple's aim to imitate the Master's life. But following His cue means inheriting His reproach. If men possessed the gall to persecute the Master, they will not leave His servants unattended. But take courage. There is assurance for the disciple who suffers reproach. The sufferings of the saints will not go unnoticed. It's a promise. "There is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known." The Lord keeps an eye out for His own. The worst of all fates is the least of all worries. It's a promise. Even if the life of a disciple is snuffed out because of his testimony of the gospel, he has merely hastened his reward. "And do not fear those who kill the body...but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." The least of disciples is of more value than the least creature. Yet even the most common of them is not forgotten. Not even one sparrow among a thousand "falls to the ground apart from the Father's will." If the sparrow's fall gains His notice how much more the passing of the faithful? To know the Savior is to be known of Him. "It's a promise." "Whoever confessed Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father." I have one difficulty with these assurances - how easy is our cross. Makes me nervous about our service when we encounter so little resistance. - Jason Moore

Pray together: Give me strength to trust in your protection; patience to wait for my hope; and love to live in the shadow of the Son of God.

MY CHALLENGE FOR NEXT WEEK:

During the course of next week I will

- Send a card to someone who is not able to get out for services tomorrow;
- Call a friend of mine and invite them to services;
- Pray for those families we support in preaching the gospel throughout the world;
- Read my Bible every day;
- Be kind