

Study Guide for the Week of December 16, 2007

*This study guide is designed to help you to become more familiar with the Bible. **For 2007 the study guide will help you read through the New Testament in a year.** Study these passages on your own, with a friend, or with a group. If you or someone you know needs a Bible, please take one from under a chair in the Worship Center. They are there for you to take home and use! Sermon manuscripts are available at www.spwired.com.*

Monday, December 17. Read *Philippians chapter 4*. These are some of the most joyful, tender words in the whole Bible. There are many themes in here. Which speak most clearly to you? Why? How can you find ways to rejoice in the midst of difficulties (like power outages)?

Tuesday, December 18. Read *Colossians 1:1-23*. In this letter to the church in Colosse, Paul is writing to address several things: To let the people know how much he loves them and is thankful for them; to remind them to be on guard against a theology of Gnosticism where it was believed that Jesus was not fully human; and to remind them of the supremacy of Christ. We see this in verses 15 to 23 where Paul emphasizes that Jesus is God, present in creation, and God's way of restoring relationship to human beings. Paul is saying that if we want to know what God is like, we must look at Jesus.

Wednesday, December 19. Read *Colossians 1:24 to 2:19*. In verses 24-29 Paul writes about Christ being in us. What does this mean for us when we face fear? Despair? Divine interruptions? What does it mean when we go about our daily routines that Christ is in us? How do you draw strength from Christ in you? How do you give strength to others because of Christ in you?

Thursday, December 20. Read *Colossians 2:20 to 3:17*. In yesterday's readings, along with today's, Paul is addressing those who have added unnecessary restrictions to those who would follow Christ. Yes, there are things that a follower of Christ should avoid, but Paul is warning against legalism. Legalism is striving to abide by a set of rules and regulations to the extent that the relationship with Christ is forgotten. Why is legalism still dangerous for Christians today? What happens if we follow that path?

Friday, December 21. Read *Colossians 3:18 to 4:18*. Focus on 4:5-6. This is reminding us as Christ-followers to always act with wisdom and tact around those who are not yet followers of Christ. This means knowing when and when not to speak. It also addresses how followers should speak with a sense of warmth, charm and graciousness. Why is this important? Does it describe you?

Saturday, December 22. Read *Luke 1:1-25*. In preparation for Christmas we begin the Gospel of Luke. Notice the opening verses. What is Luke's goal in writing this gospel? As the angel spoke to Zechariah, what was John's role to be? John's conception was a miracle in itself. Later we will see how the lives of John and Jesus intertwine.

Sunday, December 23. Read *Luke 1:26-56*. Aaron used this passage as the heart of the message last Sunday. Mary's life was interrupted by God's call to servanthood. Have you been more attuned to God's divine interruptions this past week? How can you stay more attuned to them? Spend time in prayer asking God to guide you in being aware of those interruptions, large and small.