

Study Guide for the Week of August 13, 2006

ESPRESSO YOURSELF—Is It In You?

This study guide is designed to help you to become more familiar with the Bible. 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.saintpauls-umc.com.

Monday. Read **Ecclesiastes 9:10** in the Old Testament. Rewrite this in your own words. In many ways this captures the theme of yesterday's message. Enthusiasm is not something that we should turn on and off depending on the circumstances we are in, or the people we are with. Our enthusiasm, literally God's presence in us and our presence in God, should be there whether we are doing something we find pleasant or unpleasant, ordinary or extraordinary. What things in your life do you find yourself doing with all your might? What things do you find yourself doing with less than an enthusiastic heart? How might doing those things enthusiastically change their outcome, or influence other people positively?

Tuesday. Worry and stress are two assassins of enthusiasm. Read **Philippians 4:6**. What in your life is a cause of anxiety? How do you typically address your anxiety and stress? How might Paul's suggestions here help in how you face stress? Read **Psalms 40:1-3** in the Old Testament. This passage pictures a person sinking in a pit of mud or quicksand. This can be a metaphor for anything causes us worry and stress. What did the person in this passage do when they found themselves in the "miry pit"? What was God's response? What do you think it means that God put a "new song" in this person's mouth? Could that be a new way of thinking, a new level of joy and enthusiasm, a new outlook on life? This is a powerful passage of scripture to memorize for times when you, or someone else, face worry and stress that have the potential to kill your enthusiasm.

Wednesday. Fear is another assassin of enthusiasm. Read **Matthew 28:20** and **Hebrews 13:5-6** in the New Testament. These are powerful promises of Jesus in the Bible. What are you most afraid of? Does knowing that Jesus is with you always, whether you feel him there or not, help you with your fears? When you find yourself afraid try to come back to these thoughts, that Jesus is there with you and will not let circumstances get the best of you. Read **John 20:19-23** in the New Testament. Notice how Jesus' disciples had locked themselves away in fear. How have your fears kept you from doing things you want to do for God? Notice how the peace that Jesus gives his followers also comes with a commission. The disciples are sent out into the world to do God's work.

Thursday. Read **Philippians chapter 2**. What themes can you draw from this passage about enthusiasm, joy, the community of believers, encouragement, etc?

Friday. Read **Romans 3:21-25a**. Restate this in your own words. Read **Romans 5:1-11** and restate this in your own words. Read **Ephesians 2:8-9** in the New Testament. These passages are at the very heart of the Christian understanding of salvation. Our sin leaves us alienated from God and we need help to live a life of joy and peace. The law could not do this. Paul asserts that the law only served to increase our guilt and create people who were only outwardly religious. God sent Jesus to do for us what we could not do for ourselves—pay the ransom price on our heads. Have you accepted this gift? If not, a simple prayer inviting Christ into your life, accepting his death for you, and inviting him to lead you as you seek to follow him is all that is necessary to receive the gift of salvation. This is at the heart of have a faith that is strong, powerful, concentrated (like espresso!).