

Study Guide

For the Week of August 16, 2009

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! Message manuscripts are available at www.spwired.com.

Monday. Today we're going to read part of the opening of the book of Job. Job is a character in the Bible who faced the loss of nearly everything—his livelihood, his employees, his property and his children. His friends and even his wife tell him to give up, to curse God and die, but he endures to the end. **Read Job 1:13-22.** Which of the trials of Job can you relate to the most? What losses or circumstances have you faced in life? Have these trials tempted you to sin, to blame God, to want to give up?

Tuesday. As you read today, look for two key words: perseverance and endurance—circle them in your Bible. **Read Hebrews 12:1-3.** This passage says that it was for the joy set before him that Jesus endured the cross. What joy could that have been? The writer of this passage encourages his readers by saying, “do not grow weary or lose heart.” He writes this after writing about the cross that Jesus faced, along with the shame that he endured. We are being encouraged here to see what Jesus went through for us and to know that as we face difficult things, he understands and is there to support us. What is making you weary or lose heart right now? What can you tap into to find the endurance you need? Who can you turn to?

Wednesday. **Read Romans 5:1-5.** Paul faced a great deal of difficulty and persecution as he spread the gospel (Read 2 Corinthians 11:24-33 for a description of some of the things that Paul suffered through in his ministry). He knew about suffering. Look back at verse 3. Paul describes the process that works through suffering in our lives. What would happen if we chose not to move through this process? If we got stuck in one place? How do we keep moving through suffering to the hope that is promised?

Thursday. **Read 2 Corinthians 4:7-10.** Once again we read the Apostle Paul's words of encouragement. The “treasure in clay jars” is the goodness and power we possess as Christians. We may be ordinary like a clay jar, but we are filled with God's precious presence. It is this presence that allows us to do the things that Paul describes here. **Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18.** Paul offers some deep wisdom here when he tells us not to look at the difficulties that are around us, but instead to look at the strength that God gives us. Is the easy or hard to do? Remember that God's desire is to renew us day by day. He gives us what we need to endure the challenges for this day. Be sure to seek that renewal out through your daily times of prayer. Spend time doing that now.

Friday. **Read James 1:2-3.** On Sunday, Aaron moved us through the stages Paul describes here. We need endurance, the crown jewel of character traits, in order to face life with strength. Endurance comes through the trials and difficulties of life, and, in the end, this endurance leads to our maturity in faith and completeness in life. Key issues in this journey are trusting God, and not giving up. Another very important element in this is relying on each other. Galatians 6:2 says, “Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” Who do you rely on when the going gets tough? If you don't have someone, what is stopping you from getting involved in a small group?

Prayer Concerns

Serving in Iraq:

Cyle Haywood
Ryan Grindstaff
Deric Croan
Summer Garner

Military:

Jesse Smith
Nathan Lawellin
Matthew Peak
Stephen Leadbetter
Richard Hurst
James Lesmeister
Jon Arnold
Jason Lewis

Joshua Walker
Chris Palmer

Health & Healing:

Kayla Robinson
Betty Karch
Melody Cundiff
Jr. & Carrol Skelton
Olivia Tabler
Estell Maloney
Danny Tyler
Heather Lesmeister

Cancer Treatment:

Val/Margarita Christensen
Dottie Maloney

Sonja Davidson
Tony Allen
Joyce Pace

Other Concerns:

Mario Soriano
Miguel Soriano
Alex Soriano
Laura & Brian Karch
Chris Geer
Brian & Tina Harter
Tammy Hodgdon
Shirley Wheatley