

Study Guide for the Week of December 3, 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 3. Read Galatians chapter 6. What does this chapter tell us about holding one another accountable when we have moral slip-ups? How might you play this role in someone's life? What is the warning that Paul gives about this? How can you balance holding others accountable, with holding yourself accountable?

Tuesday, December 4. Read Ephesians chapter 1. Paul is writing this letter to the church at Ephesus from a prison cell in chains. This letter would have been written near the end of Paul's life. In verse 5 Paul talks about being adopted by God. In Roman culture adoption was a significant event and once the legal steps had been taken, the adopted person had their past erased and became in every sense a son or daughter of their adoptive parents. Often adults were adopted into families to carry on the family name. In this case the adopted person's past was gone, and their new life began. How do you see in this the symbolism of being adopted into God's family?

Wednesday, December 5. Read Ephesians chapter 2. In verses 1-10 Paul talks about the relationship between faith and works. What is that relationship? Can we earn God's favor through our works, or is it a gift? If God's favor is a gift that we can't earn, then what role do our good works play in our lives?

Thursday, December 6. Read Ephesians chapter 3. Focus on verses 14 to 21. This is a beautiful and poetic passage about the dimensions of God's love. How does Paul describe these dimensions? In your own words describe how wide, how long, how deep, how high the love of Christ is. How have you experienced these dimensions of God's love? In what ways do you long for them?

Friday, December 7. Read Ephesians 4:1-16. The first three chapters are about eternal truths of the faith. In Chapter 4 Paul begins to describe what each follower of Jesus must be if the Church is to live out its mission. What traits does Paul note as being vital to a life of faith? Which do you see in yourself? Which are lacking? Spend time in prayer about the traits Paul mentions asking God to build them in you.

Saturday, December 8. Read Ephesians 4:17-32. Here Paul talks about putting off the old self and putting on the new. How would you describe your "old self"? How would you describe your new self? What has changed in you? Are you ever tempted to go back to the old self? What happens if you give in to that temptation? How do you come back if you give in?

Sunday, December 9. Read Ephesians 5:1-20. Here again Paul gives practical advice for living the Christian life. How does he describe the actions of a dark life? What about the actions of a life lived in the light? What areas in your life need to be brought out into the light? Aaron talked about how Advent is a great time to repent, to get things right, to walk away from things we know are wrong. What might that be for you?