

Study Guide for the Week of Jan 1, 2006

Everyday Matters

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 Psalm 77:10-15 in the Old Testament. The author of this passage is looking back and remembering all the things that God has done. It is a great way to boost our faith too. Spend a few minutes today reflecting about the things that God has done in your life or the times you have sensed God's presence carrying you in the last year.

Tuesday. Read I Peter 2:9-12 in the New Testament. In this passage, Peter invites people not only to look back and remember what God has done, but also to look ahead to what God wants to do. Peter invites us to allow God to use our lives as displays for God's love. He is calling us to look ahead at ways God can use us in the future, and get ready for that by preparing ourselves now. Do you see God leading you to new ways of using your life to lead others to him? What do you need to do each day to be prepared to respond to God?

Wednesday. Read Matthew 6:25-34 in the New Testament. Jesus' point in this passage has to do with allowing God to be present today, and each day. Look for God and gifts of God in the most basic of things. He seems to be asking, "Do you really trust that God can take care of you?" Look everyday at the way God provides for you in the essentials of life...some bread, some love, some breath, some wine. Acknowledge that it is God, not yourself, who gives you your daily bread.

Thursday. 2 Corinthians 9:6-15 in the New Testament. Mark mentioned this week that two outcomes of daily dependence upon God are gratitude and generosity. Reread the passage, and look for all the references to being generous and thankful or grateful. Verse 10 references God as the origin of all gifts. Those who know they receive daily bread are willing to share that "daily bread" because they know it is not their own – it is from God. What has God blessed you with? Have you expressed your gratitude? How are you using your "daily bread" to feed others?

Friday. Read John 6:25-41 in the New Testament. We've been talking about all the gifts and blessings of God that sustain us as the "daily bread" throughout this week. In this passage, Jesus names himself as the "bread of life", the ultimate gift of God and the ultimate necessity. Through his spirit, Jesus becomes the everyday, always with us presence of God. Our daily bread, sent down from heaven. That's our new manna. Invite Jesus to make himself known to you today and each day. Ask him to teach you to both see and sense his presence in your life everyday.