

Study Guide for the Week of June 18, 2006

Being a Difference Maker—Father's Day 2006

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 Luke 15:11-24. This is the story of the forgiving father. How forgiving are you compared to this father? Was he too forgiving? How does the father in this story imitate God's love for us? **Read Luke 15:25-32.** This is the rest of the story. What characteristics of God's love do we see in these verses?

Tuesday. Read James 1:19-20. As a parent are you quick to listen and slow to anger, or is it the other way around? Challenge yourself to be a better listener with your children, or if you don't have kids, the children you have contact with. In fact try to be a listener to all those around you. Experiment with waiting until the other person has truly finished speaking, rather than interrupting. **Read Colossians 3:21.** In what ways have you seen fathers provoke their children? How have you provoked children? What does this cause? How can you be more understanding of kids?

Wednesday. Read Ephesians 6:1-4. This is an excellent passage for Father's Day as it speaks to both children and fathers. The exasperation mentioned in today's verse comes from criticism. How critical are you of children? Of other people? Are you willing to be a role model and yet give encouragement when they fail? **Read Acts 16:31** in the New Testament. Statistics show that children are nearly twice as likely to become followers of Jesus if the father participates in the spiritual leadership. It's definitely a team effort. How is your team doing at leading children to an active faith in Jesus Christ? If you do not have children, how are you doing at modeling an active faith to your neighbors?

Thursday. Have ever you wondered if God loves you? Have you ever thought that because of something you did, God had left you or stopped loving you? These are common feelings, but remember that our feelings can be misleading. **Read Romans 8:31-39.** This passage, among others, reveals the character of our heavenly Father. He loves us and nothing can stop that love. God's love for you is real, no matter what you feel. Do you agree or disagree with that statement? There are times when we **must** stand on God's promises when we have doubts or difficulties. How can we stand on God promises when we feel like God does not love us? What would you say to someone who is struggling with this?

Friday. Read Deuteronomy 31:8. This is one of many times in the Old Testament that God says to his people that he will not leave them or forsake them. What does it mean to you to know that God will never leave you? Notice also that God tells us to not be afraid. What is there to be afraid of? **Read 1 John 4:18-19.** If we allow God's love to do so, it will cast out our fear—fear of failure, fear of rejection, fear of the unknown. This, too, is in the character of God to do. **Read John 3:16.** This is one of the most beloved passages in the Bible. Commit it to your memory so that you can put it in your spiritual tool box. Your heavenly Father loves **you** more than you could ever imagine or believe!