

Study Guide for the Week of June 8, 2008

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.spwired.com.

Monday, June 9. Read Matthew 5:13-16 in the New Testament. Here Jesus is challenging his followers then, and now, to be the real thing. Salt without its taste is like a Christian without character. Jesus also called his followers the light of the world. We don't cover that light, but we let it shine. We let that light shine by being authentic. In what ways are Christians tempted to be inauthentic? In ways have you been inauthentic in the past or present? In what ways did the testimonies you heard on Sunday reflect God's light and reveal God's presence in those who shared?

Tuesday, June 10. Read Psalm 139:13-14. This scripture shows us that God created each of us individually. He "knit" us together and we are wonderfully made. This means that your unique personality, the way you are wired up, is exactly what God had in mind. God does not expect Christians to look like they were all cut from the same mold. Just look around in nature. God loves diversity! In what ways have you been forced into someone else's mold of what it means to be a Christian? Are you forcing someone else into your mold of what it means to be a Christian? How can you celebrate your uniqueness?

Wednesday, June 11. Read John 11:1-45. This is the story of Jesus raising Lazarus back to life. Notice the friendship Jesus had with Lazarus and notice that Jesus cried at hearing that Lazarus had died. One facet of this reading is the challenge of being emotionally authentic. Jesus not only expressed sadness, but he expressed joy, anger, disappointment, anxiety and so much more. If you were to use Jesus as your role model for being emotionally authentic, what would you change in yourself? Are you able to be emotionally authentic? What might be holding you back from being more authentic?

Thursday, June 12. Read 1 John 1:4-10. (Note that 1 John is different than the Gospel of John). Another way of growing in our faith walk is to regularly get honest with God about our failures and sins. This passage indicates that confessing is a way for us to walk in the light of God. Who in your life might you need to confess to, ask forgiveness of, and possibly repay for things you have done wrong? When we confess in these ways to others we may see God in a way that we never have. Is there someone in your life to whom you need to make a genuine confession and possible restitution? If so, let God guide you in this.

Friday, June 13. Read Matthew 27:50-54. What would have made this battle-hardened Roman centurion say, "Surely this was the Son of God"? Could it be that he saw Jesus' compassion, his character, his commitment to his mission, his genuine love, his composure on the cross and knew that Jesus was the real thing? How can knowing this help you to be a contagious Christian by being authentic in all you say and do?