

In daily life - towards imitation

Here's a story or testimony to flesh this out...A self-centered major was assigned to a new office on a military base and was eager to make a big impression on anyone who came within his presence. As the new office was being completed, the major heard a knock on the door. A private stood at the opened door, waiting for instructions. The major picked up the phone and motioned for the private to step inside. He decided to make a big impression as he said, "Yes sir, Mr. President, I agree with the Joint Chiefs of Staff - it is an excellent idea. That is also my opinion, and you call me any time, I'm glad I could help. Yes sir, Vice President Cheney is also right, and you give my best to your family as well. Thank you sir, and a good day to you too, Mr. President." The major hung up the phone he turned to the Private and snapped, "What is it you want, private?" Confused and embarrassed, the private mumbled, "Uh, sir, I'm just here to hook up the phone." How often do we act like the major?

STUDY QUESTIONS – EXPLORING THE INFORMATION (ABOUT 30 MINUTES)

- 1) In what way is hypocrisy like yeast?
- 2) What does it mean to fear God? And how does that help us overcome the fear of man?
- 3) What difference does it make to know that God is sovereign owner of your life?
- 4) What does it mean to acknowledge Jesus publicly? What does this have to do with overcoming fear?

Living it out

Which do you spend more time focusing on:
how God views you in Christ or how other people may view you?
what people might do to you or what God has done for you through Christ?

Prayer suggestion:

Meditate on Romans 8:15-16 or 1 John 3:1-3. Enjoy being in the presence of the Father. Dwell on his great love for you, you are his child and he is your Father. Pray for a greater experience of his love for you, to be shaped by that and not the world in which we live.

Joining a group and other resources:

We encourage everyone to join a group if possible. We have daytime or evening groups and youth cells. If you would like to know more, please visit our website, or contact Guy on 01423 504160. There are many great resources to help you pray and enjoy the Scriptures on a daily basis.
www.pray-as-you-go.org A 12 minute guided prayer and meditation to listen to.
<https://www.wordlive.org> Many excellent daily reading approaches, available as an app.
<http://www.sacredspace.ie/> A short guided prayer and meditation to read.
Or download the app from Soul Survivor, with short daily videos: <http://bible.soulsurvivor.com/>

INSPIRE



Everywhere...in everything

Weekly discipleship and spiritual growth resources for all ages, groups and individuals.
Follow up material on Sunday's teaching for groups and individuals.

Week beginning: 18th January 2015.

GROWING AT HOME

Three suggested discipleship activities suitable for all ages to help you grow, based on up - to God; In - to each other; Out - to mission

Up

Jesus says "Indeed the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid, you are worth more than many sparrows." (Luke 12:7) Thank God that He knows you. You are precious to Him.

In

Discuss together with your family, or think on your own, about some words to describe God's character using the letters of the word FEAR. [e.g. Forgiving.... Eternal..... etc] Write these words out and stick them on the fridge or pinboard. In what way is it right to fear God?

Out

Over a meal, talk together about how you could give a present to someone that doesn't cost any money at all. You could make some alternative gift vouchers e.g. "cooking a meal" or "mending something" or "drawing or painting a picture".

DAILY READINGS AND PRAYERS.

These daily readings are the same as the ones used in church every morning from 9 - 9.30. Feel free to join us, or use them at home. Read one or both of the readings asking yourself, "What is God saying to me, personally?" and, "How can I respond today?" If you are pressed for time there is a focus verse from the passages. Try reading the verse slowly, three or four times, allowing God to shape your heart and mind through His word. You can use these together with our daily prayer diary from the monthly newsheet.

Monday 19th January

Readings: Psalm 145, 1 Corinthians 6:1-11. Focus verse: But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Tuesday 20th January.

Readings: Psalm 132, 1 Corinthians 6: 12-end. Focus verse: 19 Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your bodies.

Wednesday 21st January.

Readings: Psalm 81, 1 Corinthians 7: 1-24. Focus verse: 22 For the one who was a slave when called to faith in the Lord is the Lord's freed person; similarly, the one who was free when called is Christ's slave. 23 You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of human beings.

Thursday 22nd January.

Readings: Psalm 76, 1 Corinthians 7: 25-end. Focus verse: 29 What I mean, brothers and sisters, is that the time is short. From now on those ... who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep... 31 those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away.

Friday 23rd January

Readings: Psalm 27, 1 Corinthians 8. Focus verse: 6 yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

Saturday 24th January

Readings: Psalm 122, 1 Corinthians 9:1-14. Focus verse: 14 In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.

SUNDAY'S TEACHING: RESOURCES FOR GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS.

First thoughts:

What do you remember hiding from your parents as a child? Did you ever get found out?

This week's teaching in a nutshell:

No Fear – Luke 12:1-12; 1 John 4:16-19

We move from a disastrous dinner party to a stadium stampede. Jesus has been invited to the home of a Pharisee for a meal. He sits down to eat without going through the ceremonial washing, which leads to surprise and consternation by the religious leaders.

Jesus then proceeds to draw attention to their focus on the outward appearance, 'looking good to others', 'doing the right religious acts' whilst their heart is turned away from God. Bad religion is religion without relationship.

Jesus accuses the Pharisees of being hypocrites, which comes from the Greek word play actors, those that wear a mask.

Hypocrisy is a deliberate deception, to cover up or hide what you are by wearing a mask, pretending to be something that you aren't. It is a deception with either positive or negative motivation, either to achieve men's praise or avoid persecution. Are we people pleasers or God pleasers? Whose opinion do we value most?

The truth always comes out. We can't hide who we are from God, he sees it all, he knows what is in our heart and yet he still loves us. We may be able to fool others but we can't fool God. He knows what is in our heart.

All hypocrisy is rooted in fear. Fear of what others will think of us, if they only knew the truth. Fear that we won't be accepted or that we won't fit in.

God's love (1 John 4:16-19) set us free from the bondage of fear. Free from the expectations of others. Free to be a child of God, because we are held, loved, and forgiven by the creator of the world. His love is unchanging, unconditional, and without limit. In his presence we can remove our mask. Nothing will change his love for us.

Fear of God not fear of man is the answer to removing our masks. But not a fear where we are to cower in his presence afraid of what he might say or do. Rather a reverential awe and complete submission to the one who knows us completely and loves us perfectly. The one to whom we belong because of what Christ did for us. When we truly know how God sees us, and allow that knowledge to shape our very being then we are set free from the expectations of others.