

In daily life - towards imitation

'Gibbo' shared an office with his boss Gordon Selfridge owner of the world famous store Selfridges. The phone rang and the Gibbo answered. The caller wanted to speak to Gordon Selfridge. Gibbo asked the caller to hold on and told Gordon who was calling. Gordon said 'Tell him I'm not here.' Gibbo handed the phone to Gordon and said 'You tell him you are not here.' Gordon was furious and Gibbo said to his boss 'I refused because if I can lie FOR you I can lie TO you and I will NEVER lie to you.' From that moment Gibbo was taken into the confidence of the boss and considered a trusted source. When have you needed to be diplomatic?

STUDY QUESTIONS – EXPLORING THE INFORMATION

By reading Matthew 5: 1-16, 21-26, 33-48 and 2 Corinthians 5:16-21, construct together a manifesto for being reconcilers in the world. You may like to do this in small groups first, taking a section each. Finally bring your thoughts together in a list that says, "In order to seek peace in a messy world we will..."

Living it out

What is the first step from your "manifesto" that you need to take?

Prayer suggestion:

Read Colossians 3: 12. Use the five qualities as a basis for praying for one another and the world.

Joining a group:

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

LOVING GOD IN ALL OF LIFE:
THE AIR WE BREATHE
& THE WORK WE DO

A TEN WEEK TEACHING COURSE ON MAKING FAITH A NATURAL PART OF ALL OF LIFE
FROM SEPTEMBER 20TH 2015

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: 22nd November 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: Find out, together with people in your family or a friend this week, about some of the promises God makes in the Bible. (e.g. John 15:5) Talk together about a promise that speaks especially to you.

In: All God's people have been given gifts to help encourage others who are following Jesus, and to serve the community. Talk and pray together about what each of your gifts may be.

Out: Take a newspaper cutting about something that is bad news. Pin it on the wall and, each time you pass it, ask God to work the Good News of Jesus into that place or people.

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 23rd November

Readings: Psalm 92, Matthew 9: 18-34. Focus verse: 20 Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. 21 She said to herself, 'If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed.'

22 Jesus turned and saw her. 'Take heart, daughter,' he said, 'your faith has healed you.' And the woman was healed at that moment.

Tuesday 24th November.

Readings: Psalm 97, Matthew 9:35-10:15. Focus verse: 36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. 38 Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'

Wednesday 25th November

Readings: Psalm 110, Matthew 10:16-33. 28 Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. 29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care.

Thursday 26th November

Readings: Psalm 125, Matthew 10:34-11:1. Focus verse: 37 'Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

Friday 27th November.

Readings: Psalm 139, Matthew 11:2-19. Focus verse: 4 Jesus replied, 'Go back and report to John what you hear and see: 5 the blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy[b] are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.

Saturday 28th November.

Readings: Psalm 145, Matthew 11: 20-end Focus verse: 28 'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.'

SUNDAY'S TEACHING: RESOURCES FOR GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS.

First thoughts:

Would you see any job as "untouchable for a Christian? Why?

This week's teaching in a nutshell:

Loving God in all of life: Being diplomats for Jesus Daniel 1:17-20 & Colossians 2:1-5.

Rachel is a young Christian woman and she is thinking about becoming a diplomat in the Foreign Office. She is challenged by a Christian friend who tells her that she will be wasting her life by going into such a 'worldly' and political profession. Again, and again, we can come up against this attitude, can't we? The attitude that wants to create a hierarchy of callings. How do you love God in your job when it involves dealing with shady characters, compromised situations, ethical dilemmas?

Daniel was a very learned man and in the Hebrew Scriptures he would have known that God's law is not devoted exclusively to so-called 'spiritual' concerns, but he would also have known that he was living in a very different culture, a very different state, with different rules and codes. How could he live out the Big Story with any integrity in such a broken, pagan culture? We get an insight into Daniel's diplomatic skills early on in his career when the question of diet reared its ugly head in chapter 1. If Daniel had resorted to a confrontational style or mockery of the Babylonian diet, his plan would have failed. He stays gracious and he keeps negotiating. He suggests a closed-door experiment, a dietary test, for himself and his three Jewish colleagues (Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah). Ashpenaz agrees to this. Fast forward ten days. Daniel and his three friends have passed the test with flying colours and Ashpenaz has ordered their diet permanently changed.

So coming back to our friend Rachel, having read about Daniel, she explains to her dualistic friend that Jesus had some very positive things to say about diplomacy. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God." Matthew 5:9 Diplomats are, of course, in a job where they can really take these words seriously and do something to stop wars and its ensuing destruction, misery and bloodshed. Today, as in the time of Jesus and Daniel, ambassadors, diplomats, negotiators, mediators, and relevant others need great skill in communications, a deep knowledge of other cultures and politics, and a good handle on the actual problems. In the murky world of Babylonian politics, Daniel sought the wisdom of God to tell His story. Are you in an area of work that you feel is constantly compromised by the world? Your calling is not to abandon God as you walk through the door, but to bring transformation with wisdom that is deeper than that which the world can offer.