

STUDY QUESTIONS – EXPLORING THE INFORMATION (ABOUT 30 MINUTES)

James 1 v 19-27: what do you think of James' definition of 'pure and faultless religion'?

1 Tim 5 v 3 – 4: Paul expects our generosity to begin with our responsibility to our own relatives – what do you think of what he says here?

Luke 4 v 14 – 30: why do Jesus's comments about Elijah and Elisha upset His hearers? How might they have reacted to Him making a Samaritan the hero of His parable?

Read also the second reading for the day **1 John 4 v7 - 21** – Jesus in the parable, James, Paul and John all draw direct links between our love of God and our neighbour, even to the extent of saying that one way we show our love for God is in loving our neighbour – so, how are we doing with loving our neighbour? (John Wimber once suggested we invite our 'neighbours' to church and allow them to give a report on our progress!)

Living it out

When was the last time you did a random act of outrageous kindness?

When will be the next time?

Prayer suggestion:

Who is my neighbour?

In silence think of two or three people you know who are in practice your neighbour, they may be your actual neighbour, or people at work, people you meet in the course of your leisure activities, or members of your family who you are not in regular contact with. Then name them out loud before the Lord, in your House group it may be appropriate for the leader to begin with saying 'Lord, we pray for....' then simply say the names of your neighbours.

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



Week beginning: 2nd November 2014.

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

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

God has no favourites. We are all equally loved and equally valued by God. Thank Him for that.

In

Send someone you know a text or give them a call, saying that they are precious to God. Try talking to someone else in your class or office this week whom you wouldn't usually speak to, even if it's just a friendly "hello".

Out

In Jesus' parable, the man who was mugged on the road to Jericho was a Jew. The man who helped him was a Samaritan. Outrageous! These two groups didn't usually associate with each other. How could you surprise someone by showing them "outrageous" hospitality or generosity?

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 3rd November

Readings: Psalm 2, Revelation 1. Focus verse: To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, 6 and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father – to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen. 7 'Look, he is coming with the clouds,' and 'every eye will see him, even those who pierced him'; and all peoples on earth 'will mourn because of him.' So shall it be! Amen. 8 'I am the Alpha and the Omega,' says the Lord God, 'who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.'

Tuesday 4th November

Readings: Psalm 5, Revelation 2: 1-11. Focus verse: 10 Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor's crown. 11 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Wednesday 5th November.

Readings: Psalm 9, Revelation 2: 12-end. Focus verse: 26 To the one who is victorious and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations – 27 that one "will rule them with an iron sceptre and will dash them to pieces like pottery" – just as I have received authority from my Father. 28 I will also give that one the morning star. 29 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Thursday 6th November. William Temple.

Readings: Psalm 11, Revelation 3: 1-13 William Temple said: "We reach a certain stage of fellowship with Christ, in spiritual apprehension and moral attainment, and find great joy in it. But this seems to fade, until we become conscious that we are called to something higher. The Lord is gone before us to prepare the next resting-place. Then everything depends upon our response. We may stay where we are, becoming more and more torpid in spirit. Or we may, in Paul's phrase, "press on." If we do this, we find the Lord meeting us and leading us to the next resting-place."

Friday 7th November

Readings: Psalm 16, Revelation 3: 14-end. Focus verse: 19 Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. 20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me. 21 To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne.

Saturday 8th November

Readings: Psalm 18: 31-end, Revelation 4 Focus verse: 9 Whenever the living creatures give glory, honour and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: 11 'You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.'

SUNDAY'S TEACHING: RESOURCES FOR GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS.

First thoughts:

Last week we asked, What would it look like in your situation to...Share peace with those you encounter/ Receive hospitality/ Cure the sick/ Announce that 'the kingdom of God is at hand'. Where have you seen the kingdom this week?

This week's teaching in a nutshell:

Shocking hospitality: Luke 10 v25-37 & 1 John 4 v 7-21

Sometimes the bible is so clear it makes you wonder why it ever seems complicated – could you get much more direct than this:

Q – What must we do to have eternal life?

A – Love God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength and our neighbour as our self
Who says? – Jesus.

Q – Who is my neighbour?

A – Anyone that needs you to be a neighbour to them

We considered that the parable of the Good Samaritan is so well known we may miss the impact it originally had, the shocking elements of which were:

- The conventionally religious figures passed by on the other side
- It was a Samaritan ('a despised foreigner') who was the hero
- His generosity went way beyond what might have been expected

We recognised that in Jesus' instruction to 'go and do likewise' He is explaining that right thoughts about God (the expert in the law actually knew the right answer to his question, as do we) should lead to right action in our life. We thought about the example that merely knowing the truth that we are in a burning building, but taking no action, would be fatal!

We saw that to believe God is 'Our Father' puts us in family relationship to everyone else for whom He is Father, therefore everyone could be considered not only our neighbour, but our brother or sister. We considered that the Samaritan did a 'random act of outrageous kindness' and asked 'how can we go and do likewise'?