

Sunday, February 17, 2013

Read Philippians 1:1-4

Reflect Paul's letter to the Philippians addresses a church on the brink of a division fueled in part by two of his female co-workers who can't get along. How fitting Paul begins addressing such a situation by expressing thanks to God for people and confidence in God to keep working in people. Paul doesn't give up on them. Paul values people and trusts in God to shape them.

Pray Give thanks to God for people. Give thanks for people you partner with at home, work, and church. Give thanks to God for continuing to work on imperfect people, including you.

Exercise Value people. Make a phone call or write an email or note to express to them your thankfulness for them. Put down the phone, turn off the television and listen, really listen to them. Focus. Make eye contact. Speak warm words to service industry people you meet. Tip well. Is there some person you have given up on? Remember, God is still working on them, and you.

Monday, February 18, 2013

Read Philippians 1:9-11

Reflect People in church in Philippi might be troubled, but Paul doesn't try to avoid them; instead, Paul wants to be with them. Paul prays for them. Again, Paul is confident God is at work in their hearts and lives.

Pray Give thanks to God for not giving up on you or others as quickly as we sometimes give up on each other. Ask God to help you persevere in relationships.

Exercise Use the words of Paul's prayer as the basis for your own prayer. Pray this prayer for yourself, asking God to help your love abound, that you will understand how to express love, that you will make good decisions based on love, that you will bear fruit for God, and that you will make God attractive to others. Once you have prayed that prayer for yourself, pray this same prayer as an intercession for someone else.

Tuesday, February 19, 2013

Read Philippians 1:12-14

Reflect Paul was "in chains" when he wrote this letter. In spite of his situation, he was able to see good coming out of his bad situation. To Paul, God's being glorified was more important than physical comfort. Though Paul was uncomfortable, he was able to keep glorifying God.

Pray Praise God. Praise God in the good times. Praise God during dark days. Pray that your dependence on God during times of trouble would encourage others.

Exercise Memorize Psalm 23.

Wednesday, February 20, 2013

Read Philippians 1:15-18

Reflect Sometimes our motives are less than godly. Selfishness sometimes creeps into our hearts. But God is faithful. God's love endures forever.

Pray Ask God to search your heart and motives. Confess and turn from any false motives that are revealed. Praise God's faithfulness.

Exercise Be reminded of God's faithfulness and generosity. Watch the sunrise or sunset. Look at the clouds in the sky or the rain falling down. Go out at night and look at the moon and stars.

Thursday, February 21, 2013

Read Philippians 1:19-26

Reflect Some people go through life just existing. Others see purpose and meaning in everything they do. Paul lived with purpose and intended to die, when the time came, with purpose.

Pray Pledge to honor and glorify God in all you do.
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Exercise Make a list of three things you would like to be remembered for when you die. Do something today to live into that list.

Friday, February 22, 2013

Read Philippians 1:27-30

Reflect Paul has been through so many trials. He anticipates that you will go through some tough times, too. Paul does not use his hardships as an excuse for his behavior, and neither should you. Whatever happens, live in a way that honors God.

Pray Confess to God specific times when you have made excuses for your behavior because of circumstances that you were going through.

Exercise Repeat the words, “whatever happens” throughout the day as a reminder that in good times and bad you need to respond with godly behavior.

Saturday, February 23, 2013

Read Exodus 16:21-30

Reflect God built a day of rest into the rhythm of life for God’s people. When you cease from productive work for a day you are reminded that God is creating the future, that God is provider, and that God can be relied on for the future. This is not to suggest you live a passive life, but a life that prioritizes a rhythm of work and rest.

Pray Give thanks to God for the way God faithfully provides. Give thanks to God for allowing you to join with God in the work God is doing in your community, including your job throughout the week.

Exercise Spend some time at the St. Louis Zoo, the Missouri Botanical Gardens, or another park (come on, it’s St. Louis, there are parks everywhere!) Go hiking or biking. Watch a movie or listen to some music. Take a nap. Go for a run or play a board game. Sip a cup of coffee.



*Readings, prayers, and exercises to stimulate growth
and enjoyment in living*

The New Life



Part 2, February 17-23, 2013