

Sunday, March 10, 2013

Read Mark 1:9-13

Reflect Jesus was baptized. The Holy Spirit descended like a dove. God spoke, declaring his pleasure with Jesus. When we were/are baptized, we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and God declares us God's children. God ministered to Jesus through angels as he was being tempted. God will strengthen us, too, even in time of temptation.

Pray Give thanks to God for the gift of the Holy Spirit, poured out on you generously at the time of your baptism. Praise God for the blessing of being God's daughter or son. Thank God for providing strength to you when you are going through a time of temptation.

Exercise Call to mind the time you were baptized. How has your understanding of being filled with the Holy Spirit and being God's daughter or son evolved over time? Think about a time when you resisted a temptation. Looking back, do you see ways where God was providing strength for you?

Monday, March 11, 2013

Read Mark 1:14-20

Reflect Jesus announces the coming of the kingdom of God and invites people to turn and believe this Good News. He calls people to follow him. They drop what they are doing to follow.

Pray Give thanks for the Good News announced by Jesus that God's kingdom has come near. Thank God for offering you the opportunity to follow Jesus. Pledge to continue following Jesus without getting sidetracked from the call.

Exercise Explore your heart. Is your primary allegiance to the kingdoms of this world or to God's kingdom? Does your allegiance to Jesus trump your allegiance to your political party or your nation's government? Ponder what it means to give your allegiance to King Jesus rather than to the rulers of governments and kingdoms of the earth. Is Jesus your Lord?

Tuesday, March 12, 2013

Read Mark 1:21-39

Reflect Sometimes we fail to appreciate the busy schedule Jesus kept. Here we see him dealing with demon-troubled and diseased people, travelling, and preaching. But in the midst of it all, Jesus makes time for solitude and prayer.

Pray Thank God for all the opportunities you have before you this week. Ask for God's help in keeping your priorities straight.

Exercise Make time for solitude and prayer, even on your busy days, even on your busiest day. Set aside 5, 10, 15, or 30 minutes. Set aside some time to be still with God. Experiment to find a time, place, and situation that works. Don't dismiss getting up a little earlier, even if you are not a morning person. You might be surprised how some quiet time can energize your day.

Wednesday, March 13, 2013

Read Mark 1:40-45

Reflect Lepers were unclean. They were required to alert all who came anywhere near them that they were unclean. This did not stop Jesus from interacting with this leper. Notice Jesus's interaction with this leper complicated his life by spreading fame.

Pray Ask God to give you an opportunity to interact with some "unclean" person today.

Exercise Interact with someone society views as an "unclean" person. Recognize and appreciate their humanity. Say hello. Make eye contact. Treat them with dignity and respect.

Thursday, March 14, 2013

Read Mark 2:13-17

Reflect Jesus shared a meal with sinners. As a result, Jesus faced criticism from the religious leaders. Jesus explains his mission as being to the unhealthy, not the healthy.

Pray Ask God to take away any spirit of judgment you have in your heart and replace it with a spirit of hospitality toward sinners.

Exercise Memorize Mark 2:17.

Friday, March 15, 2013

Read Mark 3:20-35

Reflect Jesus's behavior convinces his family he is not in his right mind. Jesus tells a meaningful story. Then Jesus gives a whole new meaning to "family."

Pray Ask God to give you strength when family members or friends criticize your godly behavior. Thank God for the "family" we experience with other who follow Jesus, living out the ways of God.

Exercise Take time to express your appreciation for someone who is your spiritual "family." Encourage them to continue following Jesus. Do something familial for someone else, even if they do not feel like family at the moment.

Saturday, March 16, 2013

Read 1 John 3:19-24

Reflect God wants our hearts to be at rest in God's presence. The practice of a day of rest, a day of giving up, can provide rest for the mind and soul as well as for the body. Have you been restless lately? Perhaps you need to take a day to rest from your work and rest in God.

Pray Thank God for God's comforting presence. Confess to God if you have failed to slow down and take time to rest your soul. Ask God to fill your heart with peace.

Exercise Take a nap. Have a simple dinner with good friends. Enjoy some unhurried and uninterrupted conversation with your spouse or best friend.



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

The New Life



Part 5, March 10 - 16, 2013