

River Community Church

Daily Devotionals Sept 5 - Sept 9 2016

Knowing and Loving God and Making God's
Love Known to Others

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Devotional Day 1 Sept. 5th 2016

Pray:

Ask God to orient or reorient you to himself. Confess any known sin. Thank him for his forgiveness. Be still and reflect on Jesus and his sacrifice for you. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to God's word. Pray for others in your life that they too would know and love God today.

Read:

Luke 16:10 "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.

Understand:

Two words are key to this verse, trusted and dishonest. A trusted person is faithful, reliable, one who is worthy of full trust. To be trusted means you can be counted on, you're true to your word. Dishonest is a person who is unjust, unrighteous, a person who is not worthy of trust.

There is a need for us to be faithful before the Lord, faithful with whatever gifts God has given you. Faithfulness is the goal. As we learn to be faithful in the small things, we prepare ourselves to be faithful with even bigger things. But, if we cannot be faithful with the little things, how can we be trusted with much bigger things, things of priceless, eternal value.

Being faithful is a key to growth. If we are not willing to do what is before us, there will be no moving on until we've learned to be faithful with what is before us.

Apply:

Faithfulness

What gifts has God given to you and in what ways has he called you to be a steward of them? Think in terms of a single-story life, things like sharing the gospel, your job, family, relationships, the future, group life and money. Are you being faithful? What does faithfulness look like in these areas of your life? If not, what is one thing you could change to help move you towards a life of faithfulness?

Ask God to forgive you for the ways you've fallen short and let his grace wash over you. Clothe yourself in Christ and ask the Holy Spirit to give you the strength to faithfully walk with him in all areas of your life. Set your mind towards walking in faithfulness to Christ.

Live:

(Personalize this prayer for today; make it specific to the circumstances that face you.) Ask God to lead you through his Spirit as you go through your day. Ask him to bring to mind the truth of the gospel and its implications for what you will encounter today. Tell him "Yes" to his will today and ask him for his

power and protection to live this "yes." Ask him to create and reveal opportunities to proclaim the good news today. **KEEP PRAYING THROUGHOUT YOUR DAY TODAY.**

Devotional Day 2 Sept. 6th 2016

Pray:

Ask God to orient or reorient you to himself. Confess any known sin. Thank him for his forgiveness. Be still and reflect on Jesus and his sacrifice for you. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to God's word. Pray for others in your life that they too would know and love God today.

Read:

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

12 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. 14 Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

15 Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

21 The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don't need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don't need you!” 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, 24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, 25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. 28 And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? 31 Now eagerly desire the greater gifts.

Understand:

Paul considers all believers part of God's family. He refers to the church community as the body of Christ

He uses the body with its many parts as an analogy for the church, to illustrate the diversity within the

church. This diversity is good and it's what makes the church function the way it's supposed to. The parts are different for a reason, and the differences must work together. When the parts all work together, it can be a beautiful thing. Think of an Olympic sprinter in full stride: it's a wonderful thing to see. Their body is moving in one direction with one goal in mind: to win the prize!

God has placed the many different parts in the body right where he wants them. There is diversity in the body, but only one body. The body of believers has one thing in common: faith in Christ.

Everyone has a role to play, a unique role, so we need not look to other roles and wish somehow we had a different role to play. In fact Paul even says the weaker roles (less desirable) are indispensable. If you start taking these different parts away, the body will fall apart or at the very least be hindered in the way it functions.

We should have equal concern for everyone in the body.

We--with all of our different gifts, talents, personalities, abilities, desires, skills and interests--are a part of the body of Christ—a vital part of this body! So no matter how small or insignificant you may feel your role is, you are called to participate and your participation is what makes our body of believers—our Church—a healthy body.

Apply:

Consider your different gifts, talents, personality, abilities, desires, skills and interests. How do you view them in the context of community?

We are all called to participate in the ministry. Think through your role in this community: how do you see yourself fitting in?

Ask God to give you opportunities to participate in the ministry. Ask him to give you a willingness to serve.

Being part of a small group is important. It's the avenue that leads to opportunity and it's a role we're all called to play. Are you plugged in to a small group? If not, what is keeping you from doing so? What is one thing you could do to make a change?

Live:

(Personalize this prayer for today, make it specific to the circumstances that face you.) Ask God to lead you through his Spirit as you go through your day. Ask him to bring to mind the truth of the gospel and its implications for what you will encounter today. Tell him "Yes" to his will today and ask him for his power and protection to live this "yes." Ask him to create and reveal opportunities to proclaim the good news today. **KEEP PRAYING THROUGHOUT YOUR DAY TODAY.**

Devotionals for Sept 5 - Sept 9 2016

Knowing and Loving God and Making God's Love Known to Others

Devotional Day 3 Sept. 7th 2016

Pray:

Ask God to orient or reorient you to himself. Confess any known sin. Thank him for his forgiveness. Be still and reflect on Jesus and his sacrifice for you. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to God's word. Pray for others in your life that they too would know and love God today.

Read:

Ephesians 4:17-25

17 So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. 18 They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. 19 Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.

20 That, however, is not the way of life you learned 21 when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. 22 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body.

Understand:

Paul is giving us instructions for how to live. We're not to live like the world does; it's empty and fruitless. They have no room in their hearts for God, nor do they want any room. Their world is all about them. It's what Terry has called meism.

Christ teaches us something different. In him, we're to put off the old self and put on the new self, walk in the newness of life. The old self is gone. When we believed in Christ, the old clothes were thrown away, and we we're now clothed in Christ!

This new life is based on truth, the truth found in the Gospel. So we engage our minds as we head in a new direction.

The word "therefore" is important. Paul is about to tell us practical steps we can take to engage our minds. He says, "You must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body."

We're to tell the truth with each other because as a body of believers we're all part of one body. One

team, one fight. We have no reason to rack and stack. We don't have to lie, put up facades and act like everything is perfect when it's not. We can put away lying and put on truthfulness.

Being truthful and putting off falsehood opens us up to opportunities for us to truly be known beyond just the surface.

Paul calls us to live an open and honest life.

Apply:

What are reasons people tend not to live an open and honest life?

Are you doing any of these things?

What is one thing you could change in your life to help you demonstrate an open and honest life?

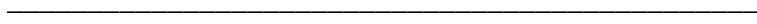
What is keeping you from doing it?

Maybe you're already there and you're living an open and honest life. What is one thing you could do to encourage others to do the same?

What could you do to make your answer a reality this week?

Live:

(Personalize this prayer for today, make it specific to the circumstances that face you.) Ask God to lead you through his Spirit as you go through your day. Ask him to bring to mind the truth of the gospel and its implications for what you will encounter today. Tell him "Yes" to his will today and ask him for his power and protection to live this "yes." Ask him to create and reveal opportunities to proclaim the good news today. **KEEP PRAYING THROUGHOUT YOUR DAY TODAY.**



Devotional Day 4 Sept. 8th 2016

Pray:

Ask God to orient or reorient you to himself. Confess any known sin. Thank him for his forgiveness. Be still and reflect on Jesus and his sacrifice for you. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to God's word. Pray for others in your life that they too would know and love God today.

Read:

Col 3:17 17 And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.

Understand:

In Colossians 3 we find Paul urging and instructing believers to fully embrace this new life in Christ. He tells us to set our hearts on things above and not the things of this world, worldly things only pull us away from God.

Instead we're to clothe ourselves in Christ, we're to put on his character. And know matter where we find ourselves, we're to let the peace of God rule in our hearts, so that in whatever we do or say, we do it as God's representative.

Notice the word "Whatever." It means all, total, complete, all in its totality. So when Paul says "whatever" he's saying there is no sacred-secular split in God's eyes, He is sovereign over all. In other words, all that we do in word and in deed should all be done in the name of Jesus! It's what we call "Living a single story life."

We're not to separate are lives into different compartments. We don't have an upstairs life and a down stairs life. Our lives are not separated into work life, sports life, family life, hobby life, and then a spiritual life. We have but only one life, and it all belongs to Christ! HE is the one who has rescued us and set us free from the trapping of this world. Bring all of your life under the reign of Christ, be filled with thankfulness and gratitude, and praise the one who is worthy of praise!

Apply:

Ponder the first part of Col. 3:17, "Whatever you do or say." Think about the different roles your life is made up of. Are there areas where you've allowed yourself to begin living a two story life?

What could you change to make your life a single story life?

How could you help other to lie a single story life?

What role does life in community play in living a single story life?

Live:

(Personalize this prayer for today, make it specific to the circumstances that face you.) Ask God to lead you through his Spirit as you go through your day. Ask him to bring to mind the truth of the gospel and its implications for what you will encounter today. Tell him "Yes" to his will today and ask him for his power and protection to live this "yes." Ask him to create and reveal opportunities to proclaim the good news today. **KEEP PRAYING THROUGHOUT YOUR DAY TODAY.**

Devotional Day 5 Sept. 9 2016

Pray:

Ask God to orient or reorient you to himself. Confess any known sin. Thank him for his forgiveness. Be still and reflect on Jesus and his sacrifice for you. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to God's word. Pray for others in your life that they too would know and love God today.

Read:

Romans 13:8: "Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law."

2 Cor. 5:14: "For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died."

Understand:

For Paul, loving others is the single most important characteristic of the Christian life and the heart of Christian living. It's the epitome and essence of the entire OT moral law; the one unending debt that Christians owe others. We must love others, and that love should be the touchstone of the way we conduct ourselves in relation to others.

It was Christ Love that compelled Paul and his companions into action. The Word "compels" means "to hold fast." The Love of Christ was constraining them to certain courses of actions. They knew that Jesus didn't act out of his own self-interest, but instead he freely died for all.

Jesus' life shows us how to love, he loved because he was a loving person, not because he found attractive qualities in those he loved. And we, his followers, are to be loving people, not simply to be drawn to attractive people. People matter.

Apply:

Reflect on Christ's love for you. In what ways has he revealed his love to you in tangible ways?

In what ways have you failed to love people?

Remembering that "compels" means "to hold fast." Think about your own life and the ways Christ's love for you compels you, constraining you, to certain courses of actions. Right them down.

If you're on course, what can you do to make sure you stay on course? If you drifting, what would it take for you to get back on course, to dial in on loving people, even people that are hard to Love?

What do you need to do to love people? What is one thing you can do this week to move that way?

Live:

(Personalize this prayer for today, make it specific to the circumstances that face you.) Ask God to lead you through his Spirit as you go through your day. Ask him to bring to mind the truth of the gospel and its implications for what you will encounter today. Tell him "Yes" to his will today and ask him for his power and protection to live this "yes." Ask him to create and reveal opportunities to proclaim the good news today. **KEEP PRAYING THROUGHOUT YOUR DAY TODAY.**

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