



## **GROW. PRAY. STUDY.**

The Church of the Resurrection – Weekly Guide

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**October 15, 2017 Ordinary – Experiencing God in the Day-to-Day**

**“Omne Sanctum – Everything is Holy”**

**Scripture: 1 Kings 19:9b-13a**

Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” He answered, “I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.” He said, “Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.” Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

Questions in this GPS marked with ► are particularly recommended for group discussion. Group leaders may add other discussion questions, or substitute other questions for the marked ones, at their discretion.

**“Clear me of any unknown sin”**

**MONDAY 10.16.17 Psalm 19:12-14**

The first part of this psalm poetically described two ways in which God communicates with the human family: the glories of nature, and the transforming power of God’s instruction, direction or teaching (Hebrew *torah*—cf. [Psalm 19:1-11](#)). The prayer at the end of the psalm asked that God help the poet not only be aware of the divine message, but put it into practice every day of his life.

- “The meditations of my heart” has a nice “spiritual” ring. But the Hebrew term meant a lot more than sitting thinking quietly while burning some nice incense. “It is implied that [the person meditating] intends to put it [God’s teaching] into practice (cf. Dt. 17:19; Jos. 1:8).” \* Have you ever said, “I’ve got to quit binge-watching that reality show” or “...eating so much of that ice cream” when you knew you had no plans to quit? Are there any parts of God’s instruction that you think about, but have no intention of putting into practice right now?
- Most of us recognize, ruefully, our capacity to rationalize, and that’s at least one reality that “clear me of any unknown sin” addressed. But the psalmist was also honest enough to add, “Save your servant from willful sins.” A great place to start the process of examining your spiritual progress is your “I know what I should [or shouldn’t] do, but I’m doing it anyway” behaviors. Can you honestly pray, every day, “Save your servant from willful sins”?

**Prayer:** Lord God, you are my rock and my redeemer. I want that to be, not just pious “church words,” but the governing reality of my life. Please guide and strengthen me. Amen.

\* John W. Baigent, comment on “meditates” in F. F. Bruce, *New International Bible Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1979, p. 557.

## **“Live as children of the light”**

### **TUESDAY 10.17.17 Ephesians 5:8-13**

The familiar spiritual contrast of “darkness” with “light” finds its roots in a typical human reaction to the physical presence of light. People who want to do something wrong, or something they are ashamed to have others see them doing, usually choose to do those things in darkness if they possibly can. Ephesians was confident that, living in both God’s grace and God’s power, Christ followers can be at peace with the prospect of “everything” being exposed to God’s light.

- Verse 8 did not say, as we might expect, “You belong to the light.” It used a stronger phrase: “Now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light.” What is the source of the light that shines from our lives in our best moments? In what ways have you become aware of Christ’s light shining through you to brighten the lives of others?
- What are some of the attitudes or behaviors (even if you’ve always been a Christian) in which God has moved your life from darkness to light? Did you intentionally “test” the parts of your life to discern light from darkness? If not, how did the change come about? How can recalling those past advances give you hope and confidence for God’s leading in the future?

**Prayer:** God, creator of light, keep illuminating the darkest corners of my life. Keep guiding me as I test habits and practices, seeking to live every day as a child of your light. Amen.

## **An ordinary rock became a sacred pillar**

### **WEDNESDAY 10.18.17 Genesis 28:10-18**

Fleeing his angry twin Esau (cf. [Genesis 27:41](#)), Jacob had showed no vision much greater than his own survival. He stopped at what the text simply called “a certain place” to sleep. Alone in the wild, with only a stone for a pillow, he had a dream in which God promised him heirs who would bless the whole earth. That dream gave him a life-changing, awed sense of God’s presence. When he awoke, he worshipped, and named the place *Beth El* (Hebrew “God’s house”).

- Can you recall a time when you especially felt the need for reassurance of God’s presence? What was going on in your life? In what way(s), big or small, did you find a renewed sense of God’s presence? How might the practices on the daily reflection prayer card given out in worship make God’s presence real to you? Which of them do you already follow to help you remember to seek God, and respond to God’s presence?
- Jacob’s world didn’t have structures like our church sanctuaries, which we often refer to as “God’s house.” What are some ways you might deepen your experience of God when you come to God’s house? What about the other days of the week? Identify one step you will take to draw closer to God through the act of worship, corporately with others and by yourself on days that do not have corporate worship.

**Prayer:** Lord God, that “Jacob’s ladder” we still sing about is always there, connecting earth and heaven. Open my eyes to remember that even on my most “wilderness” days, you are with me, waiting to hear from me. Amen.

## **Elijah found God in the quiet**

### **THURSDAY 10.19.17 1 Kings 19:9-13**

God gave Elijah a great public victory (cf. [1 Kings 18:1-39](#)). But Queen Jezebel was still in power. Angry about her “god” Baal’s defeat, she threatened to kill Elijah. Her defiance of him and God

was too much for the “successful” prophet, the bold man of action. Tired, depressed and afraid, he ran. God cared gently for Elijah’s physical and mental fatigue. Then God spoke again to Elijah in his wilderness experience—perhaps in the way Elijah least expected.

- Archeologists have found Canaanite figurines showing Baal with fists full of thunderbolts. God had sent fire on Mt. Carmel, but not here. Scholar John Bimson said, “‘A gentle whisper’ and ‘a still small voice’ (RSV) do not do full justice to the enigmatic Hebrew, which may be better rendered ‘a brief sound of silence.’...it implies God was at last passing in the silence after the storm.” \* When have you sensed God, not in sound and spectacle, but in small, quiet ways?
- Elijah didn’t just wander aimlessly in the wilderness. He went to Mount Horeb, also known as Mount Sinai—the very place where God made a covenant with the people of Israel in Moses’ day (cf. [Deuteronomy 5:2](#)). Are there sacred places that form the “fixed points” in your life’s journey with God? Do you ever return to any of them in times when difficulty or pain make you hungry for God’s presence?

**Prayer:** Lord God, this is a very noisy world. Guide me to the outer and inner places of silence that I sometimes need in order to hear your quiet, sustaining voice. Amen.

\* John Bimson, comment on 1 Kings 19:12 in *The New Bible Commentary, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Edition*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994.

### “Examine yourselves...test yourselves”

#### FRIDAY 10.20.17 2 Corinthians 13:3-5

The apostle Paul learned, with sadness, that some Corinthian Christians, people he had personally brought to faith in Jesus, now thought badly of him and his message. A group of “super apostles” had turned their hearts and their faith in a different direction (cf. [2 Corinthians 11:4-6](#)). Verse 3 in today’s passage showed their desire to “test” Paul. But he asked them to take a hard look at themselves, to make sure their motives and attitudes were in tune with Christ’s.

- Scholar N. T. Wright suggested some self-test questions that may supplement those you received in church. “When you look at yourself in the mirror, do you see someone in whom King Jesus is living and active, or someone who once knew him but now seems not to? When you listen to the sort of things you yourself say, does it sound like words that might have come from King Jesus himself, or are you simply talking the same way everyone else does?” \*
- Wright went on, “And when you settle down and quieten your mind and heart, to pray and wait for God, do you know and sense the presence, the life and the love of King Jesus close to you, within you, warming and sustaining, guarding and guiding, checking and directing you? These are searching tests, but they are the kind of thing Paul has in mind.” \*

**Prayer:** King Jesus, it’s rather scary to search my life and heart. Give me the courage to test myself, to find the good you’ve already grown in my life, and to discover what is still missing that you wish to give me. Amen.

\* N. T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone: 2 Corinthians*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004, page 144.

### “Each person should test their own work”

#### SATURDAY 10.21.17 Galatians 6:1-5

The apostle Paul pictured lots of interdependence and interaction when he described the living Christian community to the Christians in Galatia. But even as he called them (and us) to support,

and even correct, one another, one of the most common ways of reacting to others was specifically ruled out: “not compare themselves with others,” said verse 4. As we grow in the discipline of examining ourselves each day, one unhelpful answer is, “Well, I’m better than \_\_\_\_\_.”

- What inner factors tempt you to compare yourself with others? How does God’s love and grace empower you to gradually erode the negative, competitive, comparative patterns taught by a culture whose values are not the same as God’s? What steps can you take toward living into the freedom to which God invites you, basking in the light of God’s favor and approval without fearing what others will think or how your path will “stack up” against someone else’s?

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, teach me how to be happy with doing a good job without worrying about how my life and work compare with someone else’s. Remind me that you, and only you, are the master and Lord I ultimately aim to please. Amen.

**Family Activity:** This simple activity may help even smaller children begin forming the habit of examining their way of life. Read Matthew 7:12, the Golden Rule. Give each person in your family an index card. Have each person write, “I did or said something kind” on one side of the card. On the other side write, “I did or said something hurtful.” Ask each person to pay attention to their words and actions each day. Encourage them to place a mark on the appropriate side of the card each time they do something kind or hurtful. No one else needs to see the cards. These are for each individual and God. Each day, work towards having fewer marks on the “hurtful” side and more marks on the “kind” side. Pray for God’s help to treat others kindly.

**Prayer Requests** – [cor.org/prayer](http://cor.org/prayer)

*Prayers for Peace & Comfort for:*

- Larry and Sharon Forbach and family on the death of their son Rick Heinitz, 10/10
- Janine McPhee and family on the death of her sister Judy Jackson, 10/10
- Christine Polo and family on the death of her husband Joe Polo, 10/6
- Loryn and Sydney Polo on the death of their father Joe Polo, 10/6
- Patsy Shipley and family on the death of her mother Mary Stockard, 10/5
- Christal Heier and family on the death of her grandmother Mary Stockard, 10/5