

Greetings friends,

I ask that as we begin our spiritual journey together we begin to take some time daily (if you are not already) to read the Scripture and pray. I thought it would be beneficial for us to focus on the same passage of Scripture for the week. This week, we will focus on Sunday's text, 1 Peter 1:13-23, though I recommend also reading vs. 1-12. If you were not in present on Sunday and have not yet watched it, I encourage you to do so. The book of 1 Peter is a letter that was written by Peter to several churches scattered throughout the area now known as Turkey.

Format (this is a repeat from last week, and will be consistently present for anyone new and as a reminder for all):

Find a quiet place and time to focus on the Word, and to hear from God through it. It doesn't have to be long, for some it will be longer than others. I encourage you, if possible, to do this practice in the morning. You will then find that God brings it to your mind throughout your day.

For greater impact I encourage you to get some paper and a pen and journal daily what thoughts and impressions God brings to mind. Write out also your own thoughts and your own prayers, making sure to leave space within your time for God's response. Listen intently, and notice what rises up within you- what you are thinking, feeling, memories that arise and ideas that spring up. It may be something God would want you to address within yourself and/or with others. It may be something God is inspiring you to begin or end. God's possibilities are infinite! After time, it is often beneficial to go back and read what you have written, and notice how God has been moving in your life (and praise God for it!).

Begin with prayer, quieting yourself within and opening up to hearing what God would like to reveal to you. Praise God for who he is, for loving you, being with you, and more. Then ask God to speak to you; to open your heart and mind to hear his message. (if you are journaling, you could write out the prayer)

Read the Scripture passage over twice; once as a read through, and the second time slowly, meditatively. Notice what God illuminates for you. Notice what words or ideas are "jumping off the page at you," impacting you from the Scripture. Ask God why that is being highlighted for you. What is God saying to you? What is God asking you to say, do, change, pray about, etc.? What is the application for my life today? **Most importantly- what am I going to do about it? (If you are journaling you could write it all out, which reinforces it in a greater way)

I have put together some daily questions based upon the Scripture. You may use those, but also feel free to deviate away from it if God is leading you there. They are simply offered to prompt contemplation with God. There is much more in this passage, feel free to delve in more!

At the end of your time pray again. I recommend praying throughout, but the ending prayer would include praise, thanking God for revelation, and asking for the Holy Spirit to continue to reveal, bringing to mind God's will. Ask God for the courage, empowerment, and opportunity to do what you have determined God is asking you to do.

1 Peter 1:13-23

¹³ Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming. ¹⁴ As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. ¹⁵ But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; ¹⁶ for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”

¹⁷ Since you call on a Father who judges each person’s work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear. ¹⁸ For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. ²⁰ He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. ²¹ Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

²² Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart. ²³ For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

DAILY QUIET TIME WITH GOD:

Monday: The passage begins, “alert and fully sober.” The original Greek says “gird up the loins” indicating a practice for the people wearing robes that they would take the robe from behind and through the legs and tuck it into a belt, almost creating a pants-like effect. The imagery is to be ready, aware, and alert. Can you think of any other words to describe this image or phrase? This was written in reference to our minds. What do you think is meant by this phrase? How would one have a mind that is alert and fully sober (sober in this instance has nothing to do with alcohol). Why would it be important? What are the things that cause the mind to not be in this state? What are the possible effects of having your mind in either state? What would be the concern about not having a mind that is alert and fully sober? Ask God to reveal to you if there is anything that is causing your mind to not be alert and fully sober, and to reveal the consequences of that state in your own life. If there is an issue brought to mind, ask God for clarity and a way to move forward.

Tuesday: Vs. 14 states, “As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.” How does the term “obedient children” make you feel? Would you characterize yourself in this way? Why or why not? For you personally, what would be included in the warning about evil desires? What do you think conforming to evil desires looks like, and is there any area of your life where you are conforming in this way? “When you had lived in ignorance,” as in, before you knew the truth of God. Consider times when you realized you had been living in ignorance and the truth of God shed a light into your life. What happened, how did it happen? When you realized the truth, was changing into what God desired and away from what you had been doing easy or difficult? Why or why not? Ask God if there are any areas in your life that you are now living in ignorance. If God reveals something, ask for the truth, and the guidance and strength to change into what God desires for you.

Wednesday: Vs. 15-16 states, “But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”” (see also Leviticus 11:44-45, 19:2) Holy means to be set apart, unique, typically relating to the divine. For instance, the Sabbath Day is holy because it is a day set apart for the Lord. To be holy in all you do is a total life commitment. Consider your life- your time, money, relationships, etc. How does being holy impact every part of your life? Is it? Why or why not? If not, ask God how to make that happen. The original Greek states “Holy you shall be,” or “You shall be holy.” With that reading could it be viewed as both a command and a promise?

Thursday: Vs. 17, “Since you call on a Father who judges each person’s work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear,” has three ideas. A) God judges impartially, B) live as foreigners (or strangers) here, and C) live in reverent fear. How does the idea that God judges impartially make you feel? Does it make you feel secure, concerned, or something else, and why? Why do you believe that God judges impartially? What does that mean for how we should live? Is God bringing to mind any areas of your life that need to be examined and possibly changed, transformed? What would it look like to live as a foreigner/stranger? What would be the attitude, posture, and way of life? Why do you think Peter believes this is important? What does it look like to live in reverent fear of God? How does the term “fear” make you feel? Ask God for understanding and growth in all these areas.

Friday: Read vs. 18- 21 which speaks of Jesus’ sacrifice for us. It begins, “For you know,” in reference to vs. 17 which was examined yesterday. What are the different aspects of what Jesus did described here? Why do you think Peter used so much imagery? Which imagery speaks to your heart the most and why? When it says, “redeemed from the empty way of life,” what areas of your life does it bring to mind? Consider areas of your life, and perhaps your whole life, that were empty and through Jesus were redeemed. How did that happen, what did it look like? How does your knowledge of what Jesus did for you make you feel? Talk to God about it, expressing whatever came to mind, whether it was thanksgiving, confusion, shame, etc. Read this passage again and with every section remind yourself that God loves you and wants only good for you.

Saturday: Vs. 22-23, “Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart. For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.” There is again, so much in this one sentence! How is someone purified by obeying the truth? How does that happen? What does obedience look like? Is it something you long to do or is there hesitation? What truth do you believe Peter is referring to, and how do you obey it? Purification by obeying the truth led to sincere love for each other- why do you think that would be? Although Peter notes that they now have a sincere love for each other, Peter asks them to take the next step and love one another deeply, from the heart. Ask God if there is a situation or relationship where you need to take a next step, and perhaps love even more. What would that look like? Ask God for revelation and guidance. The term “born again” is used, and of “imperishable seed,” as in everlasting, eternal. What do you think the term “born again” and

“holy” have to do with one another? Describe your understanding of being born again of imperishable seed, for not only the future but also your present. Take a moment and thank God!

****EXTRA****

Did you know that Methodism was founded by John Wesley, and that one of the key things that set Methodists apart was the focus on holiness? They developed what was called a Holy Club , and the members sought holiness by systematically serving God every hour of the day. They participated in works of piety, such as worship, prayer, fasting, reading the Bible, etc. They also participated in works of mercy, such as feeding the hungry, visiting those in prison, and caring for orphans. The members would meet together for spiritual examination and accountability, asking 22 Questions (below). Some members of the Holy Club went on to lead the Evangelical Revival, bringing many to Christ. Over time the focus on holiness transitioned into Societies, Class Meetings, and Band Meetings- small groups for spiritual formation, and as John Wesley put it, the pursuit of “holiness of heart and life,” which means “universal love filling the heart and governing the life.” (from “Advice to a People Called Methodist”)

The 22 Questions:

1. Am I consciously or unconsciously creating the impression that I am better than I really am? In other words, am I a hypocrite?
2. Am I honest in all my acts and words, or do I exaggerate?
3. Do I confidentially pass on to another what was told to me in confidence?
4. Can I be trusted?
5. Am I a slave to dress, friends, work, or habits?
6. Am I self-conscious, self-pitying, or self-justifying?
7. Did the Bible live in me today?
8. Do I give it time to speak to me everyday?
9. Am I enjoying prayer?
10. When did I last speak to someone else about my faith?
11. Do I pray about the money I spend?
12. Do I get to bed on time and get up on time?
13. Do I disobey God in anything?
14. Do I insist upon doing something about which my conscience is uneasy?
15. Am I defeated in any part of my life?
16. Am I jealous, impure, critical, irritable, touchy, or distrustful?
17. How do I spend my spare time?
18. Am I proud?
19. Do I thank God that I am not as other people, especially as the Pharisees who despised the publican?
20. Is there anyone whom I fear, dislike, disown, criticize, hold a resentment toward or disregard? If so, what am I doing about it?
21. Do I grumble or complain constantly?
22. Is Christ real to me?

