

GROWTHguide

FOR THE WEEK OF FEB. 15, 2015

"From Quit to Commit"



REFLECTION AND STUDY

MONDAY | Read Psalm 51:16-18

In The Message paraphrase of Psalm 51, King David's Psalm of confession, David says to God, *"Going through the motions does not please you, a flawless performance means nothing to you."* Psalm 51:16 (MSG) A more traditional translation of these verses reads, *"You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings."* Psalm 51:16 (NIV) God does not seek our religious ritual instead of our faithful love. Ritual cannot replace love for God and neighbor.

- Do you ever satisfy yourself with the idea that Sunday morning worship is all God wants from you?
- Where in your own life can you do more to align your heart with God's seven days a week?
- Offer a prayer of thanksgiving and a request for God's guidance as you interact with others throughout the week.

TUESDAY | Read Lev. 19:15-18

How do these verses compare to Micah's words, *"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."* Micah 6:8 (NIV)

- How has God shown you what is good?
- Identify some Bible verses that you rely on to teach you what is good. Memorize one of them.

WEDNESDAY | Read Luke 10:27-37

"If anyone asks, 'Who is my neighbor?' we reply plainly. Your neighbor is every person in the world, every human being created by God, the maker of us all. We must not exclude loving our enemies, the enemies of God, or those who are their own enemies. We are to live lives of love for others, just as Christ loved us."

- John Wesley, "The Almost Christian"

- Do you have a neighbor who would benefit from an act of mercy like a personal visit, a ride to the store, or help mowing the lawn? Don't think about it – do it!
- Pray for someone or a group of people who might be considered your enemies. If you don't have any enemies, pick someone for whom you harbor a bit of ill will.
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THURSDAY | Read Phil. 2:1-5

"More than any other single way, the grace of humility is worked into our lives through the Discipline of service. Humility...is one of those virtues that is never gained by seeking it. The more we pursue it, the more distant it becomes. To think we have it is sure evidence that we don't.... Of all the classic Spiritual Disciplines, service is the most

conductive to the growth of humility. When we set out on a consciously chosen course of action that accents the good of others and is, for the most part, a hidden work, a deep change occurs in our spirits."

-Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*.

- How does valuing others above self reflect a humble journey with God?
- When you serve others, do you do so in ways that are hidden or do you seek acclaim and approval for yourself?
- Reflect on a time when you wanted recognition for your service and pray for God's guidance to help you avoid similar behavior as you "walk humbly with your God."

FRIDAY | Read Micah 6:10-12, Proverbs 31:8-9

Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador was martyred by a sniper's bullet in 1980 after presiding over a public Mass. He was well known for his outspokenness concerning the Church's obligation to stand with the poor and promote social justice and equality. *"The majority of the poor in [El Salvador] are oppressed and repressed daily by economic and political structures. The terrible words spoken by the prophets of Israel continue to be verified among us."*

-Archbishop Oscar Romero from *Voice of the Voiceless*

- Was Archbishop Romero correct? Are Micah's words in the verses you read for today applicable in our society?
- How can we as Christ-followers do what Jesus calls us to do in the face of a culture that has very different values and priorities?
- Pray for the courage and wisdom to speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves.

SATURDAY | Read Matt. 28:18, Eph. 1:21, Rev. 1:5

"It is important that we fulfill our political obligations under the lordship of Christ as individual citizens, but that is not enough. The church, as the corporate body of Christ, serves as the model and agent of Christ's kingdom on earth. Jesus wants his people to join him in working for wholeness, justice, and peace..."

-Ronald J. Sider, *Churches that Make a Difference*

- Help St. Paul put these words into action by completing the Missions and Outreach Team Survey that was included in your bulletin on Sunday or by completing it online.
- Prayerfully consider where you might volunteer to serve in one of St. Paul's Missions and Outreach activities. Then follow through and volunteer.
- If you participate in voting at election time, do you consider the consequences of your vote on the lives of those who are poor or needy? Why or why not?

SUNDAY

Today is your "Sabbath" and a time for reflection. How has God been speaking to you over the week? Use what the Lord has said to you to remold and reshape your life. If you are having trouble hearing God's voice, slow down or even stop what you are doing so that the busyness of life's demands do not squelch the whispers of God's language of love upon your heart.