

Devotion Guide
July 25th - July 30th



Faith Presbyterian
Emmaus, Pennsylvania

Faith Workcamps 2004
Kenosha, Wisconsin

For the past 13 years, Faith Presbyterian Church has participated in Group Publishing's summer workcamp program. The primary goal is the spiritual growth of high school and college students. Workcamps are an intensive week of community service offering teenagers an opportunity to perform hands-on home-repair projects for low income families. Projects include carpentry, roof repair, step and porch construction, weatherization, wheelchair ramp construction, painting, and drywall work.

As the youth serve, their confidence and character can grow like never before. Their faith ignites as they complete hands-on, meaningful work that really counts, and they discover a genuine appreciation for all God has given them.

Some residents must choose between putting food on the table and fixing a leaky roof. The real repairs, however, are done not to the homes, but to the lives of those you touch.

This year we head for Kenosha, WI which is a community of 80,000 between Chicago and Milwaukee. Many of the residents in this community are elderly, disabled, or have low incomes. Because of health, age, or financial limitations, they cannot complete the home repairs they need to survive the harsh winters. Recent economic downturns have only worsened the situation.

Deuteronomy 6:4-12 will be the primary focus of this summer's devotions at workcamp. We set aside time at lunch, during the evening program, and at bedtime to really focus on these verses to help our faith grow and we hope you will do the same. Each day's scripture verses correspond with the focus at workcamp for that particular day (July 25-30) so you can have an understanding of what is happening in Kenosha, WI.

Thank you very much for supporting Faith Workcamps! Know that your support is helping to change not only the lives of Faith Presbyterian's workcampers, but the lives of all who come in contact with them throughout the week and in the future. Please pray for our safety during this physical and spiritual journey. We will depart Emmaus on July 24th and return on August 1st.

BUILD ON THE LORD

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.”

- Deuteronomy 6:4

In Jewish teaching, the first and most important thing one learns is what is referred to as the *Shema*: “Shema Yisrael Adonai Elohim Adonai echad” (“Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone”). How can such a simple statement be so much at the core of the Jewish faith?

One significant thing to realize is the extreme difference of a monotheistic faith in a pagan world. “Israel” was on its way to enter a world surrounded with people who served and placed their trust in many “gods”. Today, we are still surrounded by other “gods”, especially in American culture. There are countless distractions in our daily lives that find a way to sneak in as other “gods”, taking our attention away from our one true God.

Understanding the singular glory of God is the foundation of our relationship to Him.

- Author Unknown

What are three things that serve as other “gods” in your life? For the rest of this week (or your week back home if you are already away from your distractions), choose one of these “gods” and take some time intentionally away from it. During this time, pull out your Bible or a devotional and have one-on-one time with God. Tell Him your worries, but also, don’t forget to tell Him about your day, as you would a friend, a spouse, or a parent.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

The Lord is the one true God. He is the Creator – the Creator of mankind; all men are created by God. Workcampers, as you embark on this week, remember that each person you meet here is created by the same God who created you. Partners, take some time and think about people you have met by “chance” and reflect upon how they have impacted your life.

BUILD ON DEVOTION TO GOD

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.” - Deuteronomy 6:5

When asked which commandment is the greatest, Jesus replies, “‘you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment” (Matthew 22:37-38). We are to “love” God. Love is so common a word these days. It has become banal – everything from “I love ice cream” to “I love my pet” to “I love my family”. But this love is distinguished – not our love for our favorite candy, but a love that involves our entire being. In Greek, this is referred to as “agape” – the highest elevation of love. Every action reflects this love.

But how do we really see this love? Think of a parent’s love for a child. This is probably the most intense love as a living example. A mother from the ghetto jumps to cover her child, to envelop him, when she hears the gunshots go off. A father runs back into a burning building in hopes of rescuing his children. A sacrifice – a willing to give up themselves for their own children – exactly what Jesus has done for us.

Out of our faith in God, in Jesus who sacrificed Himself so that we may live, grows love. Let us work to escalate this love to the highest level. Devotion requires our entire being – our heart, our soul, our mind, our strength. It goes down to our very core.

To love God with all one’s heart means with total sincerity of faith and feeling.

To love Him with all one’s might means with all one’s worldly possessions.

But to love Him with all one’s soul means to love God even with one’s life itself.

- Chaim Pearl

THINK ABOUT IT:

In this day and age there are many distractions that can keep us from totally devoting ourselves to God. Think about a time when your devotion was not complete. How can you better deal with a similar situation in the future?

BUILD ON GOD'S WORD

“Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart.”
- Deuteronomy 6:6

How do we keep these words in our hearts – how do we impress them into our very being? By reading God’s Word. It is full of story after story. God has provided us with an instruction manual for life.

Paul writes to his protégé, Timothy, that “all Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Before embarking on His ministry of just three years, Jesus spent thirty years in preparation. He studied the Scriptures intensely so that in His ministry, when He ran into opposition, He could give a Biblical response. He studied the Scriptures so that they were imprinted in his very being.

While in prison, Paul had God’s Word with him. Though he was not provided with a copy of the Scriptures, they were imprinted in him already. They gave him comfort as he faced persecution. In fact, it was while he was in prison that he wrote his letter to the Romans, an amazing statement of his faith.

The Bible is full of stories of what and what not to do in certain situations. Read and learn from these stories.

The Word of God hidden in the heart is a stubborn voice to suppress.

- Billy Graham

SOMETHING TO SHARE:

Find a passage from Scripture you do not already know. Make it a goal to learn the passage by heart. After camp, share this passage with your partner and hear the scripture they chose and how it moved them.

BUILD ON ACTION

“Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise.”

- Deuteronomy 6:7

Read the first verse of Mark’s gospel: “The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” Mark is overwhelmingly excited to share this story. He does not touch the Christmas story, but rather goes immediately to Jesus’ baptism and ministry. Mark is the gospel of action. It is full of one work followed by another throughout. The gospels in the New Testament are followed by the Acts of the Apostles. Mark could be called the Acts of Jesus.

Build on action. Jesus put the Scriptures to action, miracle after miracle. Some may say we, as humans, are unable to perform miracles. But we can be the channel for God’s miracles. We are here to accomplish God’s mission. We have the ability to share God’s Word with others. We have the ability to create and to give birth. We have the miracles of medical science. Do not dismiss these gifts from God – He is our Enabler. Share the Good News. Let others know where these miracles come from. And thank God that He has chosen you. Never let yourself fall away from the Scriptures

The first Bible many will read will be us and how we live.

- Rebecca Manley Pippert

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

There is the old saying that “actions speak louder than words.” Our actions are determined by who we are at the core. Our personalities, morals, and relationship with Christ often begin developing at a very early age. Was the Word of God significant in your childhood? If so, how? If not, how do you wish it might have been? If you are a parent, do you incorporate God’s Word into your child’s learning at home? What are some interesting and effective ways?

BUILD ON JESUS

“Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

- Deuteronomy 6:8-9

You have the greatest gift in the universe. You have salvation.

Throughout the Old Testament, we see examples of faithful servants of the Lord. But none of these examples is perfect. Until Jesus came, in human likeness – a man, yet fully God.

Today’s Scripture says to bind the Law of the Lord on our hands, on our foreheads, on our doorposts. We are called to proclaim God’s Word.

John 1:14 says that Jesus *is* God’s Word; the Old Testament is fulfilled in Him. Who can neglect the association with this passage and the crucifixion? “Bind them as a sign on your hand”: the nails in His hands. “Fix them as an emblem on your forehead”: the crown of thorns piercing His flesh. One even might read “write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” as the sign placed above the cross, marking Jesus’ crime: “King of the Jews”.

A CONSTANT REMINDER:

Surround yourself with reminders of God’s Word. When a child is scared, he often has an item, like a teddy bear or a blanket, that will keep him calm – it will make him feel safe. Surround yourself with reminders of your safety – your eternal safety. Put a Scripture quote on your door or on your computer monitor, get a keychain with a religious symbol, create a list of your favorite scripture passages to display, etc. Give yourself a reminder of God’s promise to you, fulfilled through Jesus Christ, and let those reminders serve as a message to outsiders as well. Like Jesus on the cross, mark yourself as God’s child, for Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice for you.

(For additional reading, see [The Room](#) on page 7.)

BUILD ON A LIFESTYLE OF SERVICE

“When the Lord your God has brought you into the land that He swore to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you – a land with fine, large cities that you did not build, houses filled with all sorts of goods that you did not fill, hewn cisterns that you did not hew, vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant – and when you have eaten your fill, take care that you do not forget the Lord, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the houses of slavery.”

- Deuteronomy 6:10-12

Look at the lilies of the field, who perish, and how God has glorified them – how much more will God care for us (Matthew 2:28-31)? Do you have a bed to rest your head on? Do you have a roof over your head? Do you have ample supply of food? So often we take these things for granted. But, as promised, the Lord is looking out for us.

How do we ever become worthy of the gifts God has provided for us? The simple answer is we don't. It is only by God's unending love, Jesus' sacrifice for us. The only thing we can do is have faith. James 2 asks, what is faith if not accompanied by good works? Live not only by words, but by deeds. Paul tells us, “your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus, who did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness” (Philippians 2:5-7 NIV). Remain faithful to God and become His servant.

*Great opportunities to help others seldom come,
but small ones surround us daily. - Sally Koch*

THE ONE THING:

What stands out as something God has provided for you throughout this week? Although it should not be your motivation, often times a byproduct of serving the Lord is personal satisfaction and gain. Workcampers, what are you taking away from this experience that you'd like to share with your partner? Sponsors, what do you want to know about the workcampers' experiences?

The Room

In that place between wakefulness and dreams, I found myself in a room.

There were no distinguishing features except for the one wall covered with small index card files. They were like the ones in libraries that list titles by author or subject in alphabetical order. But these files, which stretched from floor to ceiling and seemingly endless in either direction, had very different readings.

As I drew near the wall of files, the first to catch my attention was one that read "Girls I Have Liked". I opened it and began flipping through the cards. I quickly shut it, shocked to realize that I recognized the names written on each one. And then without being told, I knew exactly where I was.

This lifeless room with its small files was a crude catalog system for my life. Here were written the actions of my every moment, big and small, in detail my memory couldn't match.

A sense of wonder and curiosity, coupled with horror, stirred within me as I began randomly opening files and exploring their content. Some brought joy and sweet memories; others a sense of shame and regret so intense that I would look over my shoulder to see if anyone was watching.

A file named "Friends" was next to one marked "Friends I Have Betrayed".

The titles ranged from the mundane to the outright weird. "Books I Have Read", "Lies I Have Told", "Comfort I Have Given", "Jokes I Have Laughed At". Some were almost hilarious in their exactness: "Things I've Yelled at My Brothers".

Others I couldn't laugh at: "Things I Have Done in My Anger", "Things I Have Muttered Under My Breath at My Parents".

I never ceased to be surprised by the contents. Often there were many more cards than I expected. Sometimes fewer than I hoped. I was overwhelmed by the sheer volume of the life I had lived. Could it be possible that I had the time in my 20 years to write each of these thousands or even millions of cards? But each card confirmed this truth. Each was written in my own handwriting. Each signed with my signature. When I pulled out the file marked "Songs I Have Listened To", I realized the files grew to contain their contents. The cards were packed tightly, He just cried with me. Then He got up and walked back to the

shut it, shamed, not so much by the quality of music, but more by the vast amount of time I know that file represented.

When I came to a file marked "Lustful Thoughts", I felt a chill run through my body. I pulled the file out only an inch, not willing to test its size, and drew out a card. I shuddered at its detailed content. I felt sick to think that such a moment had been recorded. An almost animal rage broke on me.

One thought dominated my mind: "No one must ever see these cards! No one must ever see this room! I have to destroy them!" In an insane frenzy I yanked the file out. Its size didn't matter now. I had to empty it and burn the cards. But as I took it at one end and began pounding it on the floor, I could not dislodge a single card. I became desperate and pulled out a card, only to find it as strong as steel when I tried to tear it.

Defeated and utterly helpless, I returned the file to its slot.

Leaning my forehead against the wall, I let out a long, self-pitying sigh. And then I saw it. The title bore "People I Have Shared the Gospel With". The handle was brighter than those around it, newer, almost unused. I pulled on its handle and a small box not more than three inches long fell into my hands. I could count the cards it contained on one hand. And then the tears came. I began to weep. Sobs so deep that the hurt started in my stomach and shook through me. I fell on my knees and cried. I cried out of shame, from the overwhelming shame of it all. The rows of file shelves swirled in my tear-filled eyes.

No one must ever, ever know of this room. I must lock it up and hide the key.

But then as I pushed away the tears, I saw Him. No, please not Him.

Not here. Oh, anyone but Jesus. I watched helplessly as He began to open the file and read the cards. I couldn't bear to watch His response. And in the moments I could bring myself to look at His face, I saw a sorrow deeper than my own. He seemed to intuitively go to the worst boxes. Why did He have to read every one? Finally He turned and looked at me from across the room. He looked at me with pity in His eyes. But it was a pity that didn't anger me. I dropped my head, covered my face with my hands and began to cry again. He walked over and put His arm around me. He could have said so my things. But He didn't say a word.

wall of files. Starting at one end of the room, He took out a file and, one by one, began to sign His name over mine on each card.

"No!" I shouted rushing to Him. All I could find to say was "No, no," as I pulled the card from Him. His name shouldn't be on these cards. But there it was, written in red so rich, so dark, so alive. The name of Jesus covered mine. It was written with His blood.

He gently took the card back. He smiled a sad smile and began to sign the cards. I don't think I'll ever understand how He did it so quickly, but the next instant it seemed I heard Him close the last file and walk back to my side.

He placed His hand on my shoulder and said, "It is finished". I stood up, and He led me out of the room.

There was no lock on its door. There were still cards to be written.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."

- John 3:16

2004 Workcampers

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