

Food for Thought

For the week of December 29, 2013

(Questions and Scriptures for further personal study)

1. Jeff mentioned that our relationship with Jesus isn't just personal, it's meant to be shared with the people around us. We have the privilege and responsibility to represent Jesus to others. How do the following verses help us understand what this means?

Matthew 5:13-16

Colossians 3:17

James 1:27

2. Too often Christians try to live the Christian life in their own strength rather than relying on God's power. What do the following verses teach us about relying on God's strength rather than our own?

Judges 7:1-8

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

Zechariah 4:6

3. We heard this weekend how having a personal relationship with Jesus means we're never alone. Not only do we have others to walk this journey with us, we also have the power and presence of Jesus who is always with us. What other benefits of having Jesus always with us do you see in Romans 8:31-39?

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Matthew 5:13-16

Salt and Light

13 "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

14 "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. [NIV]

Colossians 3:17

17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. [NIV]

James 1:27

27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. [NIV]

2. Too often Christians try to live the Christian life in their own strength rather than relying on God's power. What do the following verses teach us about relying on God's strength rather than our own?

Judges 7:1-8

Gideon Defeats the Midianites

1 Early in the morning, Jerub-Baal (that is, Gideon) and all his men camped at the spring of Harod. The camp of Midian was north of them in the valley near the hill of Moreh. 2 The Lord said to Gideon, "You have too many men. I cannot deliver Midian into their hands, or Israel would boast against me, 'My own strength has saved me.' 3 Now announce to the army, 'Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.'" So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained.

4 But the Lord said to Gideon, "There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and I will thin them out for you there. If I say, 'This one shall go with you,' he shall go; but if I say, 'This one shall not go with you,' he shall not go."

5 So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the Lord told him, "Separate those who lap the water with their tongues as a dog laps from those who kneel down to drink." 6 Three hundred of them drank from cupped hands, lapping like dogs. All the rest got down on their knees to drink.

7 The Lord said to Gideon, "With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the others go home." 8 So Gideon sent the rest of the Israelites home but kept the three hundred, who took over the provisions and trumpets of the others.

Now the camp of Midian lay below him in the valley. [NIV]

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

7 or because of these surpassingly great revelations. Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. 10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. [NIV]

Zechariah 4:6

6 So he said to me, "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty. [NIV]

3. We heard this weekend how having a personal relationship with Jesus means we're never alone. Not only do we have others to walk this journey with us, we also have the power and presence of Jesus who is always with us. What other benefits of having Jesus always with us do you see in Romans 8:31-39?

Romans 8:31-39

More Than Conquerors

31 What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? 33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. 34 Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36 As it is written:

"For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered."

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. [NIV]