

Daily Thoughts for week beginning 21st January 2024

Monday 22nd January

Week 3

My dictionary describes 'submitting' as 'a kind of acceptance of a superior force, authority or will'. To give into or up to, to yield. When put like this there is an element of it which make it feel like it is something bad or to be avoided.

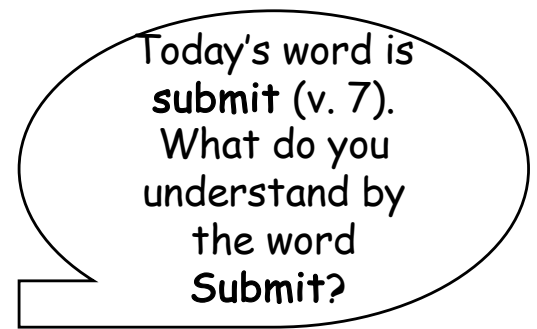
In Hebrew the root verb is the same as 'to serve' which means to help and lift up and acknowledge, or to put in order. It does not mean obedience.

This puts a different perspective on the whole submission thing. It is an action which involves following, taking direction from and out of love, and serving.

Reading: Colossians 3:18-25

Question: What is the connection here between submitting; respect and authority? Think about your relationship with God in terms of these 3 words. Does this give you a better understanding of submission or being lifted up in a relationship of love and honour and respect?

Prayer: Lord, may we respond by faith to what we hear, and use our mouths to share who you are. May we tell of your good deeds and love and inspire faith in those around us. Help us to have compassion for those in need, and respond in love with acts of generosity. Amen



Tuesday 23rd January

In the light of what you read and thought about yesterday -

Read: James 4: 3-6 again.

Thoughts: Note that sin leads us to love the world. Verse 4 says "friendship" with the world is a problem. That word friendship doesn't really help us much. When I hear "friendship" I think of a buddy, or someone I would say hi to, but not necessarily hang out with all the time. I don't dislike the person. They are a friend, but not like a BFF (best friend, forever) that I'm hanging out with every day. But the word for friendship here is actually a lot like infatuation. It's a term for "love." James is warning us about our love for the things of the world. You love:

- What the world desires
- What the world chases after
- What the world is attracted to
- What the world says is cool, good, and right

Sin leads us to love those things rather than what God loves. We desire that stuff rather than what God desires for us. We are consumed with the world, rather than what God says is good and right.

Prayer: Praying about a BFF => May they feel your love through my actions, words and gifts. I ask that I would always be loyal, trustworthy and generous to them, For I treasure their companionship, their unique spirit and their relationship with me so much. Amen.

Wednesday 24th January 2024

Read: Romans 1:28-32

Thoughts: this gives us a good look at what the world chases after. It's a pretty scary picture. Sin continues to encourage you to get closer and closer to that line of the world's standards. The world is corrupt, and it stands in opposition to God. If you're a friend of the world, you have a problem. If you love the world, you can't love God. You become his enemy. You become hostile towards God, malicious, bitter, and you oppose God's way. Sin leads you to fight with God.

Question to think about: In your own words, what is the difference between what the world says is good and what God says is good?

Prayer: God of all grace, I know you have plans for me- plans for me to be a part of your kingdom and an agent of love in the world. Today, show me how to respond to the invitations I might receive. Help me to be open to the opportunities to share your love. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

Thursday 25th January 2024

Read: Matthew 5:13-16

Thoughts: Jesus used a common object to teach people this simple lesson. These days we also use lamps although now they are electric. Do you do this? Do you turn on a lamp and then cover it? Do you turn on a lamp and then put it into your wardrobe and shut the door? Of course not. Jesus asks again, "Is it not brought to be put on the lampstand?" The purpose of a lamp is to shine out. It is not only not hidden, but it is set on a stand so that its light can shine even more prominently. It is not reasonable or logical to cover it up. So how does that apply to us as kingdom citizens? We are light bearers who reflect the light of Christ.

Question: Is it possible to be a friend of the world and a friend of God at the same time? What does Jesus say about a Christian's relationship with the world in Matthew 5:13-16?

Prayer: The German theologian Meister Eckhart once said, 'if the only prayer you ever say in your life is "thank you", that will be enough'. For the next 24 hours, look for opportunities to pray the words 'thank you' to God. Thank you for the sunrise. Thank you for that I have enough food for the day. Thank you for my health, such as it is. Thank you for that lovely conversation with a friend. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Amen.

Friday 26th January 2024

Read: James 4:3-6

Thoughts: Sin leads you to fight with God. Just as verse 3 says, you think you're praying, but you have horrible motives. You're hoping that God will give you what YOU want. Your prayers have little to do with God's glory or His Kingdom, and more to do with your glory and your kingdom. Christians are supposed to be committed to their relationship with God, but sin is driving them to love something else. Loving the world is violating our commitment to love God

more than anything else.

Verse 5 reminds us that every one of us has a spirit of envy inside.

- We all deal with envy
- We all deal with jealousy
- We all deal with sin

No one is immune to this powerful enemy. Sin will lead you to fight. You're at war with God, at war with everyone around you, and even at war with yourself. So, what do you do if sin is winning? Where do you turn if you're at war with everyone? Where do you go if you are someone who doesn't want to live this way?

As bad as sin is... sin is no match for God's grace.

Verse 6 says that God gives more grace and is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble. What is this about?

"Grace" is getting something that you don't deserve. It's gracious of your mom to give you a dessert, even though you didn't finish your dinner.

God's grace is the same. Grace is:

God blessing us, even though he shouldn't

God forgiving us when we don't deserve it

God restoring our relationship with Him, even though we aren't worthy

(The best example) Jesus dying on the cross for your sin, paying a debt that you owed.

God is gracious to those who can humble themselves.

Question to think about: How do we humble ourselves?

Prayer: Take time to just be with God today - just sit in His presence and listen. Submit to His presence and do what He says.

Saturday 27th January 2024

Read: James 4:7-10

Thoughts: Humility is the mark of being a Christian. What does it mean to be humble? Humility begins with submitting to God. Remember, you can't love both God and this world. You can't serve both. You can't follow both. There is no middle ground. You need to love God and submit to Him. James tells us to draw near to God.

Prayer time: Grow in your relationship with God by loving his Word. Try to learn what it says, try to do what it says, obey it, and grow in it. Grow in your relationship with God by praying to Him as your heavenly Father. Ask him for wisdom to better understand Him. Ask Him for forgiveness when you sin. Pray for help to fight.

What did you learn? Sin is a powerful enemy that can only be beaten with God's help. Sin's worst impact on our lives is that it leads us to fight with God.

Thankfully, God's grace is available to all who believe in Him.

Prayer time: James tells us to draw near to God. Grow in your relationship with God by loving his Word. Try to learn what it says, try to do what it says, obey it, and grow in it. Grow in your relationship with God by praying to Him as your heavenly Father. Ask him for wisdom to better understand Him. Ask Him for forgiveness when you sin. Pray for help to fight against sin. Pray for help to resist the devil.

Seek forgiveness from sin. Hate your sin. Never be comfortable with it. Never grow numb to the sin in your life. Never shrug it off. Never just let it go. Feel miserable, be genuinely sorry, be so broken that you could cry over your sin. Recognize the seriousness of sin. It's not a joke. It's no laughing matter. Sin makes you and God enemies. The separation that it brings between you and God is serious.

Humble yourself as you learn more and more about how great God is and how sinful and insignificant you are. Stop thinking so highly of yourself...live in reality of who you really are, recognizing how much God has done for you by His grace! God will give grace to you if you will humble yourself this way. He will forgive you and save you from your sin if you will humble yourself before Him.

BE STRONG
WHEN YOU ARE WEAK,
BRAVE
WHEN YOU ARE SCARED,
AND HUMBLE
WHEN YOU ARE
VICTORIOUS

*Work
Hard Stay
Humble*



Imagine someone is washing your feet - how does it feel?

Imagine you are washing Jesus' feet- does this feel different? How?

