

DAILY BIBLE STUDY SHEET

Daily meditation on the Word of God is imperative to our growth. As the people of God, we should commitment reading Scripture every day. There are questions to help prompt your meditation. If you do not have a Bible, please contact the church office and one will be given to you. To locate the passages, use the Table of Contents to find the page number. The number before the colon will tell you the chapter to find. The numbers after the colon are the superscript numbers in your Bible indicating the verses to read.

Monday, March 8th – Psalm 121:1-8

Let's start this week by remembering that from dust we came and to dust we shall return. Because of our sinfulness and the sinfulness in the world, we still experience the effects of the curse, and we know we are wanderers in the world – this is not truly our home. These are pretty solemn realities we face. That brings us to this week and where we can turn, when we discover the mess we are in. Now let's look at the Psalm for today. What does the Psalmist do when he is in this reality (vs. 1)? We look up when there is trouble brewing, when we need help. And who is the answer to that question (vs. 2)? What follows in this Psalm is a reminder of who the Holy One is and what the Holy One does. These are reminders that fuel our hope that God is watching, hearing and working in our midst. What are some of the wonderful reminders the Psalmist gives us (vss. 3-6)? As small as we are compared to the sun and moon, God still cares for us and protects us. But as we face our sinfulness, the evil that wells up in us still, God is taking care of all that. How do we know this (vss. 7-8)? When we face temptations, the need to gossip, back-stab, be lazy in the faith, and desire the things of the world, look up to the One who can save you, the Lord and Creator of heaven and earth. Work this week on memorizing verses 7 and 8, so that when temptation comes, you can speak this out loud to yourself as a reminder and cry out to God for help.

Tuesday, March 9th – Psalm 5:1-3 and 11-12

Today we turn to Psalm 5. It follows the pattern of Psalm 121. How does this Psalm begin (vss. 1-3)? Think back. When have you cried out for help to God? Most folks cry out for help when they are sick or in trouble. When was the last time you cried out for protection from slipping into wickedness? When was the last time you cried out for salvation from the temptations to sin? All of these requests and cries matter to God. Notice in verse 3, we make the cry, the plea, then what do we do? Waiting is not our long suit is it? Verses 4-6 are a description of the things that displease the Lord. Verses 7-8 are a plea for God to keep the Psalmist from going that way. Verses 9-10 speak of those who blatantly sin before God and against others. And then we come to verses 11-12. What happens to those who take refuge in the Lord (vss. 11-12)? Did you notice that those who seek the Lord receive protection and a shield of love/favor? From what do you think we need to be shielded and protected? Today, cry out to the Lord. Cry out for the Holy Spirit to convict you of sinfulness and give you a desire for obedience. Cry out for a deeper experience of God's love and for God's protection. Cry out and then be silent as you wait expectantly for God's answer to your pleas.

Wednesday, March 10th – James 4:1-8

As we start today, I encourage you to read James 4:1-12, so we can speak to verse 8 in context. What does James instruct the reader to do in verse 8? How does having impure hearts and doublemindedness tie together? Verses 3-4 give us clue. We have spoken much about the sinful desire to be equal to God or to be gods of our own lives. When our pleas to God become about satisfying our worldly desires, then we may not receive what we have asked. When our requests are more about having more of the world than of God, there is a good chance that we have missed the point. James gives us the correction in that if we draw near to God, God will draw near to us. Is your one desire above all things to be nearer to God? If you lost everything today, can you be content in God? Is God enough? If not, why not?

Thursday, March 11th – 1 John 5:14-15

We have spent this week studying what to do when we find ourselves in the mire of the reality of our sinfulness, the curse, and facing our own mortality. We are to cry out to God and draw near to Him. But in order to really do this, we need to have a deep faith about the One we are crying out to. How does John describe this deep-seated faith in our prayers (vs. 14)? Faith is the confidence that God hears us when we pray. But there is a description of the kind of prayer God hears. What is John's defining factor (vs. 14)? That caveat is important as we get to verse 15. If we are praying for things that will please God, God will answer those prayers. So, what do you think would be the kind of prayers God is interested in answering? The healing of believers to God's glory? The reign of Christ throughout all the world to prevail over everyone and everything? For repentant sinners to be forgiven and released? For the unbelieving friend, neighbor or relative to come to a life of faith in Jesus Christ? To know what would please God, we turn to the Word of God, both written and living. We follow Jesus' example of what pleases God and we leave the worldly things to the side. Perhaps pray for things that have eternal consequences rather than temporary. And don't forget to pray with confidence that God does hear and will answer those prayers.

Friday, March 12th – Genesis 2:8-9 & 15

We close this week by connecting Psalm 121 to the Genesis creation story. Read today's text. Note again the beauty and functionality of the garden in verses 8-9. In verse 15, God places humanity in the garden for what purpose? The ESV translation reads "to work it and keep it." The word "keep" is the Hebrew word *shamar*. It is the same word used in Psalm 121:7. It reads that God will "keep" us. Consider what it means to "keep" a garden? What tasks are involved in the keeping up of a garden? Weeding, tilling, watering, pruning, to name a few. And the keeper travels around shaping and caring for the whole garden, not just this tree or that bush. The keeper works at caring for the plants, so that they bear fruit, grow mature and are strong. If one of them grows sick, the keeper works to heal the tree. This is how God "keeps" us. God is our *shamar* and hears our prayers, as he is the keeper of the garden of our hearts. And while the garden of our hearts needs a keeper to do the work, remember, the keeper sees the garden as beautiful and can see the potential for more beauty, grace, health and strength, as well as delightful fruit. Let's end this week in prayer asking God to continue to do the work of being keeper in our lives. May we be strong, healthy and fruitful for His name's sake.

Saturday, March 13th – Prepare for tomorrow by reading Mark 1:14-15.