

2011 Week Eleven
Midlands Churches of Christ, Birmingham, UK
Women's Ministry
Offerings for Quiet Time Study

1. CONNECTING

Psalm 143

- In verses 3-4, what threatens to break the psalmist's connection with God? How does he get it back in verses 5 and following?
- Go through the psalm and make two lists: one of all the nouns (all the things, all the concepts) that are MINE, and another list of all that are GOD's. (*For example, in verses 1 -2, I came up with my prayer, my cry for mercy, my relief, God's faithfulness, God's righteousness, God's servant.*)
- Next, go through the two lists and write or pray aloud a real-time example for each item. (*My prayer that I want God to hear today is that I want to have a heart that feels what God feels, cares about what God cares about, is moved to compassion when God is moved to compassion (our church is fasting and praying for disciples in danger around the world today); I want God to act on behalf of those who are in danger from dramatic disaster around them as in Japan and the Middle East and Mexico, but also to rise up and intervene for disciples who are in danger from loneliness, apathy, materialism, unconfessed sin, lukewarmness, as well.)*

2. HIS DISCIPLES CAME TO HIM

I love the thought that sitting down to read the Bible gives us the same opportunity to be taught by Jesus that his disciples had in Matthew 5:1!

- Feeling frustrated or guilty or a bit hard-hearted because of a lot of rushing or missing times with God lately? Get out the diary or calendar and set a date with God when I know I can get a good, uninterrupted, long-enough time with God to reboot
- Read through Matthew chapter 5, noting or highlighting commands (*I use green*) and prayers (*I use yellow*) as you go.
- Pray for those who persecute me (no real-live enemies at the moment? Pray about the negative thoughts that persecute me)
- Note which commands I need to work on and plan to pay special attention today to obey them more fully¹

3. RIGHTEOUSNESS FROM GOD

Matthew 5:20, Romans 3:21-22, Genesis 15:6

I have to admit that I am one of those people that has a hard time fully accepting the grace of God in the midst of day-to-day battles for righteousness. I fight for righteousness sometimes not entirely because I want to please God, in full appreciation of his grace, but because I'm trying to live up to some kind of (often impossible) standard I set myself. It's good for me to remember that Abram was righteous, before the introduction of any law, just because he believed God.

- Make a list of some things I need to "just believe God" about. Pray through them with thankfulness – and relief! (need more reassurance? Romans 4, Romans 8 ... Gordon Ferguson's book, *Romans, The Heart Set Free*)

4. TWO OR THREE WITNESSES CONFIRM EVERY MATTER

2 Corinthians 13:1, Psalm 37:25-26; Proverbs 10:3

One of my favourite practical teachings of Scripture is the fact that God has decreed that "two or three witnesses confirm every matter." This truth helps me just about every day in some practical way. Only one "witness" telling me to do something (like my own heart, for example)? – not enough evidence to act upon it yet. Need to wait on God to bring me another one (Bible teaching? 2 or 3 strong disciples with the Holy Spirit?)

I have some friends who have lost jobs (both parents in one family) and another who is supporting family in Africa in very dire circumstances. Straying off of my own household budget causes me stress and steals my joy.

*I was reading Proverbs 10 this morning, and just noticed that there is more than one scripture in the Bible confirming that God will never let his people go hungry (add Matthew 6:25-34 to the list!). I **do** need to be careful with my budget but I don't need to **worry**.*

- Make a list of my financial worries, for myself and for others.
- Pray through them.
- If I'm worried about someone's basic physical needs who is not a Christian, perhaps it's time to figure out a way to interest them in studying the Bible?

¹For me, today, I came to these convictions after reading Matthew 5: 1) "Let your light shine...": I need to call my disabled neighbour, take some time to talk with her and see if she needs anything; 2) "anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment..." : I know someone who is angry with her brother and needs to have a conversation with him. I need to talk to her today and make sure she has a plan to have the conversation in the next day or so. 3) "do not swear at all...let your 'yes' be 'yes'...": I have a bad habit of creating expectations that I fail to fulfill, like texting someone that I'll call them later and then not doing it. I need to confess this; pray specifically to catch myself when I 'm about to do it; and ask my friends to alert me when it happens.