

- Digging Deeper -

For personal and small group study

Week of October 25, 2009

1 Timothy 5:8 (MSG) "... Anyone who neglects to care for family members in need repudiates the faith. That's worse than refusing to believe in the first place."

- When you realign how you manage your time and money, you will have far more to give to help others.
- You are most gratified, and God's kindness naturally flows out of you, when you give of your resources to help someone else discover their greatest joy in Christ, rather than just using your resources to enjoy life's comforts.
- The nature of sacrificing transforms a person's heart so they naturally treat others more gently.

2. WHAT "MUSCLE" CAN FELLOWSHIP BUILD?

- Bible fellowship is far more than socializing. It's the bonding of spirit and mutual sharing of God's Spirit within you.
 - True fellowship happens when you:
 - share your spiritual discoveries or experiences
 - "...build each other up in your most holy faith..." - Jude 20 NLT
 - "speak the truth in love" - Ephesians 4:15
 - "Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed." - James 5:16
 - "Honor one another above yourselves." - Romans 12:10
 - Spiritual **relationships** are fundamental essentials to spiritual progress.
 - You exercise spiritual fellowship by being purposeful to interact with others about God and what He is doing or saying to you.
 - Engage in common activities of worship, study, prayer, celebration, or serving with other disciples.
- Psalms 34:3** "Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt his name together."
- Being of one heart is a **real and powerful** factor of spiritual life.

1 Timothy 4:7-8 (NLT) "Do not waste time arguing over godless ideas and old wives' tales. Instead, train yourself to be godly. Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come."

A couple suggestions for training yourself:

- 1) Find someone to exercise with you to keep you moving forward [spiritual fellowship]
- 2) Go through the "Energy Pack" cards again and raise the challenge bar and routinely practice those that help build the spiritual muscles in the areas that you know need strengthened.

Note to Small Group Leaders ... As you prepare this session, ask yourself how you and your group members can avoid "just going through the motions" and progress to going deeper - to truly strengthen your journey with Christ. The purpose of this study guide is not just question and answer, but reflection and application that leads to life-change.

1. How would you define kindness? The Greek word for kindness, "*chrestotes*", means *the genuine desire of a believer to treat others gently, in contrast to being harsh*. In what ways have you experienced the Holy Spirit growing this fruit in your own life? Explain. [Colossians 3:12; Ephesians 2:8TLB; Galatians 5:16, 22-25; Matthew 7:12; Titus 3:4; Luke 7:37-50] Name a special time when you sensed the kind, tender-hearted, nurturing spirit of God in your life.
2. The Bible uses the word good or goodness 619 times. In the Greek [*agathosune*], it means you will have such *a disposition to do good to others, even to the point of rebuking or correcting others, to cause good in others* - as Jesus did the scribes and Pharisees. Using this definition of goodness, how would you like to see this fruit of the Spirit expressed more effectively in your daily life? [Galatians 6:12; Ephesians 2:10; 3 John 11; Titus 3:14]

How do kindness and goodness relate to each other? [2 Timothy 3:16-17; Titus 3:4-8]
3. One spiritual discipline that helps us grow in kindness and goodness is fellowship. Read Romans 12:5 and 10. What would it look like for you and for those whom you fellowship with to practically live that out?
4. Describe the closest friendship you have ever had ... and what made that friendship special. Who do you talk to about your spiritual life?

In groups of two to four people, draw two columns on a piece of paper. Column One: "*Characteristics of a Spiritual Friend*." Column Two: "*Characteristics of Myself as a Friend*." Now fill the columns with your observations. What did you learn about fellowship and spiritual friendship? ... about yourself? [Hebrews 10:24-25; Philippians 2:3-4; Colossians 3:13-14; Ephesians 5:11; James 5:16]

5. How does the practice of stewardship reveal what is truly in your heart? How does the knowledge that all you have (time, money, heart) belongs to God affect your life? Briefly review the sermon notes and read Energy Pack Cards 34 and 39. How does practicing stewardship enhance your efficiency and effectiveness in serving God in your daily life? How does the way you were raised as a child affect your practice of stewardship today? What legacy are you passing on to others?

Welcome to New Life !

We are very pleased you are here. It is an honor to have you worshipping with us today! This information is provided to help you feel welcome and “at home.”

Worship in Singing & Giving

- We leave how to worship up to you as an individual. During **singing** worship some people remain seated, some stand, others kneel, many clap, and some lift their hands. The outward expression is not the issue - it is what is in your heart that counts. Just relax and enjoy the presence of God.
- If you would like to receive personal **prayer** during worship with singing, you may go to one of the Prayer Teams located at the back of the sanctuary.
- Invitation is given for **tithes and offerings**. If you are our guest, please do not feel obligated to contribute when God's tithes and offerings are received.

Worship in Sharing God's Love

Expressions of greeting and God's love are extended to all, especially to our guests.

Worship in Meditating on God's Word

Teaching from the Bible for about 35 minutes.

We encourage you to use our **staffed Nursery** [which has a private nursing room] and **Children's Churches** during the service. Please ask an usher for assistance in locating the various rooms.

{turn page over}

Pastor Bob Wine

October 25, 2009

FUEL FOR THE JOURNEY - 6

1 Timothy 4:7-8

- Christianity is often confused with humanitarianism since both focus on helping humans.
- If you don't understand the difference, you will identify a person as a Christian because they do good things for others, when in reality, they may have no personal relationship with Christ. All Christians are humanitarian, but all humanitarians are not necessarily Christian.
- When spiritual exercises are **blended** into your daily life, they will build your total relationship with God and help you release far more profound Spirit-generated virtues called “fruit of the Spirit.”

☞ **Kindness:** gentleness ... in contrast to being harsh or austere.

☞ **Goodness:** having a disposition to show complete goodness, that you will take risks to correct, or even rebuke, others to help them.

1. WHAT “MUSCLE” CAN **STEWARDSHIP** BUILD?

- Our top anxiety-producers are time and money.

Mark 10:45 NLT “[Jesus] came **not** to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

- Having His heart for sacrifice is crucial when managing these two areas of your life.

- Time is the stuff our days are made of.

James 4:14b “You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes”

- You need some time to yourself, but the reality is that you are happier and more fulfilled by **giving** -- not **getting**.

Matthew 16:25 (NLT) “If you try to hang on to your life, you will **lose** it. But if you **give up** your life for my sake, you will **save** it.”

Acts 20:24 (NLT) [Paul] “my life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus—the work of **telling others the Good News** about the wonderful grace of God.”

- The spiritual exercise of stewardship of your time and money requires that you **manage** them in such a way that your needs, and those of your family, are met.