

SEVENTH WEEK DEVOTIONAL

monday **DIGNITY**

Read Genesis 29:16-30:20

We can rest in God's dignity-defining love for us. So why do we clamor for self-worth in so many things? It becomes an unconscious obsession and a way of life for us, despite our knowledge of God's love demonstrated in Jesus. Leah is an amazing example of how God reached out to the unwanted sister and blessed her so greatly. As you read, consider these questions: Why was Leah mistreated by her father? Did the customs of the day put her in a painful position? At what point did she finally find some freedom from her quest for self-worth? Who or what is *your* Jacob, the object of your pursuit for recognition or acceptance? And how might you better respond to someone who is looking to you to provide that?

tuesday **DESPERATE**

Read Luke 19:2-10

Zacchaeus was despised by his own people because he was the worst kind of tax collector. Any other short man could have stood in front of the crowd, but not one so hated. He was desperate enough to climb a tree for a glimpse of Jesus. Zacchaeus didn't ask Jesus into his life. Jesus asked Zacchaeus into his! Even those who people have reason to hate, God finds reason to love. What did Zacchaeus' understanding of Jesus cause him to do? Why do you think his response was so strong? Maybe our weak response to Jesus is rooted in a lack of awareness of 1) our desperate need of him, and 2) how much he graces us when he invites us into his life! Ask the Lord to reveal your heart toward Jesus so you can adjust, repent and just plain worship! Are you willing to respond strongly?

wednesday **CALLED**

Read Matthew 4:18-22

They were just fishermen. Why would Jesus select common, uneducated men to perform eternal work? What must it have felt like for Jesus to call them? The Greek word for "call" (*kaleō*) is best understood as an invitation. God invites us because he loves us, not because we're qualified. No one who truly knows they are loved and valued by God responds out of plain old duty, but out of desire and honor. When you consider that you've been *invited* by God to be a part of this amazing divine plan, how can you not take him up on the invitation? How can we not feel so blessed? After all, is anybody really qualified for such a task?

thursday **WISE**

Read James 1:5-8

It's common for us to want miracles, easy escapes and clear-cut steps when we're in a pinch. Scripture suggests that God intends to do things through us, not just for us. He loves to empower us. It's part of what redemption means. One of the strongest promises made to us in Scripture is the provision of God's wisdom when we ask for it. Isn't it interesting that so many other religions try to hide wisdom and make acquiring it some major religious accomplishment? But God says all we have to do is ask for it! That's how much he loves us and desires to demonstrate our God-given dignity by providing wisdom to otherwise lost and confused people. For what do you need wisdom? When is the last time you asked God for it?

friday **OBEY**

Read Matthew 26:36-39, Romans 1:5-6, Philippians 2:12-13, 2 John 1:6, 2:5

God isn't looking for us to earn his love by obeying. It's impossible. But he is looking for us to respond to it seriously - to want what he wants and love what he loves. God wants his love to be fully received because only he truly understands its infinite worth and potential. And that's why submission is what is necessary, even if we don't understand or it's painful. When we respond to his love with obedience, we love him back in a way that transforms us and our world. It blesses and dignifies us, making us more as God created us to be. Is there anything hindering your obedience? What could be better in life than to live out of the love God has for you and that you feel in return?

saturday **FEET**

Read John 13:3-17

Just let this story sink in. Jesus washed a bunch of dirty feet to demonstrate how much people mean to God and then invited us to do the same. How will you let this example move you toward others? Shouldn't it be exhilarating that our Lord was and is this kind of leader? After all the self-centered leaders we've encountered in life, consider this picture of GOD IN THE FLESH!