



Lesson #4 "Blue-Light Special Religion"

Daily Devotions for the Week of October 22-27

Monday, October 22 Read Psalm 146

What does this psalm tell us about the nature of God and what God values?

How does this compare to what we value?

What, specifically, would it cost you if you were to follow God's example and priorities as expressed in this passage? Would you be willing to pay it? Why or why not? _____

Tuesday, October 23 Read Isaiah 58

Sum up the prophet's criticism of the people of Israel in a sentence or two. What are they doing wrong and what does God expect them to do instead?

_____ In what ways could this same criticism be leveled at the church today? _____

_____ Another way to think about it is to ask: who is *really* at the center of our church experience, God or myself? Why? _____

Wednesday, October 24 Read Mark 12:41-44

Contributing "out of (our) abundance" is another way of saying that real generosity requires a real cost. How is that the opposite of true worship (remember: worship literally means 'worth-ship' or worthiness) of God?

Why do we need to model the widow's faithfulness for our own sake and for our own discipleship?

Thursday, October 25 Read Mark 10:35-45

If this was the only scripture you had, what would it suggest was the motive James and John had for following Jesus? _____

How is this attitude the opposite of the sacrifice Jesus embodies and calls for in vv.43-45?

What are some ways we still struggle with these divergent goals in the church today?

Friday, October 26 Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-29

The Corinthians had turned the Lord's Supper into a tool for division and self-aggrandizement (see 1:18-21). According to this what is the real purpose of Communion and, by extension, the whole of the life of the church? _____

_____ Why is the remembrance of Christ's sacrifice so central to who we are as Christians?

Saturday, October 27 Read Proverbs 3:1-10

Ultimately we only sacrifice for a larger cause or for one who we deem deserving. Prayerfully reflect on this passage from Proverbs, particularly v.5. Is God worth a real commitment-a sacrifice- your time, talent and resources? _____ Do your actions reflect your answer? _____

Small Group Discussion Guide

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Part 1– Life Signs

- Read Isaiah 58 aloud with your group. Ask: “What is God’s complaint (voiced through the prophet Isaiah) with the people of Israel? Are there ways He might have the same complaint with the church today? Why or why not?”

Part 2– Fully Functional

- Read this note from Sunday’s sermon aloud: **“Religion that costs you little is an empty charade, not true discipleship.”** Discuss these questions:

- Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
- How do you understand the term “sacrifice” in this context?

- Read Mark 12:41-44. What does it mean to give out of our abundance and why is Jesus so harsh on this point?

Part 3– Abundant Living

- Read Friday’s (10/26) scripture and discuss the devotional questions about the passage from 1 Corinthians.

- Look at the information below in “Lap #4.” Were those statistics shocking to you? Why or why not. Read the following note from last Sunday’s sermon:

“The call to sacrifice is a call to stop worshipping ourselves.”

- Do you agree with this? There’s no doubt that scripture is full of the call to sacrifice, so how do you define that term? Is it still important to modern Christianity? Why?

Lap #4

According to statistics here at Cordele First, of 622 potential giving units (individuals, families, households, etc.) about 30 give up to \$150 a week. 26 give between \$20 & \$30 per week and 351 give...\$0 a week.



Reflect on that a moment.

Then ask yourself: would I

be a part of this church if there was no air conditioning? No children’s programs or music? No room in which to meet or no staff?

To what extent are we all hoping for a bargain ...gaining the most from our church experience while contributing as little as possible? Who do we depend on for our church and who depends on us?

