

Good News Daily

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Sunday, February 14

Deuteronomy 6:1-9 *Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.* (v.5 NIV)

Valentine's Day is all about communicating love in tangible ways. Cards, flowers, and candy are the most common expressions. But the more creative among us look for novel ways to say, "I love you!"

In today's passage, Moses offers suggestions for conveying our loving adoration to God. If we love Him with our entire being, we will spend time in God's presence rehearsing His promises and His cautions. We will be careful to guard the glimpses of truth He has given us. If we have children at home, we will talk about God's goodness throughout their day and throughout their lives as a way of bequeathing our faith to them. It will take some creativity to express our love for God to those who share a common last name with us. But our willingness to tangibly communicate our devotion to the Lord will pay off.

According to this wonderful passage, our ability to return God's love begins by us treasuring His word in our hearts and then letting our hearts lead the way. God longs to know that His overtures of love have been received and He longs to be loved in return.

Psalms 148, 149, 150; Hebrews 12:18-29; John 12:24-32

Monday, February 15

Deuteronomy 6:10-16 *Be careful that you do not forget the Lord, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.* (v.12)

When you're in love, you realize just how aware you are of the other person. You are quick to admit that (Valentine's Day aside) the reason you want to express evidence of love to the other has everything to do with their worthiness. Today's passage reminds us that our expressions of love for God are not out of the blue. They are reasonable and appropriate responses to God's initiating love that has enriched our lives and given us the ability to love Him.

For the ancient followers of God, success and accomplishments were gifts from the Lord, not the fruit of hard work. Upon entering the land of promise, the Israelites inherited wells and vineyards and ready-built homes. They had no cause to boast. Rather, they had every reason to give praise and worship to God who had lavished on them a multitude of wonderful blessings.

The New Testament writers remind us that even our faith is a gift from God that we cannot take credit for. "We love God because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

Psalms 25; Hebrews 1:1-14; John 1:1-18

Tuesday, February 16

Deuteronomy 6:16-25 *In the future, when your son asks you, "What is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees and laws the LORD our God has commanded you?" tell him: "We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt but the LORD brought us out..."* (vv.20-21)

One of the longest running game shows on television is *Jeopardy*. The format is unique. Unlike most trivia shows, contestants don't answer questions. Instead they are given the answers and they must then ask the questions.

Long before Alex Trebek, Moses hosted his own version of *Jeopardy*. Reminding the Israelites of all they knew to be true about God's faithfulness, Moses told them to anticipate the answers they would give to the questions future generations would ask about their pilgrimage of faith.

When our children and grandchildren observe our spiritual values, their curiosity will be piqued. As they hear us talk about prayer, worship, church, or "trusting the Lord," the Holy Spirit will be creating a spiritual thirst within them. And when the time comes when they will verbalize their interest, questions,

and doubts, what will we say? Doesn't it make sense for us to rehearse in advance in our minds how we will answer them?

Psalms 26, 28; Hebrews 2:1-10; John 1:19-28

Wednesday, February 17

Luke 18:9-14 *"For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."* (v.14b)

Remember playing "Ring Around the Rosie" as a child? Do you recall what we said just before we collapsed to the ground? "Ashes, ashes, we all fall down!" That is an appropriate image as we reflect on what it means to be God's person this Ash Wednesday. We humble ourselves before God by assuming a posture of humility with our faces to the ground and the sign of the cross etched on our foreheads with ashes.

Now that the journey to the empty tomb has begun, we would be wise to walk the path before us cautiously. As we trace Jesus' steps, let's be aware of the difficult terrain and the shadows of suffering in which our Savior proceeded to procure our salvation. Recognizing our tendency to fail the one who was nailed to the cross for us, we'd do well to walk the Lenten trail in a self-deprecating, humble manner.

According to Jesus, humbling oneself is to be chosen over being humbled by another. It is a way of signaling to ourselves (and those around us) that we are grateful for all the Lord has provided us. Denying ourselves is an unmistakable mark of discipleship.

Jonah 3:1—4:11; Psalms 95, 32, 143; Hebrews 12:1-14

Thursday, February 18

John 1:19-34 *"Look, the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! ...I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God."* (vv.29, 34)

My kids never got into playing "Ring Around the Rosie" like I did when I was younger. But they did enjoy spending hour after hour looking for a little man with red and white stripes and black horn-rimmed glasses in the *Where's Waldo* books. Once they found Waldo in the convoluted clutter of each page, they never misplaced him again. Once you see Waldo, you know where to look. The same is true with Jesus!

John the Baptist drew crowds on the banks of the Jordan River. Some were sincere sinners desiring a new start in life. Many were insincere spectators catching free entertainment. It's hard to know if John knew the motives of those he baptized. But one thing is clear. He clearly recognized one face in the crowd. It belonged to a self-proclaimed rabbi from Nazareth. John was convinced that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah. In recognizing Jesus, he recognized his own place.

For us, it all begins with identifying Jesus Christ as God's solution to our sinful state. When we join John in admitting that Jesus is Lord and submit to God's plan, we truly become Christ's disciples.

Deuteronomy 7:6-11; Psalm 37:1-18; Titus 1:1-16

Friday, February 19

John 1:35-42 *The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him "We have found the Messiah."* (v.41)

Another childhood game most of us played was "Tag." You could play Tag anywhere because it didn't require any equipment. To play Tag you just need someone who is "it" and people to "tag." The object of the game is to run fast enough to reach those around you and touch them.

Once Andrew met Jesus he was determined to run and find his brother Simon. Andrew was not content to simply keep a good thing to himself. He wanted to share his discovery. If you read this passage through the filter of your imagination, you can sense the childhood enthusiasm of one brother racing to find his other brother to let him in on a secret that is too good to be true.

Another mark of discipleship on the path to an Easter faith is a desire to tag others with God's love. Those who have been touched by Jesus (in the words of the old African American spiritual), "gotta tell somebody!" Once the Lord tags you, your life is never the same.

Deuteronomy 7:12-16; Psalm 31; Titus 2:1-15

Saturday, February 20

John 1:43-51 *“Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked. “Come and see,” said Philip. (v.46)*

Did you ever play “Mother May I?” Quite simply, the designated “Mother” issues commands to do certain things, but you can only obey once you have asked her permission and permission is granted. “Mother, may I take three steps forward?” “Yes, you may!” But the key part of playing this old-fashioned childhood pastime is to actually do what you’ve been given permission to do.

Still another mark of discipleship we’d do well to look for in our lives is “responsiveness.” When the Lord makes clear what it is we are to do, the person with a growing faith obeys. The journey of Lent (though arduous) can be journeyed with confidence if we simply follow the Lord’s invitation to follow him.

When Nathanael quizzed Philip about Jesus’ reputation, he was really asking permission to take three steps forward. In Philip’s response we can hear the Lord himself granting permission to “Come and see.” And what makes this passage of Scripture so significant is that Nathanael was quick to respond. May we do the same? Yes, we may!

Deuteronomy 7:17-26; Psalms 30, 32; Titus 3:1-15

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