

The New Humanity #2: Energetic Understanding

Begin with prayer. Then READ through the Bible passage. WRITE your thoughts, reactions, observations. ANSWER THE QUESTION to begin connecting the Bible with your life experience. Use additional paper or your own notebook if you need more space to write.

Monday, 5/12/08 – Read Acts 2:1-21

My Observations _____

A Question to Answer: On "Pentecost" the disciples of Jesus experienced a powerful energy which was actually the Presence of God -- the Holy Spirit of God. The disciples, filled with the Spirit of God, became "agents of understanding." People understood one another -- even when they expected not to. ... Maybe there is a kind of understanding that is deeper than language; maybe sometimes we don't even have to speak the same language in order to know what another is feeling or thinking. ... Has there been a time in your life when you found unexpected understanding? Think about it. And jot down some notes about your memory.

Tuesday, 5/13/08 – Read Genesis 11:1-9

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: One of our human failings is that we allow separation and estrangement between people to happen - even when it's unnecessary. We allow differences to become insurmountable barriers. For sure, the barriers are there, and they are hard to get over. But if we give up the effort, inevitably we become like the people at Babel. ... When have you seen people give up and retreat into separation? When have you seen people do the hard, hard work required to achieve understanding?

Wednesday, 5/14/08 – Read 2 Kings 5:1-16

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Think about Naaman today. He was a powerful man in his own country, but he couldn't beat leprosy. And when the Hebrew prophet Elisha gave Naaman instructions for healing his leprosy, he got "huffy" and indignant. ... Have you ever responded like that? Have you ever seen someone respond like that? ... Sometimes we neglect wisdom and good advice because it comes from someone we don't respect -- or from a people we don't respect. ... When we respect all God's people, we open ourselves to untold treasures of wisdom and understanding. ... What person -- or group of persons -- would you like to become more open to? To whom do you need to show more respect?

Thursday, 5/15/08 – Read Sirach 25:1

[1] I take pleasure in three things, and they are beautiful in the sight of God and of mortals: agreement among brothers and sisters, friendship among neighbors, and a wife and a husband who live in harmony.

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Sirach is from a part of the Bible called "The Apocrypha," which is not included in all versions of the Bible. So we have reprinted today's verse here. Sirach 25:1 affirms how beautiful it is when there is understanding among siblings, between neighbors, within a marriage relationship. and it affirms that it is not only beautiful to us -- it's beautiful to God!! ... In which of these three areas (siblings, neighbors, marriage) do you find a good relationship most fulfilling? Which of these relationships do you find most challenging? ... Pray today about both your fulfilling and challenging relationships. And remember: God wants your relationships to work and be beautiful.

Friday, 5/16/08 – Read John 4:5-30

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: After you have read through John 4:5-30, go back and pay attention to verse 27. The disciples were astonished that Jesus was talking with a woman. In Jesus'

culture, women and men did not interact with each other -- unless they were part of the same family (or were somehow otherwise related). But Jesus is extraordinary! The barrier of gender is not an obstacle for Jesus. He simply reaches across this barrier and engages this woman -- just as he would anyone else. ... In what ways is gender a barrier for you? How does it keep you from understanding people?

Saturday, 5/17/08 – Read Luke 10:38-42

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Martha and Mary seem to have been close friends of Jesus, maybe part of his inner circle. While Jesus is visiting in their home, Martha becomes irritated because her sister Mary is not helping with the preparations; instead, she's in there with the men-folk, participating in the men's conversation. ... And look! Jesus affirms her right to be there! ... Once again, Jesus ignores the barrier of gender that can keep us separate. ... In our world, how do we inappropriately segregate men and women, relegating the others to the status of "outsiders"? ... Can you think of a situation where you'd be willing to cross the barrier? Can you think of a situation where you'd be willing to invite someone into your fellowship?

Sunday, 5/18/08 – Read Galatians 3:27-29

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: The apostle Paul, in today's reading makes an astonishing claim -- as astonishing as Jesus talking with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well! He says that in Christ we are all one and that there is "no longer male or female." ... What do you think he means by that? ... At least he must mean that we all have equal status before God -- and we are therefore asked to do the hard work required to really understand one another. ... Is there someone in your life that you will engage and seek to understand more deeply?

My Faith Journal, May 11, 2008

The New Humanity #2

Energetic Understanding (or "Thank You, Mom")

Main Points of Today's Message

Baby Talk

Teach Your Children (Parents)

Energetic Understanding