

The New Humanity #3

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, 5/19/08 – Read Ephesians 2:13-22

My Observations _____

A Question to Answer: This week we continue our reflections on God's New Humanity. Historically hostile groups are brought together in peace (claims today's reading) by God's saving love in Christ, by Jesus' death on the cross. ... Try it today: think of someone you don't get along with, maybe even someone you feel anger toward -- think of that person and remember that this is someone God loves, this is someone that Jesus died to save. Does thinking of that person that way change your attitude toward them?

Tuesday, 5/20/08 – Read 1 John 1:5-10 (Note: this is the first LETTER of John, not the gospel of John)

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: It's so easy to talk it and so hard to walk it! ... But Christian faith is about what we do -- not just what we say. Can you name a time when you do "walk in the light," when your words and actions match up pretty well? C'mon, claim it!! ... Probably there is some other part of your life where you don't yet walk your talk. Name that one too, and write down one thing you can do today to bring actions and words closer together. It's when our words and our actions match up that we most effectively serve God's new humanity.

Wednesday, 5/21/08 – Read 1 John 3:18-24

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Do you ever struggle with feelings of guilt? Does your own conscience ever condemn you? ... If so, pay close attention to today's reading! ... God is greater than our conscience, and God has declared that in Christ we are forgiven. ... Will you claim that today? And then in your own mind speak directly to your conscience; tell your conscience that God is bigger, and God declares you forgiven. Write down your thoughts about this.

Thursday, 5/22/08 – Read 1 John 4:13-16a

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: When you read John 4:13-16a, notice that word "abide." What do you think it means? What feelings does it arouse? ... Literally, "abide" means "to remain, to continue, to stay"; it means "to have one's abode (home)." ... To abide in God, then, means simply to have our home in God ... every morning that 's where we start from and every evening that's where we return to; throughout the day, that's our "home base" -- just like our physical homes. And God's home is in us. ... How would life be different for you if you consciously "abided" in God? How would your attitudes about people be different? How would your "abiding" in God contribute to God's new humanity?

Friday, 5/23/08 – Read 1 John 4:16b-17

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Today's reading makes yesterday's a bit more specific: to abide in God means simply to abide in love. And then verse 17 makes this awesome statement: "as God is, so are we in this world." Wow! What do you think that means for you? ... If God's constant intention is to create a new humanity, specifically name one thing you can do this week to carry God's intention into the world. Is there a person (or a group of people) who need to experience the love of God -- people you can love? Are there people (or groups of people) who

are at odds with each other -- where you can do even one small thing to lessen the hostility? Will you do that "one small thing"?

Saturday, 5/24/08 – Read 1 John 4:18-21

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Today's reading pushes us further. It pushes us to identify those we are afraid of ... and then to respond to them out of love rather than out of fear. Tall order, isn't it? ... What do you think is meant by "there is no fear in love"? Do you think that's correct? ... At least it might mean that responding to a person out of fear is very different than responding to that person out of love. Think of a specific person and think of your fear-response and your love-response to that person. How are the responses different? Can a love-response still include caution and be realistic? ... Name one person whom you want to respond to more with love than with fear.

Sunday, 5/25/08 – Read 1 John 5:1-5

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: We are called to conquer the world, just as Jesus' early followers overcame the Roman Empire. "The world" often pits people against one another. The world's games (like TV reality shows) often involve eliminating people and "voting them off the island." God's agenda is creating a new humanity -- in which the barriers fall and the hostility and fear are overcome. God wants you to be part of the new humanity. Will you be part of God's team?

My Faith Journal, May 18, 2008

The New Humanity #3:

Women & Men

As you hear today's message, think about these questions:

What is the Bible's *central* teaching about the status of women and men in God's eyes?

What are my ATTITUDES about men? What are my attitudes about women? Do my attitudes help God build The New Humanity?

Does my LANGUAGE (the words I choose to speak) help God build the New Humanity?