

Gotta Work Both Ways (Mutuality)

Monday, 11/24/08 – Read Ephesians 5:21

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: This week we're going to think through a passage in Ephesians that has been a stumblingblock for many people. It is also a passage that challenges us with one of the fundamental principles of Christian living. ... We begin today with just one verse, Ephesians 5:21. When you read the words "be subject to," what do think they mean? ... For today just notice one thing: the verse does not tell one person (or one group of people) to be subject to another person (or group). It says "be subject to one another." It requires **mutuality**. Think of one of your most important relationships. How would this kind of mutuality change that relationship. ... So often we struggle with others in order to get our own way. How would the mutuality suggested in today's verse change that behavior?

Tuesday, 11/25/08 – Read Luke 22:24-27

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: In today's reading we encounter Jesus' teaching on authority and dominance. Have you ever been in a relationship where someone "lorded it over you"? Have you ever tried to have that kind of dominance over another person? What were those experiences like? ... Jesus says that his followers are to become servants -- rather than dominators. How does that strike you? Jesus' teaching is similar to yesterday's instruction about being **mutually** subject to each other? How would your relationships be different if people didn't strive to get their own way but understood themselves as servants? Try to be specific about your real relationships.

Wednesday, 11/26/08 – Read Ephesians 5:21-33

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Today's reading is the part that has been problematic for many people. If we interpret this passage as setting up a hierarchy -- with the husband dominating the wife -- then this is not good advice for us. But first read again verse 21 (voluntarily being subject to one another mutually) and Jesus' teaching (see yesterday's reading Luke 22:24-27). How do these two teachings change the way you interpret this advice to wives and husbands?

Thursday, 11/27/08 – Read Ephesians 6:1-4

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Ephesians believes that our faith should transform our way of living -- that every part of our lives can (and should!) express our trust in the goodness of God. Even our closest relationships can show God's goodness. Even difficult relationships can express our faith. When the principles of mutuality and service are lived, our relationships gradually begin to change -- relationships between spouses, relationships between parents and children, relationships between adult children and their aging parents. ... Which of your relationships most needs God's transformation? ... Write down one thing you'll do this week to express your trust in God's goodness in one of your important relationships.

Friday, 11/28/08 – Read Ephesians 6:5-9

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: It is disappointing that the New Testament does not directly condemn human slavery. But as

we see in today's reading, it does seek to soften the harshness of slavery. ... Maybe one way for us to work with today's reading is to apply it to our work environments? Do you do your work ("render service") with enthusiasm? If you're in management, do you use threats with those who report to you? ... How would it change your work environment if you remembered that you and those above you and those below you are all accountable to the same Master -- to God?

Saturday, 11/29/08 – Read Mark 9:33-37

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Today we turn to another of Jesus' teachings, similar to the one we read Tuesday. What do you think Jesus meant by being a servant? Why do you think this was so important to him?

Sunday, 11/30/08 – Read John 13:1-17

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Jesus walked his talk. He not only instructed his disciples to become servants of one another, he embodied it in the way he related to them. ... If Jesus was willing to become the servant, why is it so hard for us? Why are we so resistant to that role. ... Right now decide on one way you will live out the role of the servant this week. Who in your life right now needs to be served? What one thing will you do to serve them this week?

My Faith Journal, November 23, 2008
Becoming Grownups #10
Gotta Work Both Ways

What do I want to remember out of today's message?

What action do I intend to take as a result of today's message?

Each day this week, take a few minutes. Begin with PRAYER. Then READ through the Bible passage indicated on the inside of this guide. WRITE down your own 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.