

**Evil**

**Monday, 1/19/09 – Read Ephesians 6:10-14a**

My Observations: \_\_\_\_\_

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A Question to Answer: When we look at the world, we see lots of bad things happening, destructive things, hurtful things. As upsetting as these bad things are, many of them are understandable. Some of them are the result of human mistakes or our human frailties and flaws. But the Bible claims that this doesn't explain all the "bad things" that happen. The Bible assumes that also there really is evil in the world. Today's reading says that our struggle (literally, our "wrestling") is not with other human beings; it's with "rulers," "authorities," "cosmic powers of this present darkness." ... What do you think? How do you think of evil? Do you think there is real evil in the world?

**Tuesday, 1/20/09 – Read Romans 7:7-25a**

My Observations: \_\_\_\_\_

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A Question to Answer: Today's reading is a difficult passage. (Don't worry if your first response is: "I don't get it.") ... The main idea here is that Paul is describing sin not just as a human choice or behavior gone bad; he identifies sin as something active within us, influencing us toward destructive behavior. ... Have you ever felt that -- something in you that's pushing you in the wrong direction -- like a desire to spend money on something you really couldn't afford, or a pent-up pressure to vent your anger in a way that might be destructive? All addiction is like that. An alcoholic's desire to drink feels like a destructive power, constantly pushing in the wrong direction. ... Have you ever felt anything like that? What was that like for you?

**Wednesday, 1/21/09 – Read Ephesians 6:10-14a**

My Observations: \_\_\_\_\_

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A Question to Answer: The Bible never claims that we can handle evil on our own. Our own personalities are just no match for "cosmic powers" -- or even those internal pressures pushing us toward the wrong thing. ... Constantly the Bible tells us to rely on God's power; only God can give us the strength to stand up to "the cosmic powers" or our own internal pressures. ... Relying on God's protective presence is something we have to grow into, but it begins in prayer; it begins in deepening our relationship with God. As we stay closer and closer to God, we begin to feel God strengthening us and we sense God's encircling protection. In your prayer today, ask God to draw close to you and help you discover God's protective presence.

**Thursday, 1/22/09 – Read Matthew 6:9-13**

My Observations: \_\_\_\_\_

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A Question to Answer: This practice of drawing close to God and praying for God's protective presence is so important that Jesus included it in the Lord's prayer: "And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one [or, from evil]." ... When you pray the Lord's Prayer, what do these two lines mean to you? How do you understand them?

**Friday, 1/23/09 – Read John 17:14-19**

My Observations: \_\_\_\_\_

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A Question to Answer: The Gospel of John, chapter 17, is Jesus' prayer for his disciples -- and for us! He does not pray

that we simply be removed from “the world” -- the arena where, inevitably, we’ll be confronted by evil. But he does pray that we will be protected. ... Think about that for a moment and let it sink in. Let yourself feel Jesus praying personally and individually for you, praying for your protection. Write down your thoughts and feelings.

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*My Faith Journal*, January 18, 2009  
Becoming Grownups #12  
**“... but deliver us from evil.”**

**What do I hear God saying to me today?**

**Saturday, 1/24/09 – Read Ephesians 3:16-17**

My Observations: \_\_\_\_\_

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A Question to Answer: Today we return to an important theme of Ephesians (“inner strength”) but we come to it with a deeper understanding. Inner strength comes from God’s “power through his Spirit,” as we daily draw closer to God. ... Now look closely at verse 17. The result of our whole relationship with God is “being rooted and grounded in love.” Finally, it is love that overcomes evil. And inner strength is the strength to love. ... What do you think? Is divine love what finally overcomes evil?

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**What action do I intend to take this week?**

**Sunday, 1/25/09 – Read 1 John 4:16-20**

My Observations: \_\_\_\_\_

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A Question to Answer: Love banishes fear the way light banishes darkness. When we are, in our daily prayer, drawing close to God (“abiding in God”), and we are being rooted and grounded in God’s love, then we have a kind of holy boldness and an inner strength -- and we are able to stand, even in the face of evil. ... Is there a glimmer of all this developing within you? Will you pray today, asking God to help you become more open to God’s presence and protection?

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*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. Use additional paper or your own notebook if you need more space to write.*