

Suit Up

Monday, 1/26/09 – Read Ephesians 4:11-16

My Observations _____

A Question to Answer: As we have journeyed through Ephesians together, the destination we have been seeking is Christian maturity. The goal is to become a spiritual grownup. At this point, just for today, what is most important and most attractive to you about becoming a mature Christian person? The balance and poise to stand on your own two feet (to make up your own mind)? To love the way Jesus loved? To have anger without it becoming destructive? Or maybe something else? ... As you, day by day, become more and more a spiritual grownup, what specific quality do you want to express in your living? (Feel free to look back through Ephesians and your previous weeks' notes.)

Tuesday, 1/27/09 – Read 1 Corinthians 13:8-13

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Even in maturity we want to preserve the child-like qualities of trust and delight and gleefulness. But possibly there are some childish qualities that you'd like to outgrow. What would you identify as "childish ways"?

Wednesday, 1/28/09 – Read Ephesians 6:10-17

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Becoming a spiritual grownup doesn't just happen, and it's not something we do by our own striving. Over and over Ephesians says that we become stronger because of God's strength. Today's reading uses the metaphor

of putting on armor, clothing ourselves in the power of God. Read through the list again in verses 14-17. Which of these qualities would it be most helpful for you to focus on -- truth, true goodness ("righteousness"), peacefulness, trust ("faith"), God's forgiving and accepting grace ("salvation"), Bible (the word of God)? ... What will you do to open yourself to this divine quality?

Thursday, 1/29/09 – Read Mark 1:35-36 and Luke 4:16

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Jesus went off by himself to pray, to spend time in communication and communion with God. And Jesus also customarily went to synagogue, meeting together with the community of faith. ... Becoming a spiritual grownup, "putting on God's armor," does take time and focus. Time with God alone. Time with the community of faith. It takes both of these. ... Which of these needs a bit more time and attention from you these days? Make some notes for yourself about your time alone with God and your time with friends in faith.

Friday, 1/30/09 – Read Matthew 6:1-18

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Jesus simply assumes that we will practice our faith -- that we will give generously and charitably, that we will pray, and that we will fast. Jesus does not say "if you ..." He says "whenever you ..." or "when you ..." do these things. Jesus knows that that a relationship with God, like any other relationship, has to be practiced. ... Which of Jesus' instructions in today's reading is most exciting to you? Which of Jesus' instructions do you want to incorporate

into your own routine of practice? Which ones would move you closer to spiritual maturity?

Saturday, 1/31/09 – Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Rejoice, pray, give thanks -- these are the instructions in today's reading. But notice the insistence in each case: "always," "without ceasing," "in all circumstances." How do you respond to these instructions being presented so insistently? ... These instructions are perhaps one more description of spiritual grownups. Try it this week. Try taking one more step along the way. Try giving thanks to God in all the circumstances you encounter in your life. Try it; see how it works.

Sunday, 2/1/09 – Read Philippians 4:4-9

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Our thoughts can be our downfall. All of us have negative and troubling thoughts that crowd in on our awareness. Without some mental and spiritual discipline, these thoughts can dominate us. None of us can completely prevent negative thoughts from entering our minds. But we can gently re-focus our thinking. As today's reading says, "Think about these things." Try it today: the next time a negative or destructive thought intrudes itself, just turn it loose and re-direct your thinking.

My Faith Journal, January 25, 2009

Becoming Grownups #13 (Last)

Suit Up

What do I hear God saying to me today?

When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. (1 Corinthians 13:11)

What action do I intend to take this week?

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

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.