

encounter with God made it clear that God cares for his people and enlists us in action on behalf of God's hurting people. ... In recent days when did you have some sense that God was nudging you to respond to someone who was hurting?

Saturday, 3/7/09 – Read Galatians 5:22-26

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Here's another test. Today's reading says that the fruit of the Spirit -- what the Holy Spirit of God produces -- is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Now this doesn't necessarily mean being comfortable; God is constantly calling us outside our comfort zone. But finally God's call is going to produce these wonderful qualities in our lives. The test is this: Is my response to God producing love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control in my life? ... Can you think of instances where your response to God DID produce those qualities? Can you think of a time when your response was mistaken and didn't produce those qualities?

Sunday, 3/8/09 – Read 1 John 4:7-12

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: The final and supreme test is love. Notice that today's reading follows just a few verses after the instruction to "test the spirits." 1 John tells us how to test the spirits! ... Finally God is always calling us to love, and when some action is not finally loving, that is not the call of God. (Careful! don't confuse "loving" with "being nice.") ... Can you think of someone who was attempting to follow God's call but who was very UNloving in their actions? Did their action seem to you like a faithful response to the call of God?

My Faith Journal, March 1, 2009
Experiencing Call #5
"But How Do You Know?"

What do I hear God saying to me today?

What action do I intend to take this week?

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.

Discernment

Monday, 3/2/09 – Read 1 John 4:1-3a

My Observations _____

A Question to Answer: This week we begin an exploration central to Christian living. The Valpariso Project (www.practicingourfaith.org) puts the question this way: “What does God want me to do? How can I know for sure? We yearn for divine guidance, especially when voices within us seem to conflict. How do we tell the difference between self-deception and God’s leading?” We’ll be working with these questions over the next couple weeks or so. ... We begin with this instruction from today’s reading: “do not believe every spirit,” “test the spirits.” ... All of us already do that -- in some way. We don’t follow every inclination, every suggestion, every “nudge” that arises within us. Every day we make decisions among the various “spirits” that are moving within us. Think for a moment. How do you do that now?

Tuesday, 3/3/09 – Read Romans 12:1-2

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Today’s reading contains instructions, and it implies a promise. We’re instructed to present ourselves as living offerings to God, to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. This offering and this transformation will then enable us to DISCERN God’s will, God’s intention, God’s purpose in our lives. ... What do you think? Could it be that our lack of clarity arises out of our holding back, our reluctance to offer our lives to God FULLY? What do you think? ... Is there something in your life that still needs to be brought to the altar and offered?

Wednesday, 3/4/09 – Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-11

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Discernment comes to us in various ways at various times. Sometimes discernment comes as a gift from God. Sometimes God gives an individual “a power to see what is not evident to everyone” [one dictionary definition of discernment]. Sometimes this is a “natural gift” -- as in those people whom we think of as having good judgment. And sometimes God seems to give this gift to someone for a particular situation. ... Have you ever been in a group where everyone seemed befuddled and the group was confused and stuck. Then one person offered an insight that made everything clear and the group was able to move ahead? ... Describe that experience. At the time did you think of that as a spiritual gift from God, the gift of discernment?

Thursday, 3/5/09 – Read Mark 9:14-29

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Carrying out God’s will in our lives sometimes comes as a gift, and sometimes it is developed through work and discipline and practice. In today’s reading Jesus’ disciples could not heal the boy, and Jesus comments: “This kind can come out only through prayer.” ... Prayer is our first and most important practice for seeing God’s will. Our prayer needs to ask God for discernment, for seeing clearly our loving God’s will for us. And our prayer needs to have some space in it, space for quietly listening. ... How is your practice of prayer going? Does it need more time? Does it need more quiet? Does it need fewer words? ... As you pray today, talk (and listen!) with God about your prayer.

Friday, 3/6/09 – Read Exodus 3:7-10

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: “Test the spirits,” we read on Monday (1 John 4:1). And God has given us some clear tests. How do I know what God wants me to do? ... When I think God may be calling me to some action or activity, one of the most important questions is: Does it alleviate human suffering? ... Moses’