

**When It All Goes Wrong**

**Monday, 9/14/09 – Read Genesis 1:31**

My Observations \_\_\_\_\_  
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A Question to Answer: We humans are a mystery to ourselves. Our poets and psychologists have worked hard to unravel the mystery, and yet the final answer is always elusive. This week let's consider some of the Bible's reflection on our human nature. This may be hard work at points, but it is important work. ... The Bible's starting place is the divine affirmation that all creation is good. Make a short list: What are some of the ways you experience the goodness of God's creation. Are there some things about creation you have trouble affirming as good? What are they? ... In your prayer today ask God to inspire in you the grace of affirmation.

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**Tuesday, 9/15/09 – Read Psalm 8:3-9**

My Observations: \_\_\_\_\_  
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A Question to Answer: The Bible understands that our short little lives on planet Earth don't seem to amount to much compared to the colossal dimensions of the universe -- the moon and the stars, for example (verse 3). And yet the Psalm insists that God regards us with glory and honor. ... Can you hold both those thoughts together -- our finitude and frailty AND our creativity and beauty? ... As you live today, will you embrace both your vulnerability and your majesty?

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**Wednesday, 9/16/09 – Read Genesis 3:1-7**

My Observations: \_\_\_\_\_  
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A Question to Answer: The story of Adam and Eve eating the apple in the Garden of Eden has challenged people for millennia. What was the problem? What was the sin? ... Those questions have been answered many different ways. For today, though, consider the "promise" of the serpent: "You will be like God" (verse 5). Is that a seductive temptation -- to try to escape being human, to try somehow to be like God? Having power over others is one of the ways we seek to escape being human. How do you seek to escape your humanity? How do you try to exert power over someone else?

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**Thursday, 9/17/09 – Read Romans 1:18-23**

My Observations: \_\_\_\_\_  
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A Question to Answer: The Apostle Paul believed that the grandeur and majesty and goodness of God was visible to everyone. All they had to do was look at the natural world. And Paul thought that the root of our human problem was that we were not content to be human in relation to an awesome, eternal God. So, we try to become like God -- or we make God be more like us (see verses 21-22). ... Do you diminish God by thinking of God as "like us"? Does it ever seem more comfortable to have a God whom we have made over according to our preferences?

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**Friday, 9/18/09 – Read Romans 7:14-25**

My Observations: \_\_\_\_\_  
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A Question to Answer: Paul's language here is difficult! He describes an experience that's all too familiar to those who have struggled with addiction: I do not do the good thing I want to do; instead I do the bad thing I hate (verse 19). Have you ever experienced anything like that? ... Sometimes sin is not just making wrong choices. Sometimes we feel trapped in a downward spiral that we cannot get out of simply by will

power. Have you ever experienced that sense of being trapped in a downward spiral? ... Paul discovered that the way out is the POWER of God's grace in Jesus, which is powerful enough to break us out of the spiral. Have you experienced the POWER of God's grace? If so, what was that like for you?

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**Saturday, 9/19/09 – Read Psalm 51:1-3, 9-15**

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

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A Question to Answer: Perhaps the hardest (and the most necessary!) step we can take in dealing with our brokenness and woundedness is to tell the truth about it -- to admit it to ourselves and to God. That's hard, and yet so simple. All we have to do is be who we are and to tell the truth. ... In your prayer today, try to be really honest with God. Tell God about the pain and the hurting in your life; and tell God about the hurting and pain you have caused others. It's hard. But it is the way forward. As you pray today, use these verses from Psalm 51; let them help you express yourself to God.

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**Sunday, 9/20/09 – Read Romans 8:31-39**

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

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A Question to Answer: The very heart of the Christian Good News is that the God who created us human and who cherishes our humanity, this same God does not abandon us when it goes wrong. God heals our wounds and lovingly reaches out his hand, seeking to hold us to himself. When we trust that divine embrace, nothing can tear us away. We have to tell the truth about ourselves, and that spiritual honesty is our response to God's loving initiative toward us. ... In your own life today, will you open your heart to God's embrace?

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*My Faith Journal*, September 13, 2009

You Asked for It, #2

## ***When It All Goes Wrong***

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

Genesis 1:31

Psalm 8

Genesis 3:1-7

Psalm 51:1-3, 9-15

**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.*