

Jury Duty

The letter that lay on the judge's desk did not look like the usual courthouse correspondence. This was not some well-typed official request from a government agency; it wasn't on pricey stationery used by a high powered law firm to project professionalism and competence. This letter was actually a hand written thank you note that had been mailed in a small purple envelope.

"Judge, you may remember that I tried to get out of jury duty because I teach elementary school and I thought I should be with my students instead of stuck serving on a jury. I admit I was angry when you told me that wasn't a hardship and the school would have to get a substitute for my class. I held out hope one of the lawyers would excuse me since they knew I didn't want to be there anyway, but they didn't and I stayed.

"I want to say thank you for not letting me go. After being in that trial for 5 days, hearing the evidence and working with the other jurors to reach a verdict, I understand what you meant when you told us we were there for important business. Now when other teachers tell me they have a jury summons and wonder how to get out of it, I will tell them of my experience in your courtroom and encourage them to serve. I'm glad I did."

Monday – How Others See You

"Two men look out a window. One sees mud, the other sees the stars." Oscar Wilde, 19th c. Irish playwright

1. Please read 1 Peter 2:12-17 (focusing on vs. 12). What is the purpose of living in a way that honors God? How can you do to live in such a way that others will recognize God's work in your life?
2. In Acts 1:1-8 and Matthew 28:16-20, Jesus has high expectations for those of us who know him. What are those expectations? How do they help inform what it means to live "such good lives among the pagans?"

Making it Personal: Ask God to prepare you for the opportunities he provides, so that you can tell people who God is by what you say and what you do.

Tuesday – Authority

"Liberty is the proper end and object of authority, and cannot subsist without it" John Winthrop, 17th c. Puritan leader and Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony

1. Please read 1 Peter 2:12-17 (focusing on verses 13-14). How does this challenge or affirm your own understanding of government?

Text Insight: At the time of Peter's letter, Nero was Emperor of Rome. His reign was one of cruelty, fear and debauchery.

2. In Romans 13:1-7, how do Paul's insights on civil authority help you understand your role in society?
3. See Matthew 22:15-22, Acts 4:18-20 and Acts 5:25-32, and describe how you can discern when earthly laws must be set aside for God's supreme law.

Making it Personal: Have you ever faced a law that you personally needed to set aside in order to follow God's ways? Pray now for the wisdom to know what to do should this situation ever arise.

Wednesday – Silencing Ignorance

"What you see and hear depends a good deal on where you are standing; it also depends on what sort of person you are." C. S. Lewis

1. Please read 1 Peter 2:12-17 (focusing on verses 15). What sort of ignorant talk and foolishness do you think Peter is talking about?

Text Insight: When the scripture writers used the word "fool" they meant more than silliness. The concept of foolishness relates to a moral failing with a spiritual dimension.

2. What does Psalm 14:1-7 tell you of those that God calls fools?
3. How can you live out the truths regarding wisdom found in Proverbs 10:14 and Ecclesiastes 10:12-14?

Making it Personal: When have you been misunderstood in the way you carried out your faith? Pray that God will use you, even when those around you fail to understand.

Thursday – Freed to Serve

"Well it may be the Devil or it may be the Lord, but you're gonna have to serve somebody." Bob Dylan, Gotta Serve Somebody (1980)

1. Please read 1 Peter 2:12-17 (focusing on verses 16). IN the context of this passage, what does it mean to be free for God?

Text Insight: The biblical concept of freedom is not about a lack of restraints. It concerns being freed from the power of evil and sin that will overwhelm us without the help that comes from our Savior Christ.

2. What does Jesus say in Luke 16:10-16 and what does Paul say in Romans 6:19-23 about your ability to be completely autonomous and free from any control?

Making it Personal: Ask the Lord to show you how to live in the freedom he provides, so that others can see their need to be free as well.

Friday – The End of All Matters

"Mere facts are for children only. As they begin to point towards conclusions they become food for men." Edmund Selous, 19th-20th c. British ornithologist and writer

1. Please read 1 Peter 2:12-17 (focusing on vs. 17). What can you do to show proper respect to the people listed here?
2. In Deuteronomy 10:12-13 and Ecclesiastes 12:9-14, how do you carry out your duty to God?

Text Insight: Fear of God includes a proper understanding of how awesome, mighty and majestic he is; why honoring and praising him is completely appropriate; and how awful it would be not to belong to him.

3. How can you get a proper understanding of God according to Proverbs 2:1-6? What does this tell you about the cause of foolishness?

Digging Deeper (optional): Read Exodus 33:12-23 and 34:5-7. What can you do to follow Moses' example?

For the Weekend: Re-read 1 Peter 2:12-17. What can you do to live wisely and honor those around you and in authority above you?