

Taking Care

*Button up your overcoat, when the wind is free
Take good care of yourself, you belong to me*

*Eat an apple every day, get to bed by three
Take good care of yourself, you belong to me*

*Wear your flannel underwear, when you climb a tree
Take good care of yourself, you belong to me*

Button Up Your Overcoat
(Lyrics by BG de Sylva and Lew Brown)

If only it were as easy as this old song suggests to care for ourselves. But for when it really counts, like for all eternity, we need more than a warm coat, fresh fruit and long underwear. We need God. This week we will see what it means to have God’s care in our lives, care that goes soul deep and lasts forever.

Monday – Nurtured by God

“A growing relationship can only be nurtured by genuineness.” Leo Buscaglia, 20th c. American educator

1. Please read Philippians 1:1-6. What attributes of God are included here?
2. How do Philippians 1:1-6 and 2:12-13 assure you of God’s nurturing presence in your life? What is God’s role and what is ours?

Text Insight: Working out your salvation does not mean working for salvation. We work out our salvation because a life of faith is an active life which requires regular exercise to grow healthy and strong.

3. Based on Ephesians 2:1-10, identify where you were when you entered your life with God, where he has brought you, and what work in your faith he has for you now.

Making it Personal: How has God nurtured you in your life with him? How do you go about working out your salvation?

Tuesday – Presence of God

“In the rush and noise of life, as you have intervals, step home within yourselves and be still. Wait upon God, and feel His good presence; this will carry you evenly through your day’s business.” William Penn, 17th-18th c. English religious leader and politician

1. Please read Philippians 1:12-26. Why do you think Paul sounds so confident in verse 21? What can you learn from him in these verses about being in the presence of Christ?
2. Now look at Psalm 16:1-11. What similarities and differences do you see between this writer and Paul?
3. What comments might Paul have made about applying Psalm 16:8 to his own life?

Digging Deeper (optional): Read 2 Corinthians 11:23-33 and consider how these hardships would have affected your own walk with God. What enabled Paul to prevail?

Wednesday – Resurrection of God

“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” Jesus, John 10:10

1. Please read Philippians 3:10-11. What does this tell you about the need for death in order to experience life?

Text Insight: Verse 11 does not necessarily mean Paul is wondering if he will achieve eternal life (“somehow to attain ... resurrection”), but more likely that Paul is caught up in the mystery as to how God accomplishes this for believers.

2. According to Philippians 3:7-9, what is Paul willing to give up in order to live as Christ wants him to live?
3. What does Jesus say about the need for his own death in John 12:23-33 and Mark 8:31-38, and how that should affect those who belong to him?

Making it Personal: Have you given up anything to follow God? Ask God to strengthen you as you live in the sacrificial and abundant life he has for you.

Thursday – Dependence

“Work as if everything depended on you and pray as if everything depended on God.” D.L. Moody, 19th c. American evangelist

1. Please read Philippians 2:1-5. How would dependence on God lead to the attributes Paul lists here? How does this passage also reveal our dependence upon the people of God?
2. We cannot live the Christian life well without the help of other people. And that help can be blocked by an unforgiving spirit. What does Paul identify in Philippians 4:2 as the way for two quarreling believers to be able to get along? What do you learn about these women in 4:3?

Digging Deeper (optional): According to John 15:1-17, what can we accomplish apart from God? How do we carry out God’s will, according to this passage? What significance do you find in verse 16?

Friday – Discipline of God

“He who lives without discipline dies without honor.” Icelandic proverb

1. Please read Philippians 3:12-17. What keeps Paul focused?
2. What sort of discipline does Jesus call us to in Luke 9:57-62? When have you shown this kind of dedication? Under what circumstances is it most difficult for you to stay disciplined in your faith?
3. In Proverbs 3:11-12, what is the motivation for God’s discipline in our lives?

Making it Personal: What can you do to live a life disciplined in the ways of God? Whether you need to develop a better prayer life, scripture study, service to others, or anything else, ask God to guide you.

For the Weekend: What did the Philippians do that prompted Paul’s statements in Philippians 4:10-20? What behavior does Paul describe that will lead to a life of discipline and abundance in Christ?