

**An Honest Day's Work**

One summer during high school when staying with some relatives out of state, my Uncle Tom put me to work painting my grandparents' house so that I could earn some spending money. Now, I'm not very handy with tools around the house but I got by all right. The hardest part was the weather; the temperature reached 100 degrees by early afternoon most days (and it felt even hotter right up against the wall of the house with paint fumes in my nose). Along around 2:00, my grandfather would come outside with a tall glass of iced tea and tell me it was time to come in. They wouldn't let me back out to work until after dinner.

At the end of the summer I returned home and I remember telling my Dad that this was not the type of work I'd like to do again. He told me something that has stuck with me to this day: it was honest work, and Uncle Tom thought highly enough of it to pay me to get it done. That little observation stood me in good stead with a bunch of other jobs that followed: bussing tables, scrubbing floors, sweeping out storage rooms.

Jesus is the greatest example of a servant and has work for us to do as well. In fact, he thinks so highly of that work that he offers to reward us for doing it. Let's spend this week learning what it means to be served by our God, and to serve him and others in return.

**Monday – Washed Clean**

*"Are you washed in the blood, in the soul cleansing blood of the Lamb? Are your garments spotless? Are they white as snow? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?"* Elisha Hoffman, *Are You Washed in the Blood?*

1. Please read John 13:1-11. How does Jesus' knowledge in verse 3 lead to his action in verses 4-5?
2. What is Peter's misunderstanding? How does Jesus correct this?
3. John later explained, in Revelation 7:9-17, the full effect of being washed by Jesus. What is striking about the cleansing agent noted in verse 14? What benefits from this cleansing are listed in this passage?

**Making it Personal:** Take some time and meditate on the gift we've been given in the precious blood of Christ. As you ponder his generosity, thank God for the gift he offers us, to be washed eternally clean by his Son.

**Tuesday – Poetry in Motion**

*"Poetry is the art of uniting pleasure with truth."* Samuel Johnson, 18<sup>th</sup> c. English writer

1. Please read John 13:12-16. What did Jesus say we should do with his example? Why?
2. Now look at Ephesians 2:10. According to Paul, who are we? What has God planned for us? Why do you think he did this?

**Text Insight:** The original Greek word translated here as "workmanship" is the same one that gives us the word "poetry". It originally meant a type of composition, so this verse says we are like the work of a composer.

3. In Mark 10:42-45, how did Jesus characterize his purpose in coming to us? What did he say about those who follow him?

**Making it Personal:** Ask the Lord Jesus to show you who you can serve today (and each day thereafter).

**Wednesday – At His Service**

*"Serve the LORD with gladness."* Psalm 100:2 (NASB)

1. Please read Deuteronomy 10:12-14 and 13:4. How would you describe the devotion that God asks of us?
2. How does the fear mentioned in Deuteronomy 10:12 along with the ownership in verse 14 tie together our obligations in between? What does God promise in return (v.13)?

**Text Insight:** Fear of God is a biblical phrase covering many aspects, such as deep reverence and respect, as well as an understanding of his role as Sovereign King and Judge of all mankind.

3. Take a look at Romans 14:7-8. What is the nature of your existence in God? How does this help you understand the way you should behave each day?

**Digging Deeper (optional):** Read Matthew 25:31-46. How is our service of God related to the way we serve others.

**Thursday – Putting Faith to Good Service**

*"In the Kingdom of God, service is not a stepping-stone to nobility: it is nobility, the only kind of nobility that is recognized."* T.W. Manson, 20<sup>th</sup> c. British theologian

1. Please read James 1:22-27. What warning does he give for those who talk big without action? What action does he suggest?

**Text Insight:** The word "religion" here refers to a person's faith as expressed in his actions.

2. Now read Deuteronomy 10:14-22 and describe the attributes of God listed there. What does this passage say we are to do in response to God's work in our lives? Why?

**Prayer Focus:** Pray for FBC, that our church would answer God's call to be his servants in the world. Specifically, pray that FBC would grow in becoming more externally focused towards the communities of Davis, Woodland, Dixon, etc.

**Friday – Earthly Reflection of Heavenly Affection**

*"Oh to live above with saints I love, that would be glory. But to live below with saints I know? Now that's another story!"*

Anonymous

1. Please read James 4:1-12. What problems does James identify among fellow Christians? What suggestions does he have to avoid this?
2. How is James 4:10 central to these instructions when it comes to understanding our place with God and with those he has put around us?
3. Read Romans 16:16, 1 Corinthians 16:20, 2 Corinthians 13:12, 1 Thessalonians 5:26 and 1 Peter 5:14. How can the action of greeting someone warmly lead to treating that person correctly?

**Making it Personal:** Remember all that God has done for you as you interact with others today.

**For the Weekend:** Read Luke 7:36-50. Based on what you know about yourself, do you identify most with the woman or the Pharisee? Why?