



grow. pray. study.

June 9, 2019 *The Name Written on You*

Scripture: 1 John 4:18-21

There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear, because fear expects punishment. The person who is afraid has not been made perfect in love. We love because God first loved us. Those who say, “I love God” and hate their brothers or sisters are liars. After all, those who don’t love their brothers or sisters whom they have seen can hardly love God whom they have not seen! This commandment we have from him: Those who claim to love God ought to love their brother and sister also.

Questions in this GPS marked with an arrow bullet point are particularly recommended for group discussion. Group leaders may add other discussion questions, or substitute other questions for the marked ones, at their discretion.

Enduring bonds of friendship

MONDAY 6.10.19 1 Samuel 18:1-4; 20:1-4, 30-33, 41-42

Woody: Besides, when it's all over, I have Buzz Lightyear to keep me company, for infinity and beyond. *

Woody and Buzz—friends for infinity and beyond. In Bible history, most of us know something about Israel’s King David, but fewer know about his close friend Jonathan. “Eldest son of King Saul by his only wife (1 Sa. 14:49–50), he was his father’s heir, which makes his loyalty and affection for David, who succeeded Saul, the more wonderful (1 Sa. 20:31)...his loyalty to David, however, was made more difficult because it conflicted with his filial duty to and affection for Saul, his father and sovereign.” **

- Jonathan’s loyalty to his friend David showed itself in his willingness to face his father’s unstable rage by standing up for his friend. Fortunately, few of us ever face that severe a challenge in showing loyalty to our friends. When have you faced a test of your loyalty to a friend, perhaps by family or another friend’s disapproval? How did you deal with the situation? Looking back, how do you feel about your action toward your friend?
- David didn’t forget Jonathan, even after his friend’s death in battle (cf. [2 Samuel 1:4](#)). When he was established as king in Israel, David sought out a surviving son of Jonathan (crippled by a childhood accident) and gave him an honored place at the royal court (cf. [2 Samuel 9:1-7](#)). In what ways do you see David’s enduring friendship for Jonathan as foreshadowing Jesus’ eternally lasting friendship in giving you a place in God’s family?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, help me to learn from Woody and Buzz, from Jonathan and David, and most of all from you the deepest meanings of being a friend. Make me a loyal, dependable friend. Amen.

* From https://www.quotes.net/movies/toy_story_2_11805

** T. H. Jones, article “Jonathan” in *The New Bible Dictionary, Third Edition*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1962, 1996, pp. 604-605.

Who we are in Christ

TUESDAY 6.11.19 Acts 11:25-26, Revelation 3:10-12

“Look under your boot, Buzz. You too, Jessie. Whose name is written there?” *

Andy’s name on their shoe sole showed who Woody and Buzz belonged to. Scholar N. T. Wright told how Antioch, a diverse city, linked Christ’s name to his disciples: “there the word ‘Christian’ first came into use. It was a nickname...just as ‘Methodist’ was at first a word used by the opponents of Wesley and his friends to sneer at their ‘Methodical’ ways of organizing their Bible study and prayer groups. Like many nicknames, it tells us a lot about the popular perception of what was going on. You would hear every language...in Antioch...but the one you could guarantee to be understood in was...Greek. ‘Christ’...was the Greek word for ‘Messiah,’...‘God’s anointed king.’ Jesus’ followers were thinking and speaking in such a way that they were called ‘the king’s people,’ ‘Messianists,’ ‘Christians.’” **

- Scholar William Barclay wrote about Revelation 3:12, “Jesus Christ will mark his faithful ones with his new name: what that name was we need not even speculate, for no man knows it (Revelation 19:12), but in the time to come, when Christ has conquered all, his faithful ones will bear the badge which shows that they are his and share his triumph.” *** When did you first take Christ’s name as your “badge” of identity? How has it shaped your life?
- What does your name mean? Do you know why your parents chose that name for you? Do you like your name? How has your name shaped your view of yourself and of your place in the world, positively or negatively? When the poetic image of Revelation comes true and God gifts you with a new name (cf. [Revelation 2:17, 3:12](#)), what personal meaning do you want that name to carry?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, it is because you are the Christ (God’s anointed king) that I am a Christ-ian. You are my king, and how I look forward to spending eternity with you in the safety and victory that Revelation promised. Amen.

* From video clip at https://video.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?hsimp=yhs-att_001&hspart=att&p=Toy+Story+2+clip+about+name+on+Woody%27s+shoe#id=2&vid=969513bc19e51c84afb4c37fb361404d&action=click

** N. T. Wright, *Acts for Everyone, Part 1: Chapters 1–12*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008, p. 178.

*** William Barclay, *Daily Study Bible Series: The Revelation of John—Volume 1 Chapters 1–5 (Revised Edition)*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1976, p. 135.

God goes as far as necessary to reach us

WEDNESDAY 6.12.19 Matthew 18:12-14, John 15:15

Buzz Lightyear: “To Al’s Toy Barn... and beyond.” *

Infinity and beyond? Rescuing Woody took a trip to “Al’s Toy Barn.” Jesus came from the mysterious reaches of “infinity” to this planet on very real rescue mission. Probably echoing the image from [Ezekiel 34:1-12](#), he told a story about a shepherd who lost one sheep from his flock. The shepherd was not at all unmoved by the loss. He dropped everything, searched until he found the lost sheep—and felt great joy when he found it. The story fit, because Jesus searched for more than just a sheep; he searched for people he called “friends.”

- Pastor Bruce Larson wrote, “A shepherd once explained to me that sheep nibble their way into lostness. They move from one tuft of green grass to the next, sometimes right through a hole in the fence. When they’re done nibbling, they can’t find the hole and they’re lost. Some of us know what that is—to nibble ourselves bit by bit into the far country.” ** When have you been like the lost sheep, not sure how to find your way home? What “shepherd(s)” has God used to find you and bring you home?

- Scholar William Barclay said because Jesus called us friends, “no longer do we need to gaze longingly at God from afar off; we are not like slaves who have no right whatever to enter into the presence of the master; we are not like a crowd whose only glimpse of the king is in the passing on some state occasion. Jesus gave us this intimacy with God, so that he is no longer a distant stranger, but our close friend.” *** In what ways do you accept, value and nurture your friendship with Jesus?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you have changed me from “lost sheep” to “friend.” Remind me each day what a privilege it is for me to be a friend of the king of the universe. Amen.

* From https://www.quotes.net/movies/toy_story_2_11805

** Bruce Larson, *The Preacher’s Commentary Series, Volume 26: Luke*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Inc. 1983, p. 235.

Outlasting this temporary world

THURSDAY 6.13.19 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Andy’s Mom: I’m sorry, honey, but you know... toys don’t last forever. *

Andy was sad that a torn seam cost his toy Woody an arm. The apostle Paul knew firsthand about physical challenges (cf. [2 Corinthians 11:23-28; 12:7-10](#)). He wasn’t being hypothetical when he wrote that “Even if our bodies are breaking down on the outside, the person that we are on the inside is being renewed every day.” Yet he believed, as a pastor in Frederick Buechner’s novel *The Final Beast* said, that “the worst isn’t the last thing about the world. It’s the next to the last thing. The last thing is the best.... You are terribly loved and forgiven. Yes. You are healed. All is well.” In Christ, we look beyond the worst to the “eternal stockpile of glory” Jesus promised.

- Paul wrote that we focus on things we can’t see, which are more durable than what we can see. That can be hard to do. What steps do you take, in a world that seems full of disappointment and pain, to anchor your hope in God’s goodness, and to live with patience and trust? How do you maintain your trust in God’s good world, beyond our time-bounded world (and much of the time out of our sight)?
- Scholar William Barclay wrote, “From the physical point of view life may be a slow but inevitable slipping down the slope that leads to death. But from the spiritual point of view life is a climbing up the hill that leads to the presence of God.” ** How much daily energy do you put toward keeping your physical self healthy and strong? How much to keeping your spiritual connection with God strong?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, some days I feel on top of the world. Other days I feel wearing or worn out. Anchor my hope, not in this world where everything ends, but in your eternal world of life and light. Amen.

* From https://www.quotes.net/movies/toy_story_2_11805

** William Barclay, *Daily Study Bible Series: The Letters to the Corinthians* (Revised Edition). Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1975, p. 201.

Jesus gave himself for us

FRIDAY 6.14.19 Titus 2:11-14

“That was definitely Woody’s finest hour!” – Jessie, after Woody saves the day after rescuing her from the plane. *

Rescuing Jessie from a plane—not bad for a cloth pull-string sheriff! But the apostle Paul summed up a crucial Christian truth: God’s grace, expressed through Jesus’ life, death and resurrection, brought salvation for all people. And we all need salvation (or “rescue”), whether we struggle with “obvious” sins like murder, theft, adultery, etc., “respectable” sins like pride, impatience, judgmentalism and anger (which are often harder to recognize), or perhaps with some of both.

- Jesus gave himself “to rescue us from every kind of lawless behavior” (verse 14). The Greek version of the Old Testament used the Greek word for “rescue” to describe God freeing Israel from slavery in Egypt. In what ways is accepting Jesus’ gracious rescue giving you greater freedom in your life? Are you feeling the Holy Spirit’s nudge in any area where you are still in “slavery?”
- In John Wesley’s class-conscious England, where he launched the Methodist movement, many people thought the Christian faith was only for the “proper” people. Wesley, like Paul before him, knew that the good news was for all people. Wesley once wrote in his journal about a group he’d preached to, “I am apt to think many of the hearers scarcely ever heard a Methodist before, or perhaps any other preacher. . . . Are not their souls also precious in the sight of God?” Who do you know who is precious to God with whom you might share the good news of Jesus?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you gave yourself for me. Day by day, grow in me a heart that, in response to your generous self-giving, is eager to live out the good actions of your kingdom. Amen.

* From <https://www.geeksofdoom.com/2014/10/16/disney-depth-25-best-toy-story-2-quotes>

Faith is not a collector’s item

SATURDAY 6.15.19 Galatians 6:7-10

Buzz Lightyear: “Woody, you’re not a collector’s item, you’re a child’s plaything. You are a toy!” *

In the first *Toy Story* movie, Woody had to teach Buzz that he was a “T-O-Y,” with a mission to bring joy to children. In *Toy Story 2*, Buzz had to remind Woody of that, when the sheriff thought it might be better to live on display in a glass collector’s case. Sadly, sometimes Jesus’ followers also feel the urge to turn their faith into a display piece, untouched by real life’s messiness and challenges. But faith is never something to keep isolated, shiny and “just for show.” The apostle Paul wrote about relationships, about how we treat one another. He pictured us as farmers who need to be careful what we plant in the soil of our lives. The point of our faith, he said, is to energize and empower us to work for the good of all.

- Verse 9 said doing good takes focused effort. “The first verb [“get tired”] puts emphasis on losing interest (for example, “spiritless”) and the second [“give up”] on becoming discouraged or relaxing one’s efforts.” ** This can be a spiritual hazard. Have you ever gotten tired of doing good? If so, what helped renew your energy to bear good fruit by blessing others? Verse 10 said we should work for the good “whenever we have an opportunity.” Do you ever feel that you’re stuck, that you have no opportunity to do anybody any good? How can the Holy Spirit’s presence help you find creative ways of doing good at any point in your life?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, let your light shine from my life, not out of a shiny display case, but amid the darkness and dirt of real human life. Help me never to tire of doing the good you call me to do. Amen.

Family Activity: The Bible teaches us about friendship through people like Ruth and Naomi as well as David and Jonathan. Create a “Friend of the Day” calendar. Gather your family and create a list of each person’s friends. Using a blank calendar for the rest of this month and next month, write one friend’s name on each day. Commit to praying for each individual “Friend of the Day.” Consider other ways to bless each friend on their special day. Maybe you can write a note or draw a picture. Consider baking treats for your friend, giving a small gift or making a phone call to brighten their day. You could even arrange to spend time with your friend! Friendship is a gift from God. Thank God for your friends and ask God to help you be a good friend.

* From <http://www.disneyquotes.com/toy-story-2-quotes/>

** Daniel C. Arichea, Jr. and Eugene A. Nida, *A Handbook on Paul’s Letter to the Galatians*. New York: United Bible Societies, 1976, p. 152.

Prayer Requests – cor.org/prayer *Prayers of peace and comfort for:*

To **Jamie Felton** and family following the death of **Jack Matthew Felton** (Son), 5/23/2019

To **Mark Adams** and family following the death of **Rev. Thomas Adams** (Father), 5/30/2019

To **Virginia & David McIntyre** and family following the death of **Steven Sykes** (Son), 5/31/2019

To **Jami Howe** and family following the death of **Sharell Jordan** (Mother), 6/2/2019