

A DAILY QUIET TIME GUIDE
Family and Faculty Camp
Campus by the Sea
August 2 – 7, 2009

This guide for Scripture reading, reflection, and prayer is related to our morning Scripture study in the *First Letter of Peter*. Specifically, it provides occasion to think and pray about the theme of “spiritual pilgrimage and exile,” by reading a daily Psalm, reflecting on a couple of questions about that psalm, and offering prayer to our great and gracious God using a written prayer related to the psalm reading and our own personal petitions. The written prayers are taken from a collection of Puritan prayers, *The Valley of Vision*, ed. Arthur Bennett (Banner of Truth, 1975).

Monday: The Pilgrim’s Map and Compass

This week we will spend 9 hours studying together the *First Letter of Peter*. That amounts to around 3 months worth of Biblical preaching or teaching in our more normal church settings! This is a wonderful opportunity if we come to this time with prepared hearts, eager to be faithful stewards. So today’s Quiet Time focuses on our approach to God’s word and the place of that word in the life of a pilgrim and exile.

Read Psalm 119: 17 – 24 twice through, slowly, carefully, and thoughtfully.

1. Make a list of the challenges the author faces. Now make another list of his views of and attitudes toward God’s written word. How do the two lists relate to one another in the psalm? How have you seen this sort of relationship in your own spiritual life? How does this relationship challenge you?
2. Turn the list of the author’s views and attitudes into a prayer of thanksgiving and praise to the LORD. Write your prayer out so you can share it with others (as you feel free to do so).
3. Offer the following prayer up to God and, then, add your own petitions to Him. Pray, especially, for our times of Bible study this week.

O God of truth,
I thank thee for the Holy Scriptures, their precepts,
promises, directions, light.

In them may I learn more of Christ, be enabled to retain his truth and have grace to follow it. Help me to lift up the gates of my soul that he may come in and show me himself when I search the Scriptures, for I have no line to fathom its depths, no wings to soar to its heights. By his aid may I be enabled to explore all its truths, love them with all my heart, embrace them with all my power, engraft them into my life.

Bless to my soul all grains of truth garnered from thy Word; may they take deep root, be refreshed by heavenly dew, be ripened by heavenly rays, be harvested to my joy and thy praise. Help me to gain profit by what I read, a treasure beyond all treasure, a fountain which can replenish my dry heart, its waters flowing through me as a perennial river on-drawn by thy Holy Spirit. Enable me to distil from its pages faithful prayer that grasps the arm of thy omnipotence, achieves wonders, obtains blessings, and draws down streams of mercy. From it show me how my words have often been unfaithful to thee, injurious to my fellow-men, empty of grace, full of folly, dishonoring to my calling. Then write thy own words upon my heart and inscribe them on my lips.

So shall all glory be to thee in my reading of thy Word.

Tuesday: The Pilgrim’s Delight

Read Psalm 84 twice through, slowly, carefully, and thoughtfully.

1. Notice that the psalmist addresses God four times as “LORD, Almighty” (or “LORD of hosts”). See verses 1, 3, 8, 12. What truths about God are expressed in this refrain? Look carefully at each of these verses and note what further truths the psalmist associates with this great lord. Why is it important for pilgrims and exiles to know God in this way?
2. Compare the ways this psalm sees a pilgrim’s relationship with the LORD to I Peter 1: 8-9. Reflect on your own relationship with the Lord Jesus. Can it honestly be characterized in the terms of this psalm? As one great commentator on the

psalms says, "... this psalm rebukes our meager spirituality."

3. Offer the following prayer and others you might add to it to the LORD:

O Father of Jesus,
Help me to approach thee with deepest reverence, not with presumption, not with servile fear, but with holy boldness. Thou art beyond the grasp of my understanding, but not beyond that of my love. Thou knowest that I love thee supremely, for thou art supremely adorable, good, and perfect.

My heart melts at the love of Jesus, my brother, bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, married to me, dead for me, risen for me. He is mine and I am his, given to me, as well as for me. I am never so much mine as when I am his, or so much lost to myself until lost in him. Then I find my true humanity.

But my love is frost and cold, ice and snow. Let his love warm me, lighten my burden, be my heaven. May it be more revealed to me in all its influences that my love to him may be more fervent and glowing. Let the might tide of his everlasting love cover the rocks of my sin and care. Then let my spirit float above those things which had else wrecked my life.

Make me fruitful by living to that love, my character becoming more beautiful every day. If traces of Christ's love-artistry be upon me, may he work on with his divine brush until the complete image be obtained and I be made a perfect copy of him, my Master.

O Lord Jesus, come to me,
O Divine Spirit, rest upon me,
O Holy Father, look on me in mercy for the sake of the well-beloved.

Wednesday: The Pilgrim's Rest

Today is the day-off from our more normal program, a day for refreshment and enjoyment. Today's and Friday's psalms are taken from a collection from within the psalter called "psalms of ascent," 120-134. They are psalms for reading and prayer during the annual pilgrimages of faithful Israelites up to Jerusalem for special times of worship and covenant renewal. For some, their annual "pilgrimages" to Family Camp functions are very much like these ancient times of pilgrimage. Today's psalm is very short, a focused moment of insight about rest and renewal. Try to carve out some time before you get to Avalon to read it, perhaps together with other voyagers or walkers, and appropriate its central truth about where rest is really found.

Read Psalm 131, slowly and thoughtfully.

1. The psalm is built around a central metaphor. What is it? What is a "weaned child?" How is a weaned child different from a child at her mother's breast? How is this a picture of who we are and where we find rest?
2. Look carefully at v. 3. What does it accomplish in the psalm; what does it call us to do for our fellow pilgrims? How might you do that sort of thing today?
3. Spend at least a few moments in focused attention on the LORD. What concerns should you set aside as matters of "haughtiness" or as "too great" or "too wonderful" because they distract your attention to Him? Set them aside now, consciously, so you can live into today under His smile as a day of joy and rest.

Thursday: Resources for Pilgrim's in Crisis

Read Psalm 34 through twice, noticing echoes of I Peter as you read the second time.

1. The psalm heading (v. 1 in the Hebrew text is the "heading," often printed in small type and/or italics in English translations for no particularly good reason!) identifies this psalm with David and his captivity in the court of Abimelech, a Canaanite king, in the time of Saul's monarchy in Israel. Read the account in I Samuel 21: 10-15. To what does David, presumably reflecting later on the event in Psalm 34, attribute his deliverance? Why is that important for us to see?
2. Our psalm is divided into two large sections, vv. 1-10 and vv. 11-22. How do they differ? What is each giving us as we face crisis situations of adversity? Why is each gift important as you face challenges and adversities?
3. Think of the challenges before you as you return from Catalina to your normal way of life. How can you draw on this psalm as a resource for meeting them? Be as specific as you can in answering this question, identify a verse or verses that speak to what you should do, and begin to memorize those verses.
4. Write your own prayer of thanksgiving, praise, and petition related to your answer to #3. Offer it up to the LORD. Consider sharing it, as you feel free to do so, with others in our study time today.
5. Reflect on how I Peter echoes or quotes Psalm 34. Consider I Peter 1: 13-16; 2:1; 2: 11-12; and particularly 3: 10-12.

Friday: The Pilgrim's never ending confidence

Read Psalm 121, another simple and beautiful Psalm of Ascents.

1. Why is this an especially wonderful psalm for our last day together?
2. The key word in this psalm, a verb, is repeated 5 times. What is it? How is this action related to the LORD? What does it tell you about the LORD himself?
3. Consider v. 1. What was an Israelite reading this psalm most likely to associate with "the hills" or "the high places?" Why does it make such a huge difference that the LORD is "the Maker of heaven and earth?"
4. What comfort and encouragement do you personally receive from the final words, "both now and forevermore?" Take out your sheet of paper we used on Thursday morning in reflecting on "the one main thing" the LORD has been putting on our hearts. As you think again about the challenge this represents, how does Psalm 121 and the LORD, the God of everlasting watch-care, affect you. Give him thanks for this week past and for your life of pilgrimage to come.
5. The traditional hymn of departing in IVCF is "We rest on thee, our shield and our defender" (Hymns II, #170). It was sung by European students as they left an important international conference in the founding of IFES in the dark days before WWII. It was sung by the "Auca Five" on the day of their martyrdom. It has been sung at innumerable student conferences and camps in the history of IVCF USA. Sing (or read) it as an expression of gratitude for our time together and in hope of the great day when we will all assemble to sing the praises of our God of grace, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, world without end. Amen.