

Let's Get This Study Started!

We're finally starting the new study, *Everyday Practices/Eternal Priorities*. *I* have had ideas for this study since May, but I have finally seen a glimpse of *God's* idea for this study. His idea is completely different than what I was thinking - - there is at least a fully year of Bible study in that sentence right there!

Join us for the ride! I don't know where we're headed, but I know the driver and can guarantee it's going to be good. You won't get much out of a cross-country trip hanging onto a bumper, and it's the same with this journey. Hop all the way into the car, have a seat, and buckle-up. Join the Driver on the inside of the car, listening to what He has to say about the trip He is taking you on.

Let's go!

A World Without Hope?

History repeated itself last week. As Monday turned into Tuesday, I was pulling into the garage after a long trip to Colorado for a funeral. This time it was for my aunt. In two weeks I lost two people I love.

I'm not alone, we're all losing people. According to the CIA World Book, two and one-half *million* people will die in America this year. That leaves a lot of people suffering a lot of loss.

We're also losing homes and money. About 304,000 homes were foreclosed on last month. (U.S. News and World Report, Sept. 24, 2008). Bankruptcy rates are soaring. You may still have money, but that paper in your bank is worth less than it has been in almost 30 years. Governments around the world are dumping their US currency for Euros, further weakening our economic state. (NY Sun, Sept. 28, 2007)

We are even losing ourselves. Each day our heart has another 100,000 beats taken off of it. (NOVA online). During the same time, another 4,000-10,000 steps grind our bones and compress our discs.

Have I given you your "Hope for Today?"

We'll get there, but not until I first help you loose all your hope. So, just in case you're still holding onto a thread of hope in this world, I want to point out one last thing. Most of you live in America, a country known for its prosperity, power and wealth, an invincible country that will carry on as a world power for many years.

That is the same way the people of Egypt and Assyria felt in 1400 B.C. and 700 B.C., respectively. It was the thoughts of the Babylonians in 600 B.C. and the Persians in 500 B.C. It was the security of the Romans in 300 and of the British in early 1700. We know every one of these world powers fell, even though they too thought they were invincible world powers that would carry on for many years.

Why do I tell you all this? Not because I am un-American and not because I want to keep you up-to-date on current or historical events. I do my best to not watch the news and I rarely get beyond the comics in the newspaper. I'm a history dunce. It took a lot of searching to come up with "empires" that have been world powers; I only know the ones the Bible mentions.

My point in telling you all this is to have you take a look at your life, a full accounting of everything you have and everything you trust in. I want you to see if there is anything you have, anything you love, or anything you trust that cannot be taken away from you.

I want to help you realize that our hope does not come from this world. That is why we need eternal priorities - to see that we have true security and real hope in nothing but the Lord. There is no where to put our trust but in the Lord. Nothing remains over time but the Lord.

Anything we spend our skills, time, money, or other resources on that is not centered on God is wasted! Those things won't remain. Only the things of God will remain over time.

When you look at your life and examine what you do in the mundane of every day life, are you filling yourself with the things of eternity? Or, is your day consumed with that of the world which passes away?

I am writing this study because I find it so hard to keep my eyes on God and focused on eternity when my life is on earth and focused on the tasks before me. I know God will give us a way to live out the duties of wives, mothers, workers, and women while focusing fully on Him. I want us to ask Him to show us the way. I want Him to fill my heart with His love even as I fill the washer with laundry. I want to burn with the Holy Spirit even as I'm freezing at a soccer game. I want to glorify God even as I grapple with the checkbook.

Until the Lord calls me home, I can't avoid everyday practices. But I can see how He plans for me to do them while I'm focused on Him.

This study is going to make me more than a little uncomfortable at times. I hope it will make you uncomfortable too. I pray that He will speak to us and reveal to us the changes we need to make in our life to be the beautiful, glorious children He created us to be.

Let's get started!!

Dig Deeper

Grab your notebook and Bible and get ready to explore! Take your time to wander through these questions over the next two weeks and let God speak to you.

1. Pray, asking God to open your eyes and heart to His truth.
2. a. Read the following passages recording the name or descriptions of God in each passage:
 - Genesis 21:33
 - Exodus 3:14
 - Isaiah 41:4, 48:12, 48:16, 57:15
 - Jeremiah 10:10
 - Daniel 6:27
 - John 1:1-2, 8:58
 - Revelation 1:17-18, 22:13b. What do these verses tell you about God?
c. What in these verses is new to you or changes your thinking?
3. a. Record what the following passages teach about eternal value:
 - Proverbs 11:28
 - Proverbs 28:22
 - Proverbs 23:4-5
 - Matthew 6:19-20
 - Matthew 6:31-33
 - Luke 10:38-42
 - Colossians 2:23-24b. Describe what these verses indicate about your priorities and whether or not they are eternal.
c. What changes do you need to make in your life to be able to read these verses without concern for your eternal priorities?

4a. Read the following scriptures and describe the source and result of hope. Also record and pray about the blessings and promises you personally receive through these passages:

- Psalm 25:3
- Psalm 33:16-19
- Psalm 42
- Psalm 62
- Psalm 130
- Psalm 146
- Psalm 147
- Isaiah 40:31
- Jeremiah 29:11-14
- Lamentations 3:19-26
- Romans 5:1-11
- Romans 8:22-25 (along with Romans 8:18-21 and 8:26-27)
- Romans 8:12
- 1 Thessalonians 1:3
- Hebrews 11:1

b. What has been the source of your hope in the past?

c. What do you now know your hope to be?

d. How will you use these verses to change your thought life and prayer life?

5. What will you do as a result of digging deeper?



Find your true hope that rests in the Lord and fully trust in His hope.

In joyful and expectant hope,
Jennifer