

Knowing God Week 3

God Time – Are You Your Brothers Keeper?

These scriptures are selected to help you gain a deeper understanding of who Jesus is. You can read them each day or listen to the daily audio that is sent to you. They are intentionally designed for you to engage in your time alone with God. You will find them complementary to the teachings on the weekend (gatherings) and to the LIFE Group materials.

Some tips:

Use a Bible that is easy to read. The ESV or The NLT are both good translations.

Use a prayer journal. After you read the passages jot down what “jumped out” at you while reading. Then take a few minutes to write a prayer response to what you have read.

There are only five days of reading provided, so if you miss a day, you have time to catch up. Do not get legalistic! If you miss a day or even a week, God still loves you!

Monday: 1 Peter 4:9

Tuesday: 1 Peter 5:5

Wednesday: James 5:9

Thursday: Hebrews 10:24

Friday: 1 Thessalonians 3:12

Diving Deeper

Knowing God from the Start – Are You Your Brother’s Keeper?

In Genesis 4:9 we find “Am I my brothers guardian?” Cain had killed his brother Abel in the field Genesis 4:8. He took this action out of jealousy that God had accepted Abel’s sacrifice and rejected his own. Even though God already knew what had

happened to Abel, He still asked where was Cain. Cain's response was that he did not know.

Cain's response showed a disregard for God as it is clear God already knew what had transpired. God has a calling for each of them. We all have something to do in this world according to His purpose.

Cain slew Abel whom he ought to have loved, honored, and protected. This was clearly not the case. His pride, unbelief and unrepentance caused him to deny the crime as if God was unaware. Such arrogance! Where was Cain's heart? He would find his effect in what was evident in his heart. All of us can be a blessing or a curse. God made all of us to be a blessing. The character of the wicked brings upon them suffering in all they have, are and do.

It is a great hardness of the heart to be more concerned about one's plight than to be concerned for the wellbeing and welfare of others. Abel's death speaks of the potential hardness within that teaches us hardness leads to nothing but suffering.

In that, God can still grant His mercy and forgiveness, if one turns away from past, present and future behaviors that do not glorify Him. Faith in Christ is the antidote to behaviors that do not please God. So, in a way, Abel still speaks in his death to turn toward righteousness and away from evil. The future state for us can be assured.

So, are Christians to be the keepers of other Christians? Yes, in two ways. First, we are not to commit acts of violence against one another. This includes violence of the tongue in the form of gossip and "quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, factions, slander, gossip, arrogance and disorder" 2 Corinthians 12:20. Second, we are to exhibit brotherly love toward our brothers and sisters in Christ with a tender heart and a humble mind 1 Peter 3:8. In this way, we "keep" those for whom Christ gave His life.

In 1 Corinthians 13 we are reminded that love is even greater than faith and hope. The body of Christ is made up of many members functioning together toward the wellbeing of all that matters to God.

Questions to Consider:

1) Who do you live for?

2) Who or what has potentially hardened your heart?

3) What do you need to walk away from and move toward love to glorify God more fully?