



December 12 - 17, 2011
Devotion Starters

Instructions:

Use these devotion starters privately, with your spouse or friend, or as a family. You choose. For families with children, there will be some suggested children's activities to go along with each day. Encourage your kids to read the Bible with you and discuss the questions for each day. Have fun with the activities and find more resources online at www.firstbaptisticard.org.

Monday, December 12:

Read Colossians 3:3 The gospel is not that you need to improve yourself so that you might be pleasing to God. The gospel is not an internet browser plug-in for your life that simply makes your life more efficient or run more smoothly. Make no mistakes about it... apart from Christ, you are spiritually dead. But when you die to yourself, repent of your sins and turn toward God in faith, then you are made alive in Christ. Christ is in you and you are in Christ! How might you in your life be using the gospel as a self-help tool instead of realizing the gospel is an invitation to die to your self? Ponder God's acceptance of anyone who is in Christ. Pray and ask God to help you more clearly understand the gospel and who anyone that is saved is in Christ.

Tuesday, December 13:

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17. This verse is a widely known verse but is also a widely misunderstood verse. Sometimes, one might even read it and conclude that since she is not perfect, that she must not be in Christ. While Scripture clearly shows that a person who has been made alive in Christ will be changed fundamentally, Scripture also clearly shows that we are not made perfect this side of heaven. So what is Paul getting at in this verse? When one is in Christ, they no longer have enmity with God, they are not under God's wrath and judgment, they are declared children of God, and they now have the Spirit of God within them. Consider your position with God in Christ. Give God thanks for all that means to you.

Wednesday, December 14:

Read 2 Corinthians 5:16 Christ's coming to earth, dying on the cross and being raised on the third day turned the world upside down. It changed the way Paul valued everything in his life. In Philippians, he declared that he counted all of his prized achievements rubbish for the chance to know Christ. In this verse, Paul declares that he no longer judges people according to the flesh (that worldly system of judging based on externals and achievements). God does not judge the outward either, but instead the inward. If you began to value people not by their appearance or achievements, how would that change you? Would it be a hard change in your life to not judge a book by its cover?

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Devotion Starters (cont'd)

Thursday, December 15:

Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 How does being in Christ change us? When we consider God's love for us and the great cost of sacrifice He made for us, we are controlled by our love for Christ and we quit living for ourselves and begin to live for Him. This was the experience of Zacchaeus who began to live differently simply because he encountered the grace of Christ. God desires that we serve him out of a sense of love not duty. Be honest, has your spiritual life become a drudgery that you are beginning to dislike, maybe even hate? Imagine if you brought your wife flowers and she asks you why you brought them. "Because, I want to be a good husband and good husbands do spontaneous acts of love for their wives." I don't think the wife would be all that impressed with the answer. God is not impressed either when we serve him that way. Contemplate God's wide love for you. How does that love awaken in you a love in return?

Friday, December 16:

Read Colossians 3:1-2 and Colossians 3:12-17. When you are in Christ, you are fundamentally different. You are now called to live according to the Kingdom of God, not according to the world. That involves putting on Christ and putting off your self. What do these verses show you about putting on Christ? Where should our focus be? What are the qualities that we are to put on? Where will you start?

Saturday, December 17:

Read Colossians 3:5-10 Putting off the self is hard to do. It doesn't die without a fight but "greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world!" You can have victory over sin. It is not easy nor can it be done in your own power. It must be done through the Spirit and in Christ. Victory over sin can only be had with repentance and faith. Turning away from sin and turning toward Christ. Repentance may cost you with regard to your "reputation," but it is far more costly to continue in sin with a good reputation! What of the flesh in your life needs to be put to death? Have you repented and trusted Christ in that area? Who have you confided in to help you fight the sin?

Sunday, December 18:

Pray with your family for the services and activities of today. Ask God to give you hearts and minds that can hear Him clearly.

