

Daily devotion close to God (3) January 14 –January 20, 2008

Monday (Jan. 14)	<p>Scripture: Mark 2:23-28¹<i>due to a scheduling error this passage is repeated 23-24</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What did <i>Jesus' disciples</i> do that the <i>Pharisees considered unlawful</i>? Vs. 23-24 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the Jewish tradition, what do you think was <i>forbidden on the Sabbath</i>? Why? 2. Why did <i>Jesus use David's incident</i>² to answer the Pharisees? Vs. 25-26 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to both incidents, what did <i>Jesus value more</i>? Why? 3. What is the <i>God-given purpose of the Sabbath</i>? Vs. 27-28 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate <i>your Sabbath at church every Sunday</i>. Do you think <i>God is pleased with how you spend your weekly Sabbath</i>³ with Him? How would you <i>prepare yourself for Sabbath</i>? • If you do not have a weekly Sabbath, please <i>arrange your time to have one</i> because it is extremely that believers spend a weekly Sabbath³ with the Creator.
Tuesday (Jan. 15)	<p>Scripture: Mark 3:1-6</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What were <i>the people's intention in gathering around Jesus</i> in this incidence? Vs. 2 2. Why do you think <i>Mark placed this incidence here, right after Jesus proclaimed that He is the Lord of Sabbath</i> in Chapter 2? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To extend on the thought from yesterday's devotion, what is the true meaning of Sabbath? 3. One of <i>the only two times where Mark recorded Jesus' emotion of anger is in Vs.5</i>. Why was Jesus angry at the people? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on your daily life and your "religious" life, do you sometimes have your priority wrong? What should be the correct priority?
Wednesday (Jan. 16)	<p>Scripture: Mark 3:7-12</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This was <i>certainly not a run-away for Jesus, for many still followed Him</i>. Why did Jesus withdraw to the lake? Vs. 7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the <i>key focus of Jesus ministry</i> at this time? Would it be <i>more effective</i> in the city or beside the lake? 2. Why did <i>Jesus command the evil spirits not to tell His true identity</i>? Vs. 12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the Son of God, Jesus demonstrated a <i>full obedience to God's timing</i>. It is also for us to reflect on our obedience to God's timing in our daily life and ministry. Are we sometimes too impatient to wait? • In addition to God's timing, do we know <i>God's purpose</i> for our life and His mission for us at this particular stage of our lives?(Rom. 12:2)

¹ Ref. 1Samuel 21:1-6

² It is extremely important that believers in Christ keep a weekly Sabbath, a meaningful and pleasing Sabbath to the LORD. A Sabbath is NOT just a concept, but it is a time of rest/renewal and away of being "in time/tune" with God. Remember these components when keeping your Sabbath: Sabbath As Rest, As Refreshment, As Receptivity, As Release, and As Refocusing (Dr. D. Sherbino, Spiritual Formation, Fall 2007).

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<p>Thursday (Jan.17)</p>	<p>Scripture: Mark 3:13-19</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is <i>the reason that Jesus appointed</i> the twelve disciples? Vs. 14, 15 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the other hand, what is <i>the key of being a disciple of Jesus?</i> 2. How did Jesus select the disciples? Vs. 13 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The two key words here are “called” and “came”. Can this apply to our commitment to Jesus? 3. Whose names <i>got changed by Jesus through this process?</i> What were the names Jesus gave to them? Vs. 16,17 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the meanings of these names?⁴ What would you like Jesus to call you?
<p>Friday (Jan.18)</p>	<p>Scripture: Mark 3:20-30</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why were <i>Jesus and his disciples not able to eat?</i> Vs.20 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We can see the urgency that Jesus sees his ministry. Do we have the same urgency to serve others and to spread the good news? 2. What does <i>Jesus mean by blasphemes against the Holy Spirit?</i> Vs.29 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the role of Holy Spirit? (Eph. 1:13)⁵ • What is the character of a person who receives Holy Spirit? (Gal. 5:18, 22-23)
<p>Saturday (Jan.19)</p>	<p>Scripture: Mark 3:31-35</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who are <i>Jesus calling</i> “His mother and brother”? Why?⁶ Vs.35 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you called other Christians “brothers” or “sisters”, do you mean genetically or spiritually? 2. What does <i>it mean to be acknowledged</i> by Jesus as His family? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It seems to be commitment and effort on our side, in order to be in God’s family. Have you thought about the price Jesus paid for you and me? In order that, we can have the opportunity to be part of God’s family.
<p>Sunday (Jan.20)</p>	<p>Scripture: Psalm 37: 10-17</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is <i>God’s promise to the meek?</i> Vs.11 2. What is <i>one of God’s character described here?</i> Vs.17 3. How is it “<i>better the little that the righteous have than the wealth of many wicked?</i>”? Vs.16 4. Reflect on Vs.4-5, repeat these two verses as a prayer.

⁴ Jesus changed Simon’s name to Peter because of his faith. (Mat. 16:18) The name “son of thunder” is most likely describing the short temper of James and John.

⁵ Here Jesus is talking about the refusal of salvation by denying Jesus’ identity as the son of God, therefore his death and resurrection.

⁶ Note that Jesus did not deny his own mother and brother. However, in addition, he declared the qualification of whom He will acknowledge as His spiritual family in the kingdom of God. (Mat. 7:21-23)

⁷ We rarely think about it, but when we acknowledge our brothers and sisters in Christ, we are affirming our own status in God’s family. Our fellowship with others affirms the kingdom of God.