

Weekly Study Guide

The Week of April 21, 2013

Daily Readings

Monday	John 20:19-23	Tuesday	John 20:34-31	Wednesday	Colossians 1:24-29
Thursday	Galatians 6:17	Friday	2 Corinthians 11:22-30	Saturday	2 Corinthians 12:1-10

My notes on this week's readings...

Next Week in Worship

Next week's message: *Extra-Ordinary*

Next week's readings: John 21:1-19

Sometimes the stories in the Bible can seem so extraordinary. Very often we believe that we can only experience God in special or unusual moments. But the truth is that God meets us powerfully in the ordinary things of life. Join us next Sunday as we learn from the Bible to meet and follow Jesus in the regular things of life.



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Group Discussion

Connect	Today's study explores our reactions to setbacks and defeats. How do you think you tend to react to discouragement?
Learn	<p>Read John 20:24-29. Jesus had appeared to his disciples before this, but Thomas was not there. In this scene, Thomas famously objects, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands...I will not believe."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thomas assumes that even the risen Jesus would still have the wounds of crucifixion. Do you think that's what you would have expected if that had been you?• Jesus had shown his wounds to the disciples previously (v. 20), and he even offers to let Thomas touch them. Do you think this would have been hard for Jesus? <p>The apostle Paul followed the example of Jesus, and he was very open about the wounds or scars he acquired for the sake of following Jesus. Read Colossians 1:24 and Galatians 6:17 for two examples.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Based on these two verses, how would you say that Paul understood the meaning of the opposition and pain he experienced in his calling?• How do you think people tend to interpret or understand the opposition or even suffering they experience? <p>Consider the discouraging and challenging experiences you have had in life and how you share them or keep them to yourself. For another Biblical example, you can read 2 Corinthians 11:22-30 and 12:1-10.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do you ever think "If I were really faithful, God would make my life easier"? What do these verses say about that?• Is it hard to believe that God's power is revealed in our weakness?• What makes it hard to share your defeats with others?• What can be gained from sharing these hard time with others?
Apply	<p>Don't be afraid to encounter opposition for your faithfulness to Christ. It's probably a sign that you're on the right path!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do you need to be encouraged in a hard time right now?• Do you have a story of coming through something hard that God could use in someone else's life?
Pray	<p>It's good to remember the many Christians around the world who face dangerous persecution for their faith. Pray for strength and protection for them and for their witness. (If you want to learn more about persecuted Christians, you can visit the website for Voice of the Martyrs at www.persecution.com.)</p>