

Week of May 10, 2009
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Monday

1John 3:14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

There is nowhere where faith meets the test like in our personal relationships. You can pretty much fake your faith everywhere else. You can look pretty pious in prayer and worship — no one knows how you are treating your husband or your wife. It's true in the church as well as the home. We often measure our faith by our knowledge, our habits of worship, or our strength against obvious temptations. But God measures our faith by the way we love one another, bear with one another, and speak to and about one another.

Tuesday

Eph. 4:29 Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.

“You can make things better or you can make things worse.” It's a mantra around our house. The words you use at times of stress are extremely important. The tone of voice you use to express your thoughts is tremendously important. Even the timing of our words can be pivotal. “Unwholesome” is not an adjective describing curse words or swearing, rather any word that makes things worse. Husband/wife, your words may be making the situation worse. Church member, your words can heal or hurt. Let the Holy Spirit make a difference in your words.

Wednesday

Gal. 6:2 Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.

Bearing one another's burdens is a call to believers in the church and in their home. Being sensitive to the needs and the hurts of others is especially important in times of stress. Such is made more difficult when you too may be under stress. It will take humility, prayer, and deliberate yielding to the Holy Spirit for you to support your spouse, your church leaders, and your fellow believers when times are difficult, but this is the call of God upon your life. This is the way of the cross and of Christ: putting aside my personal agenda, taking up the burden of others.

Thursday

Rom. 4:20-21 Yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.

Belief is easy when there is no need to *believe*: when economic times are good, when health is stable, when the children are tucked into bed safe and sound. But God's promises are not made for such times, instead they are given for times like these: when the world is in turmoil, personal income is challenged, when tensions are high, or health is waning. Believing the promises of God's grace and presence can really make a difference now. Believing strengthens your heart, lightens your load, and changes your attitude. “Lord, I believe — help my unbelief.” (Mark 9:24)

Friday

1Th. 5:11 Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

Assurance of love, the stability of relationships, and the integrity of promise are the things that couples need most in times of stress. Much is the same for relationships within the church. When times are tough, it is essential to make sure that words spoken are encouraging words. It is the time to express love more openly and often. These are days to draw near to one another and renew commitments of family and fellowship. This is the time to be trusting and trust worthy. Take care to pour healing, not hurt into the wounds of others — at home and in the church.