

December 16

Colossians 1:15-23

In these verses, Paul writes about the supremacy of Christ.

Question to Consider:

What does it mean to you that Jesus is “the image of the invisible God?”

Prayer:

Almighty God, you are the Lord of heaven and earth and I worship you. I thank you that you revealed yourself to us in the best way possible, by becoming a human being. In the person of Jesus we see you, and I give thanks for that. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

December 17

1 Timothy 6:3-10

In this passage, Paul writes about the power money can have over us.

Question to Consider:

What is your view of money? If Paul were to use you as an illustration, would he write about you as one who has a spiritually healthy view of money, or as one who has let money take control in potentially harmful ways? Be honest.

Prayer:

Loving God, I live in a culture that seems at times to be driven by money and materialism, so it is easy to give into the power of money. Please guide me and strengthen me to use money in a healthy way – as a tool that can be used for good when its use is guided by you. In the name of Jesus I pray, Amen.

December 18

Philemon 4-12

In this shortest of Paul’s letters, he encourages a new way of seeing another person – in this case, a slave.

Question to Consider:

Paul was urging Philemon to view his slave, Onesimus, in a new way – as a brother in Christ. In Paul’s day, that would have been a huge step. Since we all have prejudices of one kind or another, which person (or group) is most difficult for you to view as a brother or sister in Christ?

Prayer:

Gracious God, I try to love as Jesus loves, but I still struggle, especially with *(name the person or group)*. Help me to be a person of love and compassion and help me to see others as you do. In the name of Christ I pray, Amen.

December 19

Hebrews 11:1-23

In this passage, the writer names several people of faith who did extraordinary things for the Lord.

Question to Consider:

As you read through this list, who stands out the most for you? Why do you suppose that is the case?

Prayer:

Merciful God, these people of faith were just like me – they were *people*. But, they let you use them in extraordinary ways. I pray that I will be just as willing to let you use me. Use me, Lord, to your service and glory. In the name of Jesus I pray, Amen.

December 20

Hebrews 12:1-3

This short passage follows yesterday's longer reading. In these verses, we are encouraged to let those great people of faith inspire us.

Question to Consider:

The "great cloud of witnesses" includes the people mentioned in Hebrews chapter 11, but it also includes people today. Think of the people in your life of faith. Who inspires you?

Prayer:

Father God, I thank you for the people of faith who inspire me in my walk with you. I thank you for what they have accomplished and for their willingness to be used by you. I pray that I am just as willing and that – with your help – my life might someday be an inspiration for someone else. I pray in Jesus' name, Amen.