

Spiritual and Practical Exercises

(for the week of August 21)

1. Reflect on your own baptism - in light of today's sermon notes; its symbolism of the ceaseless flow of God's grace - God's grace in general and particularly God's grace in Jesus, how He came and lived and taught and died for you and your child, and rose from the grave to assure us of everlasting life.
2. If you have children, to what "god" have you devoted them? To what "god" do you dedicate them each day by the values you live, the words you say, the attitudes you embody?
3. Whenever you give a gift to your child, share with them that they are indeed a precious gift from God to you. Speak often words of appreciation and affirmation to your child.
4. Reflect on the story of the three visitors to Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 18); note again Abraham and Sarah's graciousness and kindness toward strangers, as well as their commitment to the covenant with God. Where do you feel that you are on the continuum that Abraham and Sarah model: (A) deeply committed to Christ and the Christian faith and life and (B) gracious and hospitable toward others who are of a different faith or of a different belief system.
5. Extend the gift of hospitality this week in some way; invite someone over for dinner; take someone out to lunch, write a note, call someone you haven't spoken to in awhile, do a kind act for a stranger, pay the toll for the person in the car behind you the next time you go through a toll booth.
6. Reverence for God means I am willing to sacrifice some things to ensure that I am honoring God in my life, perhaps the following:
 - a. Things I know that are wrong, such as...
 - b. Things I know are less than God's best for me or my family, such as...
 - c. Perhaps some of my dreams for God's dreams.
7. If you could be God for one day, what would you want more than anything else from you or His child?
8. Spend 10 minutes each day this week with the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) and The Beatitudes (Matthew 5); they combine reverence and love in a beautiful way.
9. Think of two ways in your daily life that you can "sacrifice" the less important for the really important.
10. If you have children, think of a couple of new ways that you can intentionally help them grow in the Christian faith, remembering that they will likely model after you.