

STUDY GUIDE FOR THE WEEK OF: March 9, 2008

THE NEXT CHAPTER

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WEEK 7 OF THE SERIES

“CORE VALUE: CELEBRATION”

Scripture

Psalms 100:1-2

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing.”

Philippians 4:4

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice!

Psalms 89:1-2 & 15-18

I will sing of the LORD's great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations. I will declare that your love stands firm forever, that you established your faithfulness in heaven itself.

Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, O LORD. They rejoice in your name all day long; they exult in your righteousness. For you are their glory and strength, and by your favor you exalt our horn. Indeed, our shield belongs to the LORD, our king to the Holy One of Israel.

Study Notes

This week's Core Value is **Celebration**: Christ lavishes grace on us by his Spirit, releasing us from hopelessness and bringing us into abundant life. So, as a grateful Christian community, we pray, study Scripture, sing, and serve to celebrate God's goodness. We seek to rejoice in all aspects of our life, whether in work or in play. We want our life together to be marked by joy.

If you haven't been around Bidwell it doesn't take too long to figure out that we like parties. And that's a good thing. We want a spirit of joy to be everywhere. But we intentionally wrote the core value to talk about all of life, the good, the bad and the ugly. What does it mean to celebrate God even in the mundane parts of life—doing laundry, paying bills, waiting at the post office, even working in a dead-end job. Celebration is an important value here too, and that's where the spiritual disciplines come in. They give us the means to experience grace in ALL moments

Questions For Further Reflection and Small Group Discussion

1. Psalm 89:15 says “blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you.” That is, you're on the right road when you have learned how to worship. In what ways are you learning how to worship? How are you learning to worship God especially in the mundane moments? How are you learning to worship God outside of Sunday?
2. Which of the spiritual disciplines do you find most helpful for you right now? Which one do you want to practice so that you can live a life of worship?
3. For what are you most thankful for right now?
4. What do you think Paul means by “rejoice always?” What does that look like? Is Paul exaggerating or is he serious? How might that look in your life?