

dependent – on Jesus and His saving work on the cross, the life He’s given us through His resurrection, on the Father, a loving God who provides for us and cares for us, and on the Holy Spirit who has promised to dwell within us, to guide us, lead us, and provide the faith we need. How does that dependence look for you in your life? How can you express that dependence on the Lord (and not on yourself)? Know that you have a God who loves you deeply and is here for you, providing you everything you need.

Friday — “Forgiveness”

Read Ephesians 4:32. As we’ve been talking about relationship and walls throughout the week, one of the keys to breaking down walls and restoring relationships is forgiveness. Matthew West sings a song by that very title, “Forgiveness,” that speaks to what this amazing gift from God is that we are blessed to have received and what we are invited to share with others – that which is impossible by human standards but by the power of God at work in us and through us can be shared and given. Here is the link if you have the ability to watch and listen, you will be encouraged by it: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h1Lu5udXEZl&spfreload=10>.

Saturday – The Good Shepherd

Read 1 Peter 2:25. Last Sunday as we were talking about relationships, we also used several references to Jesus as the Good Shepherd throughout the worship services. This imagery, while the reality of it may be a bit foreign to most of us (we’re familiar with pictures and stories about sheep and shepherds but not much firsthand experience...), there is a definite relationship that Jesus leans on to lift up the love He, as our Good Shepherd, has for us as His people, His sheep. We are the ones who seem to be constantly straying, getting lost, getting into trouble, needing someone to protect us and watch over us and provide for us. We have Jesus who is (2:25) “the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls” who is here for us always. Bask in those images and promises that Jesus has given to us of His being our Good Shepherd. If you have time, read Psalm 23 and also all of John 10 to get more of a flavor of what that truly means to have Jesus as our Good Shepherd, an image and metaphor that Peter only hints at here. And let those powerful words give you peace!

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This weeks Bring it Home devotions were written by Pastor Glen Schlecht. This publication may be reproduced and shared.



*Devotions for
the week of
May 7, 2017*

WHAT NOW?

1. First, think about what walls you have put up that are hindering some of the relationships in your life. Then, pray about those relationships and ask the Lord to help in the dismantling of those walls and to strengthen those relationships.
2. Continue with the “Love Assignment” of 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. We’re now at week 12 of 16 – “love always protects.” How can you practice love by protecting this week? Let Jesus’ Love protect you and also work through you in powerful and protecting ways this week!

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Monday — Resurrection Realities

For the third week of our *Resurrection Realities* series, we find ourselves thinking about relationships and walls in our lives. These were matters that the disciple Peter was all too familiar with – both on the positive end and on the negative end of those spectrums. As he wrote his letter to his fellow believers in 1 Peter, he was helping them to deal with the harsh realities of life they were experiencing when it came to relationships and walls in front of them. We continue to ask how the reality of Jesus' resurrection from the dead can help us face and deal with the relationships and walls in our lives today? As I've been having you do over the past several weeks, I want to start our week by giving you the opportunity to reflect on these verses from 1 Peter we looked at yesterday which I preached on. As you read these verses, I want you to reflect on what God has to say to you and the life you are leading right now. How does the Lord encourage you in these verses? Where are you challenged? What's helpful? What's comforting? What's hard? What insights stand out for you? As always I would love to hear some of those reflections and if you're open to it, please email me at gschlecht@ImmanuelLoveland.org. With that, read and reflect on 1 Peter 2:19-25.

Tuesday — Your Relationships

I'd like to have you read a couple of verses just prior to the ones we focused on Sunday as Peter is addressing specifically the relationship between slaves and masters. While we don't have slaves and masters in our lives today, as you read these verses, I'd like for you to listen to what Peter and our Lord have to say with regard to other relationships in your life – be they employer/employee, parent/child, husband/wife, teacher/student, or friend. Read 1 Peter 2:13-18. Did you notice what Peter put out there as the basis for why he's calling for submission like this? And also what he sees as the desired results? We are called as Christians to submit ourselves to those in authority over us – regardless of the realm or the relationship – not for their sake or for our sake but rather, for the Lord's sake. It is on the basis of our faith and our relationship with our Lord that our behavior is to be governed. Why? As Peter puts it, to "silence the ignorant talk of foolish men." As we live our lives as servants of God, we point back to Him as the basis for our lives. It is God who provides what we need and who can see us through the difficulties we may face. Acting and speaking in a loving and respectful way flies in the face of what most expect when persecution or hardship comes. And as we let our faith lead the way, heads and hearts can be turned – to the Author and Giver of our faith. It's not easy but as we strive to live that out, we have the Lord and His Spirit in our hearts to help and guide us, and we also have one another for mutual support, encouragement, and prayer.

Wednesday — Walls

On Sunday we were thinking about some of the walls in our lives. Take some time again today to do that – what are some of those walls that

get erected in your relationships that separate you from others? Read 1 Peter 2:17-20. Walls can get erected for any number of reasons – just and unjust reasons. We can feel slighted in the workplace or that we're not being treated fairly by our boss or co-workers or parents or friends. We can feel bullied or forgotten or overlooked or abused. When those kinds of situations come up, what tends to be our natural reaction? We want to fight back, don't we? Or make it right? Or be mean right back to the person who has hurt us. Peter (and our Lord) are not necessarily promoting the doormat approach to living, that we're just supposed to let everyone walk all over us. So how, then, are we to act? When there are injustices, we certainly should address them. But how? Verse 17 gives us a powerful four-pack of direction: 1) Show proper respect to everyone; 2) Love the brotherhood of believers; 3) Fear God; and 4) Honor the king. Respect, love, fear, and honor. And all of these things flow out of faith, out of our relationship to our Lord and aren't simply "good living" principles. As we know our Lord's love for us and all that He has done for us and given to us, we in turn can share that same love as we live out our faith and live out our lives. The relationships we have with the people around us, including those in authority over us, is important. It's not about building walls or holding the power or maintaining grudges or getting the upper hand. It's about living together in the reality of Jesus' resurrection, knowing that He life is the same life we've been given. That is a life filled with love, with hope, and with a future. How can we help others in our lives to see and know and eventually believe in Jesus? It starts with taking down walls through respect, love, fear, and honor, and working on the relationships with which we've been blessed.

Thursday — Jesus' Relationship and Dependence

As you read today's Scripture passages, listen for where Jesus was dependent. Read 1 Peter 2:22-25. We know Jesus was perfect and without sin. Yet what He received was horrific by way of abuse and pain and insults. His perfect response? No retaliation, no threats. Why? Because He knew the purpose of it all – He was headed to a cross to deal with this huge wall that had been erected which was impossible for us to scale, get around, or dig under. His mission was to come into the world He created, live the perfect, sinless life, and then be the sacrifice for sins that we could not be. So He willingly endured the suffering and the pain in order to bring us back into a living relationship with Himself. But while this was His purpose, it was not an easy path to travel. We heard Him cry out to His Father in the Garden of Gethsemane that if it was possible, to take the suffering away and go another route – yet, Jesus said, "Not my will but Yours be done, Father." And here, as Peter replays some of that suffering, did you notice where His dependence was found? It wasn't in the governing authorities but He entrusted Himself to His Father in heaven. Even for Jesus it was a faith dependent life that He lived. For us, we will never endure suffering or pain to the extent that Jesus did but it is because Jesus did what He did that we can put our full confidence and trust in Him. Our lives also must be faith