

Growing Deeper

Hollow: Reclaiming our heart, our life

Week One: Wasted Struggles

Galatians 1:11-24

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. Do you remember the song of Olivia Newton John called, “Have You Never Been Mellow?” No worries if not; it’s from 1975! But, the lyrics are worth remembering; among them: “There was a time when I was in a hurry as you are/ I was like you/ There was a day when I just had to tell my point of view/ I was like you/ Now I don’t mean to make you frown/ No, I just want you to slow down.” Have you ever been mellow? Have you ever been vulnerable? Have you ever let someone else be strong (for you)? Why is that important?
2. Read Galatians 1:1-10. Do you think most people really know the “true you,” or only the “you” you allow them to see; do you sometimes try to be something that you’re not? How many people have you allowed to get close enough to know the real you?
3. Jesus once said to His disciples, “Have I been with you so long and still you do not know me?” Sometimes people only see the “you” they want to see. What kind of Savior did the disciples want Jesus to be?
4. Read Matthew 16:21-23. Explain what happened. Why was it important for Jesus to reveal His “true mission” to His disciples? What reason did Jesus give for Peter’s response to His vulnerability? How was Peter a stumbling block?
5. Someone has said, “The heart wants what the heart wants.” Peter no doubt thought he was acting in Jesus’ best interest. Has anyone ever tried to get you to do, or to be something that you are not? Did you immediately resist or accept their expectations, at least for a while?
6. What’s the danger of becoming hollow? ...i.e. (To compromise your true self for the sake of acceptance.)
7. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for the courage of your convictions and for the ability to be the person God has gifted you to become.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

8. Read Galatians 1:11-24. What do we know about Paul before He accepted Jesus Christ?
9. Read of his conversion in Acts 9:1-9. Was Paul seeking Jesus when he became a believer? Why do you think God chose Paul as His chief spokesman rather than someone who already believed?
10. Read 1 Timothy 1:15-17. How did Paul feel about his past life before coming to faith? Why was he so willing to share it?

11. Have you always believed in Jesus? If you were raised in the faith, was there a time in life when your faith became more authentic and important to you? Explain.
12. If someone were to ask you, “Why do you believe in Jesus?” what answer would you give?
13. Why is authenticity so important in relationships? What’s the key(s) to creating a safe place for someone to be authentic?
14. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray to be a better listener, not only to hear what is said, but also to create an atmosphere of trust for people to share their hurts and disappointments in life.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three

15. After his conversion Paul said, “He did not consult any man, nor go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before he was.” Why do you think he said that?
16. What role do others play in the development of our faith?
17. Despite the need for instruction, encouragement and mentoring, what else is needed for an individual Christian to grow in personal faith?
18. Read Psalm 46:10-11 and Matthew 6:5-8. What advice does Scripture give for developing a deeper personal faith?
19. How would you describe false piety? Why is it so harmful when it comes to sharing faith?
20. Paul seemed more than willing to talk of his misguided past life before Jesus. Why is that helpful to us? What are the implications for our testimony?
21. Conclude your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for greater humility as a Christian and for other Christians to be less judgmental of those who do not yet believe.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four

22. We’ve discussed how an inauthentic life is hazardous to our Christian testimony. How is it hazardous to us?
23. What happens when you try to be something you are not?

24. Read Philippians 3:4-11. Did Paul have reason to brag about his accomplishments? Why didn't he?
25. How would you define a truly great person? Do you know anyone besides Jesus who inspires you in life? Who and why?
26. Read Luke 18:9-14. What is the lesson of that story?
27. What do you think is the best way to help someone become more authentic and less pretentious in life?
28. End your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray to become a more sincere and accepting Christian who reflects the love of Jesus to all people.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five

29. Read Galatians 1:24. What was the reason Paul mentioned that caused people to praise God?
30. Who are you praying for to come to saving faith? (You don't have to mention their name... but describe how you know them.)
31. Take a moment and pray for them now, and for more opportunities for you to engage them in an authentic and gracious witness.
32. How often in the course of a week do you have a conversation about faith with other people? Is having such a conversation something you look forward to, or try to avoid?
33. Why is listening to others as important (or more important) than talking about your own life and your own faith journey?
34. What single greatest struggle in life has the Lord helped you overcome? How does that struggle still serve a useful purpose in your life today?
35. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for someone you know who is in the midst of a life-changing struggle. Write their name down and continue to pray for them each day this week.