



WINTER DEVOTIONAL

CHI ALPHA CAMPUS MINISTRIES
Sam Houston State University

2020



Welcome!

CHI ALPHA SHSU | FALL 2020

Welcome to the winter devotional! We are so excited that you have decided to dive into the stories of numerous staff, interns, and fellow student leaders.

We hope you hunger for Jesus as you finish each daily letter. We also hope that you may find yourself relating to anyone in the letters. Our desire is to encourage a culture of growth and fellowship through the wisdom and sharing of testimonies from friends around us.

Whether it is with your small group, company group, or on your own... read a devotional a day and go through the reflection questions!

Thank you.

Also wants to share credit to not only our writers, but to those who helped make this possible!

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"A Story On Forgiveness"

I am amazed at how God has forgiven me and made me into the man I am today. I was once lost in my selfishness, hurt and broken, but then Jesus came into my heart and made me a new creation. One that was meant for His glory and purpose.

I am grateful that the entire trajectory of my life shifted from one that was bound to being lost forever, to one that has a Father and a King who is good, wise, and worthy of all my praise and devotion. I have been redeemed and I am being formed more and more into the image of Christ. The "old" Trevor has gone and a new "Trevor" is becoming the vessel worthy for his Lord. Praise God for this process of sanctification and the knowledge that I am being made to look more like my eternal savior!

However, I find that there are some things from the old "me" that persist, some bad habits and attitudes for sure, some bad memories as well; things that I wish weren't there but they are. Even though I believe these things have been handed over to God, life has a way of kicking my bucket and revealing the acidic sediment that has settled at the bottom of my heart.

The bad habits and attitudes are being dealt with by the Holy Spirit and with prayer and by asking God for forgiveness for them.

But what do I do with these bad memories? I think of my own story and my own need to forgive. My father decided to leave my mother while she was pregnant with me and wanted nothing to do with us. The pain from that alone has been something to walk through with Jesus.

It did however, leave room for my mom to get married to a man named Randy. At first, Randy was a kind man to my mom and to my older brother and I. He and my mom had four children together and I am grateful to God and to Randy for my four younger siblings.

My mom has done a wonderful job by not letting us know who her favorite is, even though I know it's me deep down. But with Randy, there was a clear difference in his affection for them over my older brother and myself.

I genuinely believe he tried his best to raise us, but we would often be the targets of his anger and frustration. There is one time that is still vivid in my mind.

I had accidentally tripped my little brother and Randy thought I had done it on purpose. He grabbed me by my throat and held me off the ground screaming at me. There were many, many other moments like this that had occurred, this time I had felt innocent and incredibly misunderstood.

Life was miserable and I can remember as a child wishing that he would die in a car accident on the way home from work. My mom finally had enough and filed for divorce. It was painful, messy and yet, as terrible as divorce is, I believe it was one of the best things that ever happened to my family and me.

Years of counseling were good, but it was while conversing with God that I felt a real and clear need to forgive Randy. It was my junior year, my first year as a XA small group leader, that I called Randy and told him that God loved him and I forgave him. To be clear, it wasn't an invitation for him to be my dad again, but I said what I needed to say.

I don't know if he even remembered it the next day, as I'm fairly sure he was drunk whenever I called him. About three years ago, he died in his pain and depression. However, I knew that I had genuinely forgiven him and had said what I needed to say.

My family is still walking through their own grief and pain, but I know I forgave him and can trust Jesus to lead me into a future that is very different from my past. There are still moments of pain and hurt that arise at odd moments, but it is something that I am able to go to Jesus with and ask him to redeem my mind and heal my pain.

My forgiving Randy may have not meant anything to him, but it meant everything to me. Jesus said, "For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Thank you Jesus for a God who forgives us and leads us through forgiving others!

Has someone done something to hurt you, which requires forgiveness?

Maybe you can't think of a recent hurt. What will you do if someone wrongs you in the future?

Read: Matthew 5:7, Matthew 6:14-15, Matthew 18:21-35, Luke 23:34



**Trevor
Morvant**

Chi Alpha SHSU Staff

"If He's Not Lord of All, He's Not Lord at All"

When I was starting my third year of college, I had just finished serving my second summer at camp. I was about to begin my first year of small group leading, and I stood firmly in the belief that Jesus Christ was Lord of my life. That belief wasn't necessarily false, but Jesus was 100% my savior but only about 95% my Lord. I was more focused on the outward good things that made me look more Christian than having a heart sold out for Jesus.

Let's read Matthew 22:34-40. The Pharisees assume they have tricked Jesus and the smartest one asks a simple question that is met with a beautiful answer. They ask, "Which command in the law is the greatest?" Little did they know that there is not one simple answer. Jesus responds with, "Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, all of your soul, and all of your mind." Jesus asks us, invites us, to love Him with 100% of ourselves.

Truth is, I didn't think I could trust God with my future. My plan was to become a marine biologist who specializes in conservation. That really isn't a bad career path, at least that's what I thought. I was helping the planet that God created. As I sat in my biology classes day after day, I became miserable because I knew that Jesus was directing me to lay down my career path. Instead of listening, I decided to ignore it and pretend that the good I was doing in other areas made up for it. I tried volunteering at church more in hopes that would make up for that 5% I didn't want God to have.

The thing is, if Jesus isn't Lord of all, He's not our Lord at all. I finally came to a place of pure brokenness. If I wanted to love God with all of my heart, soul, and mind, and actually mean it, I needed to lay down my future. Loving God with all of ourselves is not just the good Christian thing to do, it is the only Christian thing to do. Christ didn't die on the cross for us to give Him only our heart and soul, but not our mind, or any variation of that. He died so we can be in full relationship and fully in love with Him.

Lord isn't a name of Jesus, it is the title He is asking that we give him. But when we invite Him to be Lord we must give over every aspect of our lives. Serving Jesus, doing the good things that make us look like a good Christian, can never replace knowing and loving Him.

Practically speaking, what does loving God with your heart, soul, and mind look like?

Is there something you are not wanting to entrust Jesus with? What would it take for you to trust Him fully as Lord?



*Emily
McCollum*

Chi Alpha SHSU Intern

"Self-Produced Grief"

As I'm writing this, my home is under quarantine. My high-risk diabetic husband has contracted COVID-19 and I'm 5 weeks pregnant. I am sitting in our bedroom alone, exhausted, uncomfortable, lonely, and afraid of miscarrying my first pregnancy and fear of losing my husband after understanding the numerous complications he could potentially have. Call me dramatic, but I'm on the edge, feeling like I could lose it all at once. Was God so good to give me a negative, but also good to give my high-risk husband COVID? I spent this time being told to pray when I'm worried, but I found myself asking others to pray instead because I felt so hurt and disconnected from God. Maybe God would listen to their prayers instead of mine? I instead found myself venting to God for answers, but not giving him a moment to respond. I wanted him to know how I felt -- raw and honest feelings. I feel angry, hurt, ignored, and failed on. Quote "feel". I'll touch on that later.

Here are some things I'm learning about God's goodness and the mental trap of "what ifs". When I go through this with you guys in a live moment, I'm speaking this truth over my life as I am with yours. I hope these thoughts of mine don't discredit my walk or my love for God. I believe we've all been hurt by someone we deeply love and it is only through revelation and reconciliation that the relationship grows. Grief is proportional to intimacy. Take every suffering as an opportunity to run away or run towards God. I choose to run towards Him.

"What ifs" are exactly that. They are a mental trap that creates a nest for the enemy to steal, kill, and destroy in (John 10:10). Just as the enemy can easily take hold of our insecurities, fears, and sins to multiply -- he can build a nest on "what ifs" and multiply those thoughts. Have you ever had gnats in your house? It's hard to get rid of them and you don't always know what's causing them, but you realize soon enough that they start to multiply and become pesky things -- Just like these thoughts. "What if" thoughts are a manifestation of our lack of trust with God. They bring unnecessary pain, and it creates a wrong assumption of God's character. (James 1:6) That is why it is so important to keep our thoughts captive to the character of God, so our mind doesn't work against him. (2 Corinthians 10:5)

Second and lastly, my feelings do not dictate or change God's unwavering character. My feelings change on the regular, but God doesn't wake up the next day feeling differently about you. He loves me (Romans 8:39) and walks with me in the darkest valleys (Psalms 23:4). My sufferings are not an act of aggression from God for something I've done. Even if all my "worst-case-scenarios" come to life -- He is still a good, loving, and a trustworthy Father. There is a wonderful poem that I will leave to finish this for you to memorize and pray over.

"He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater, He sendeth more strength when the labors increase; To added afflictions He addeth His mercy, To multiplied trials, His multiplied peace. When we have exhausted our store of endurance, When our strength has failed ere the day is half done, When we reach the end of our hoarded resources, Our Father's full giving is only begun. Fear not that thy need shall exceed His provision, Our God ever yearns His resources to share; Lean hard on the arm everlasting, availing; The Father both thee and thy load will upbear. His love has no limits, His grace has no measure, His power no boundary known unto men; For out of His infinite riches in Jesus. He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again."

Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

What do these verses show about God's character?

**Juana
Barford**



SHSU Chi Alpha Staff

"Discipline: How much I hate it, and How badly I need it"

Before I get too deep into discipline, let me define the word so you know what I mean. Discipline is synonymous with punishment, like disciplining a child when they misbehave. But discipline is also synonymous with self-control, like being disciplined in practice for a performance. I'm using the second definition, not the first.

When I think of discipline (self-control), it comes with bad thoughts of difficult things that just seem pointless in the moment. For example, "Why workout? Am I doing a body builder show soon? I can just stay home." While that statement is technically true, for me at least, it is indicative of a larger heart problem. When I'm unwilling to discipline my body, to exercise control over my body, I actually hurt it more. I would rather care for my body's feelings than its future. This bleeds into other areas of my life where I may feel better for not doing them, but actually hurt myself more by not doing them.

Another example in my life is support raising. I am a full-time missionary, and (surprise!) it's not a well-paid job. I live off of people's generosity, but people can only be generous if they are first asked to be generous. In a way I ask people for money, which is super embarrassing. I would certainly feel better if I never asked anyone for money, but if I do that I miss out on what God has clearly called me to do! I sacrifice my future for my feelings.

Gather friends who will hold you accountable. These need to be people who you trust to value your future higher than your feelings

Spend time with the Holy Spirit

Galatians 5:22-23 lists the Fruits of the Spirit and among those is self-control, aka discipline. How do we grow this fruit? We stay connected to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to develop this fruit in us.

If you're like me and have a hard time sacrificing your feelings for the sake of your future, there's hope! I've learned a few things along the way that have helped me tremendously, even though they hurt horrendously:

*Cody
Rogers*



SHSU Chi Alpha Staff

"The Vine and the Fruit"

Read [John 15:1-8 & Galatians 5:22-23]

This fruit that Jesus is speaking about here in John is a reflection of Godly character. If you're like me, you would look at this fruit and say to yourself "well, that doesn't sound like me" and you would be correct! Jesus is the vine and when we're connected to the vine we will bear the fruit that matches what we're connected to. It doesn't come from us, it's an outward expression of an inward transformation. The transformation being that He made us into a new creation!

But what if you don't produce this fruit? Let's look at how fruit actually grows in nature, and see how this translates to our spiritual fruit:

Reasons vines struggle bearing fruit:

1. too young = immaturity in Christ
2. too much fertilizer = a "feed me" attitude and lack of action
3. no sunlight, being choked out = distractions keeping us away from Jesus
4. pests or disease = unrepented sins or spiritual attacks
5. no pollination = isolation from the community

The remedy for lack of fruit is this: Remain in Him. If you're too young: the Vinedresser will feed you. If you're complacent: the Vinedresser will prune you. If you're being choked out: the Vinedresser will lift you closer.

If you're weighed down by sins: the Vinedresser will cleanse you. If you're isolated: the Vinedresser will uproot you and help you grow.

It all comes from being connected to the vine and remaining connected- this is what it means to abide. [Hebrews 12:11] "No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it."

He only disciplines those He loves, so we need to trust that the Vinedresser knows what He's doing in this season. A plant that produces fruit is one that's been tenderly loved by the one who takes care of it.

If you are seeing a lack of fruit in your life, which one of these do you most identify with?

When those around you see you, do they see the vine you're connected with by the fruit you produce?

If you are seeing this fruit in your life, how can you teach someone else to abide in Christ so that they can produce fruit as well?

*Kalli
Holladay*



SHSU Chi Alpha Staff

"Psalm 133: Love and Laughter Plows Hard Hearts"

Psalm 133 *"1Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! 2It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes! 3It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion! For there the Lord has commanded the blessing, life forevermore."*

When I came to Sam Houston, I was the hardest-hearted individual you could have met. I was under the impression that I did not need God because I was a good person, and thus never tried to learn who God was. At least, that is what I thought. Little did I know, God was fighting tooth and nail to get at my heart of stone. He introduced me to a guy named Joseph that would become my best friend. We met the summer before my freshman year because we were both in marching band at Sam Houston.

He started talking to me first and we quickly hit it off and started spending all of our free time together. Every time we were hanging out, it was just laughter. Endless joke telling and stories. We had a genuine friendship which was something that I had not ever really experienced. Through this incredible friendship, I could tell that something about him was different.

However, it was not until school started and he invited me to Chi Alpha that it really clicked. Joseph's belief in Jesus made him who he was. Unfortunately, my heart was not ready to share in that belief just yet, and I spent the whole first semester apart from the Lord. Yet through that entire semester, God revealed Himself to me through the love of a great friend.

Every time I was with Joseph, God was pouring out His love for me through him, and I had no idea. When the next semester had started, and I had just spent the prior winter break crying because I had no friends back home, God spoke and said, "I am still here. I have never left you nor forsaken you."

That only happened because of the love and laughter that I had shared with Joseph. My heart had gradually been broken up by the good and pleasant unity in which I had dwelled in with Joseph. That unity and fellowship abounds in our lives to help us see who Christ really is, because we are all finite expressions of an infinite personality. And that unity flows from us, to others, just like the oil flowed down Aaron's robes. And just like the dew of Mt. Hermon which gives life to the fields on which it rests, we give life to each other when we love and cherish our friendships. John 13:35 says, "By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." We cannot pass up the little moments of truly living life together and truly showing our love for one another.

Do you spend the necessary time with the people around you to love on them and laugh with them that their hard hearts would come to be made soft to the Gospel of Jesus?

What are some ways that you can show your love for your brothers and sisters in Christ around you and help to soften their hearts?



**Cody
Hoffman**

SHSU Chi Alpha Intern

Redemption: "The Reaction of Mercy Imparted"

I saw in the mirror an eighteen-year-old girl, pondering God with thoughts of "Was it really meant to be this way?" I had found myself in a lengthy romantic relationship, in which my selfish decisions and desires had led me to. My character was deteriorating, and I was unrecognizably worn from the sins of pride, rebellion, and sexual immorality in which I had allowed the enemy a foothold. All I could do was simply ask "Why God? Was it really meant to be this way?"

James 1:15 – "then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death" (ESV)

There is a prominent cultural idea that God Himself brings us into destructive situations. However, we understand through James that so often it is our own desires that birth sin, thus leading us to make decisions apart from God. It is OUR own fleshly decisions that lead us into circumstances where we find ourselves apart from what God really intended for us.

The Lord desires for us to live righteously. Out of His complete goodness, He wants to spare us from OUR choices along with the destruction, humiliation, and shame that come with them. As I lay on the bedroom floor of my childhood home, I remember the distress I found myself in. God so lovingly revealed to me "No child. It was not meant to be this way." The situation I had walked into was indeed apart from God's desire for my life, but out of His loving kindness, He did not leave me there.

The Lord offered me redemption. He knew the choices I had made and the selfish motives behind them and still He loved me. He offered me this unconceivable redemption. Despite our choices, God still wants to redeem us.

Isaiah 44:22- "I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions, and like a cloud, your sins. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you."

It is a simple call. "Return to Me." There will be sacrifices to be made. We may need to lay relationships down, walk away from sinful lifestyles, or give up our self-motives that are hindering the work of the Holy Spirit. Whatever the circumstance, there will be sacrifices to be made. Jesus, as he hung on the cross, gave the ultimate sacrifice of His very life. However, the Good News is that He did not stay on that cross! When we sacrifice things for God, it will be painful or else it is not a true sacrifice. However, God promises us that the hurt will not last. We can live in freedom because we are redeemed!

Prayer

Thank you God for your redeeming love. Thank you that though my decisions led me to sin, you still desire to redeem me. I pray that I would walk in obedience knowing that your redemption brings forth new life. Your heart truly is that I live righteously and that I would go and sin no more.

Are there specific situations in your life that are a result of decisions you made? If those decisions were replaced with obedience to God, how might your situation look different?

What might you have to sacrifice to walk in a life of redemption? Are you willing to endure temporary pain for a life of real freedom?

Jamie Jackson



SHSU Chi Alpha student leader

"Sharing Your Joy"

"No one lights a lamp and then hides it or puts it under a basket..."-Luke 11:33

Have you ever had a moment where you learn something that sends you over the moon with joy and excitement, but you aren't able to share it with anyone? I found myself in this exact situation recently when my wife and I discovered she was pregnant! I was so happy, I wanted to tell everyone, but due to the nature of pregnancies not always lasting, we had to keep it a secret. So months went by where I found myself being so full of joy, and yet unable to share it with many people.

I felt like a balloon that was so full I was going to pop! The anticipation of getting past the first trimester was excruciating. Constantly having to stifle my joy and keep it to myself was almost physically painful for me! It is almost as if our joy can not become fully realized until we share it with others! We all have had moments where we get excited about something and can't wait to share it with whoever has a pulse!

I know this happens for my wife when she buys something on sale. She loves to play the game "guess how much I got this for" when she finds a good deal! She's so excited she just has to share her joy with others! The sad thing is we don't as easily share what God has done in our lives. Too often we thank him for it privately but don't share it with anyone else.

If you find life with God mundane read the following passages of scripture. Then take a moment to reflect on them and write down what God is showing you. (Psalm 16:11, Psalm 20:5)

If you are too worried about what others will think, read the following passages. Take a moment to reflect on them and write down what the Lord speaks to you. (Proverbs 29:25, Colossians 3:23-24)

If you feel led, make a commitment that for the next week you will consciously make an effort to share what God is doing in your life with someone else. No matter what God is speaking to you each day, make a choice to share it with someone around you.

I know I do this all the time, I have so many stories of God's goodness and how he fills me with joy, yet I keep it to myself! Why? Either the things of God have become mundane and we no longer fully appreciate his goodness, or we are afraid to talk about him for fear others will either not understand or will discriminate against us for what we say. Neither of these are good enough excuses to not honor God for what he has done.

Either we have become ungrateful, or care too much about how others think of us. We either need the love and excitement for what God has done, as with having a secret you can't wait to share, or like finding a great deal, see the value in what God has done and celebrate that we received it at such a huge discount.

Salvation was given to us freely, but it cost Christ his life. From today onwards let us dedicate ourselves to expressing the goodness of God to those around us. Let's stop hiding what we have under a basket of fear or ingratitude, and let us show God off to the world!



**Jeff
Danford**

SHSU Chi Alpha Staff

"Light In The Darkness"

Do you ever get those days where you are just so heavy? Like your heart is just weighing you down? Everything just seems like a dark cloud, even though the Sun is shining ever so brightly outside? I have had many of those days. Many of those days of just wanting to feel better. Asking God when this overwhelming sense of pain and darkness will be over.

In July 2018, I was in a severe car accident where I broke 11 bones all at one time, in one instance. I was in a wheelchair and using a walker even before my grandparents. My life was turned upside down. Still to this day, 2 years and 5 months later I ponder when will this be over, or what in the world does it feel to not be in pain. What does it feel to be normal? What does it feel to walk and not hurt? What does it feel like to sit and not have to get up an hour later because sitting has become too painful? Or one of my main thoughts these past two years has been, what does it feel like to not plan all your activities on how you might feel afterwards?

But, God reminds me of the meadow. The meadow was light. The meadow was warm. I do not remember the accident. I do remember walking in a bright, fall feeling meadow. The grass was tall, having the color of wheat, flowing in the soft breeze. On the right side there were pine trees, which definitely had to be the Lord's doing, since He knows that I was born and raised in East Texas my whole life. The footpath I was walking on was worn with light sand starting to show up. I saw myself. I was dressed in a long white dress and my hair was flowing. I have never felt so much peace and rest in my life. In front of me was this bright and massive light that was captivating it all.

What storms are happening in your life at this moment? Family? School? Finances? Relationships?

Are you willing to call out to Jesus?

--Take time to really pray and seek Jesus. Let him be your light in the darkness.--

Then I was back. I was back to reality. Asking Jesus, "Where are you?" Him responding "Emily I am with you and I have never left you."

Jesus is with you. Jesus is with you even in the darkest and bleakest times. All you have to do is call out to him.

Matthew 8:23-27 *23 Then Jesus got into the boat and started across the lake with his disciples. 24 Suddenly, a fierce storm struck the lake, with waves breaking into the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. 25 The disciples went and woke him up, shouting, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!" 26 Jesus responded, "Why are you afraid? You have so little faith!" Then he got up and rebuked the wind and waves, and suddenly there was a great calm. 27 The disciples were amazed. "Who is this man?" they asked. "Even the winds and waves obey him!"*

The storm was raging around the disciples; they did not know which way to go or what to do. But, they called out to Jesus in the storm around them and Jesus calmed it all.

They called out to Jesus. Jesus took the ever darkening storm around them and made it light. There was light in the darkness.

Life has many unexpected things, but in the midst of it, if you are willing to call out to Jesus where you are, Jesus will respond. He will calm the storm around you and the storm in you. His peace surpasses all understanding.



**Emily
Malore**

SHSU Chi Alpha Staff

"The Value of One"

Scripture: [Mark 4:35-5:21]

Following His parables about the seeds and soils, (the seed being the Gospel and the soil being our hearts) we see Jesus go out to practice what He preached. Jesus, fully man and fully God, knew the destination and what it would take to get there far before this moment. He intentionally tells the disciples, "let us go over to the other side" and in doing so, He leaves the crowds behind [4:35-36]. Jesus does this and knows what's about to happen: they would soon encounter a tumultuous storm that caused even veteran fishermen to fear for their lives, and the rejection of a people He wanted to set free. Yet still, Jesus went for this one man. He freed this man of the legion of demons, but He desired to heal all the people- knowing that they didn't want Him, nor did they see their need for freedom.

The demons even begged Him to stay in the area. Why would He allow this? [5:10] He knew what was coming: the heart of the people would soon be revealed. Instead of desiring true freedom in Him, they desired their unclean customs and demanded He leave them [5:17]. There was only one who actually desired to be near to Jesus: the man who was ultimately freed. He sent this freed-man to his own hard-hearted people to be a witness to the power and mercy of God.

Through this one man "all were amazed". Jesus brought his disciples through sea, storm, and rejection for this one man so that the whole region may be saved [5:20]. All of this to sow the seed of the Gospel in one patch of "good soil" that it may bear much fruit [4:20].

Let us also never give up on the "one" The Lord has placed in our lives. The Lord orchestrates storms and rough waters to get you to them. I pray we never forget that we were that "one". That is why Jesus traversed Heaven and Earth, The Cross, Hell, death, and the grave- all to save us that we may go out and tell the world all that The Lord has done for us and the mercy He has had on us.

We do this that all may be amazed and saved, that Jesus may receive the reward of His suffering. May we never forget the value that our Lord Jesus places on the one.

What has the Lord done in your life? What Mercy has He shown you?

Who is the "one" in your life?

The freed-man so loved Jesus and was so grateful for what He had done for Him that he rushed to tell everyone. Are you this grateful for what Jesus has done in your life that you are telling everyone? Why or why not?

**Jake
Holladay**

SHSU Chi Alpha Staff



"Sitting or Standing"

Resting with the Lord is about recovery, refreshment, and renewal. But not all rest is Godly rest or even good rest. There are days when I can watch an entire series on Netflix, sleep in till noon, take another nap an hour later, and yet still be exhausted. During all which I am also being worried about the things on my checklist that are due at 11:59. How can that be? I have not done any form of productivity, acquired enough sleep to technically call hibernation, not spoken to any form of civilization, and yet my body aches, is drained, and now I feel guilty for not washing the dishes. What am I doing wrong? "Think about the things of Heaven, not the things of earth. - Colossians 3:2" I was resting in the way that this world defines as resting, but I was not having that true Godly rest.

With the action of sitting and standing, there is a lack of movement and heavy loaded energy. Even though extremely similar, both acts are vastly different. When someone stands, you still have to hold up all your body weight to keep it standing. This type of sneaky weight is invisible, because one often does not feel it in the moment until they are completely drained or tired.

But when someone sits, the chair, or object they are sitting on, completely holds their weight. That is like our relationship with our Heavenly Father. He is our source of comfort when we are tired, our ultimate weight bearer, and our sense of stability all while He lets us relax.

"Then Jesus said, 'Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light' - Matthew 11:28-30"

By spending that intimate time with the Lord and giving Him everything that we hold, true rest takes place. Read the Bible, pray, meditate, and most importantly, focus on Him and Him alone.

Am I sitting or standing?

Do I rest often?

Am I still carrying all the weight and burden by myself?

Michaela Barroga

SHSU Chi Alpha student leader



"The Furnace"

Daniel 3

One of my favorite stories in the Bible is that of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in Daniel Chapter 3. Their sense of courage, devotion, and steadfastness to the Lord is certainly a model to live by. When King Nebuchadnezzar created a golden idol and demanded that everyone bow down to it, everyone did, except these three, for their king was the one true God.

Filled with rage, King Nebuchadnezzar gave them one last chance to bow down to his idol, but Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego still refused, saying *"King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. 17 If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. 18 But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."* **Daniel 3:16-18.**

What a powerful statement! They boldly believed that God would save them from the furnace, but even if He didn't, they would still proclaim God. To no surprise, King Nebuchadnezzar did not like that answer. He ordered the furnace to be heated up seven times hotter than normal! Then, into the furnace they went.

Can you imagine this? You decided to rebel against the king and now everyone is watching as you are about to be incinerated. They have to be thinking that they are running out of time for God to save them from their situation, which is where we pick back up in the story:

24 Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?" They replied, "Certainly, Your Majesty." 25 He said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods."

6 Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!" So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, 27 and the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.
Daniel 3:24-27

The Bible says that not even a single hair on their head was singed! Do you wonder why God allowed them to be sent to the furnace if they weren't even going to be touched by the flames? Sometimes God will save us FROM the furnace, but other times God will save us IN the furnace.

What if Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had bowed down to avoid the furnace? If not for their bold and courageous decision, they would never have had the opportunity to meet God and feel his incredible presence in that way. By missing their furnace appointment, they would have missed their opportunity to meet *"the fourth man."*

Even though we don't face what Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did, it doesn't mean we won't face persecution, trials, or pain in our faith. These are our modern-day furnaces. As Christians, we sometimes crave comfort and stability over anything else. We often pray that God will save us from our furnace situations, but what if He wants to meet us there? Our God is a furnace kind-of-guy. The valley of the shadow of death? That's where He hangs out. Do you have furnaces in your life right now? The death of a loved one, financial instability, or crippling depression and anxiety could all be furnaces we face. If you are like me, whenever these situations arise, your first thought might be "God, why have you left me?" Or "God, save me from this, please don't let this happen." But what if God has called you into the furnace? What if God wants to meet you in the chaos, in the mess, in the flames? When it seems impossible and you are running out of time, maybe simply try turning around to find that the "fourth man" has been right there with you the whole time.

If you were being persecuted for your faith in God, and were about to die because of it, would you have the same confidence they did? Why or why not? In a crisis, is your faith in God your steering wheel or is it your spare tire? Why?

Have you experienced furnace situations in your life?

**Ben
Herring**

SHSU Chi Alpha Intern



"Bright Morning Star"

αστέρ λάμπρος πρωινός
ASTER LAMPROS PROINOS

SCRIPTURES TO READ & REFLECT: MATTHEW 2:1-2,16:2-3, REVELATION 22:12-16, NUMBERS 24:17-25 PETER 1:16-19, PSALM 139:11-12, ISAIAH 29:18-19

In ancient times, the morning star was thought of as a herald of the new day, signaling the dawn of hope and joy. The brightest object in the sky, aside from the sun and moon, is a fitting image for Christ, who ushers in a new day for the entire world. When you call on Jesus, the Bright Morning Star, you are calling on the One from whom all darkness flees.

Light Therapy is a treatment of choice for many conditions, such as depression. In parts of the world, like Alaska and Finland, they receive minimal to no sunlight for a part of the year. Without enough light some are prone to develop irritability, anxiety, and stress. But our bodies aren't the only things that suffer in darkness. The story of Jesus is associated with light from start to finish. The life of Jesus begins with a 'star' and even ends with it. Because of Jesus, a new day, bright with promise, has dawned on the entire world. Jesus is the most powerful light therapy ever invented. He is the One who destroys our darkness by the light of His presence. Jesus is worthy to be praised, who has come to shine His light on you!

In ancient times, mariners used the night sky and the stars to track their location. Even now, satellites mark their position in space by using groups of stars as reference points. So what does this have to do with Christ as the Bright Morning Star? When Jesus called Himself the Bright Morning Star, He was saying that He is our reference point.

He is the sign that a new day is dawning on the world. In Scripture, it talks about the first and second comings of Jesus. The first, through His birth, is like the star that announces a new dawn and the second is like lightning that brings a swift fulfillment of His Kingdom. Similar to the ancient mariners, we need to remember to look and lift our faces to the Bright Morning Star. Only Jesus is our reference point so that we understand our position and purpose in life.

Oftentimes we tend to get stuck in monotony by doing the same thing over and over, so we long for something new to occur or to even take time off. In the midst of life we tend to not realize that each of our lives is a story that God is writing. Along with that, I know that we like to be in control and to grab the pen out of God's hand and refuse that He exists. We like to enjoy life on our own terms and to write our own lives the way we want it to be. Although this happens more than we could admit to, God hasn't let go of the script of your life. God uses the shadows in life to turn us towards His light. When you finally become honest with yourself and God, you realize that you are going nowhere unless God is leading the way. We usually think of stars as nighttime luminaries, but the morning star announces the beginning of a new day- a new day in Christ. There will still be problems in life and will still struggle, but the greatest of stories never develop without conflict. Christ has set us on a new course, infusing our lives with His light, presence, and purpose.

What hidden darkness do you need to allow Jesus to destroy with the light of His presence?

What is going to help you stay on course and to help you fix your eyes on Him?

What is God's unique purpose for your life?

**Lauren
Hoanzl**

SHSU Chi Alpha Staff



"Treasures of Thought"

Colossians 3:1-2: *“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”*

Growing up, I was involved in Church, believed in Jesus, and considered myself to be a Christian. I knew the Gospels, I knew all the worship songs, and I read my Bible, but I didn't really know Jesus. Video games, Netflix, Youtube, sports; those were the things that I knew, and my entire life was built around being able to do those things and enjoy them as much as possible. It wasn't until I got to college and was introduced to my small group and other friends in Chi Alpha, that I realized my mind wasn't surrendered to the Lord. I learned that, "What we consume, reveals what we crave." Even further, "We can look at what we consume most to see what we love most."

These simple truths changed everything for me. My small group leader, Austin, was telling me that if we love someone we will think of them often. As a Christian, I was confessing that I loved Christ, but my thoughts didn't line up with my words. What we love, we will think of often, and if we love Jesus, we will think of Him often.

In Matthew 22:36-38, Jesus says the greatest commandment is to, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." I'm sure we can all agree that the mind is the most neglected out of these three things.

As a freshman, I was learning that Jesus deserves the surrender of my mind and that loving God with my mind is a catalyst to knowing Him with my heart and soul as well. We call this having a mind in love with God. Which is thinking about anything and everything in a consistently Christian way, in a manner that is shaped, directed, and restrained by the truth of God's Word and God's Spirit.

Our thoughts about God are everything to who we are as people and as Christians, and our thoughts also greatly influence our eternity as well. In Chi Alpha, we say that our thoughts lead to our actions, our actions lead to our habits, our habits lead to our character, and our character leads to our destiny. So let's devote our thoughts to Jesus, to the One who deserves them and the One who died for us, so that we might be with Him for eternity.

What do you consume most in your life?

Is that thing or person keeping you from knowing Jesus more?

Are you willing to lay down something important to you so that Jesus can have His proper place in your life?

Landry Williams



SHSU Chi Alpha Intern

"You Are Meant To Be Alive"

My junior year of high school, I stood on a stool in my closet, contemplating my life before I made the choice to take it. I quickly came to the conclusion: there was not a single thing that made me want to stay alive. Right before I was about to step off the stool, a tiny voice told me to stop what I was doing and reach out to the only friend I had at the time. For some reason, she was awake at three in the morning that night and talked me down. She showed me real love.

At the time, I couldn't tell you where the tiny voice came from or what compelled my friend to respond the way she did. Now, I can say with full confidence that the tiny voice was the Holy Spirit and my friend responded the way she did simply because she was full of Jesus. Later in the week, she had convinced me to read 1 John with her, a book all about the love of God.

I had never read it before, and luckily, it wasn't rocket science. "By this, we know love, that [Jesus] laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers" (1 John 3:16).

If I took my own life, I would be entirely disregarding the work of Jesus on the cross. The King of the universe, Love incarnate, came down and died the most horrific death, so that I could be alive. Instead of thanking my Savior and choosing to serve Him with my life, I was instead going to make His death worth nothing. Understanding the worth of my life comes directly from knowing the weight of what Jesus came to Earth to accomplish.

What are ways that I can see the character of Jesus? There's a myriad of answers, but one is to open up to people in a community that loves Him.

How can you see Jesus in your past, present, and future?

Do you see your future life with Jesus in it? If not, try and dream a little!



**Shea
Hunter**

SHSU Chi Alpha Intern

My friend exhibited the love of Jesus the night I was going to take my life and that's what gave me a small sense of hope. If you are struggling with finding a purpose for your life and thinking that you are worth nothing, read the book of 1 John, Ephesians, and the gospel of John.

You are worth dying for, and someone already has for you. Please reach out if you are struggling with suicide. We desperately love and need you!

"Two Criminals and a King"

One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise." – Luke 23: 39-43

Those who read this section of Scripture often think that the first criminal is a fool. However, this is often our first interaction with Jesus. Calling on His name simply to receive that which we desire in the moment with hearts full of doubt.

Doubt that mocks the King with every word spoken. Many jump to judge the first criminal without ever stopping to consider how they once also approached the cross with such a hardened heart as his.

One must wonder what the repentant criminal saw in Jesus in this moment. After all, this is not Jesus in all His glory that we today have come to know. This is Jesus in all His humility: hanging on the cross being treated as a criminal. Jesus was being elevated no more than the two criminals beside Him, and yet this man still saw Him as a King.

No mere king either, but the King of Kings! He had hope that Jesus was saving someone in that moment, and that person would not be Himself. What about a man on a cross could inspire such hope? Not only did he feel hope, but he also felt the weight of his own sin.

This left him but one choice: to call on Jesus' name in hope that he might yet repent.

What did the second criminal see in Jesus that the first criminal could not see?

Why do you think that the first criminal was unable to see it?

How do we make the change from viewing the cross with desire instead of repentance?



**Nathaniel
Bowden**

SHSU Chi Alpha student leader

"The Good Sheperd"

John 10:1-18
Psalm 23

"The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want"- Psalm 23:1. When we know who our shepherd is, we come to realize that he leads us, and he cares more about our well being than even we do. I invite you to read over Psalm 23, 3 times today. Look out of a window and read it aloud.

Jesus, I pray that we come to know more of who you are. That we become anchored in the fact that you are the good shepherd and want to lead us. Lead us into more of you. Lord, I pray that we can grow in trusting you in every season knowing that you love us and care more for us than we do ourselves. Amen.

Realize that Jesus is leading us. He leads us to green pastures and to quiet waters. He shows us the way to the right paths. Notice in verse 4 how we are still being led even to the shadow of death. I am not going to tell you that walking this Christian walk will be easy and bright all the time, but I want you to see who is leading.

In the valleys and the mountains, we look to the good shepherd. "Your rod and staff comfort me" the rod to protect you and the staff to guide you. Jesus will protect us from danger and guide us every step of the way. When this is all over, we get to go to Heaven. Verse 6 states, "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

John 10 continues this same imagery many years later with Jesus in the flesh saying "I am the good shepherd." Jesus, as the good shepherd, says he is the gate.

He says we must enter through him, and that when we enter, we will be saved and find pasture. Notice the word pasture. This is the same word, but in Greek, used in Psalm 23 where he leads us to green pastures. Jesus, the good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. He loves us so much that he is willing to die for us. Jesus, the good shepherd, knows his own and his own know him. He says that he already knows us and invites us to know him.

Are you letting Jesus Lead you?

How can you grow in trusting Jesus?

Where do you run to when you're in the valley (trouble)?



**Zachary
Walker**

SHSU Chi Alpha Intern

"Denying Ourselves to Follow Christ" (Sexual Identity)

Before coming to the Lord, I struggled with my identity of who I was. Specifically, with my sexual identity. I identified as a Lesbian, and struggled on a daily basis trying to find my worth in this world. The key words here are: "finding my worth in this WORLD," that was my issue. I was letting the world and my circumstances dictate my feelings, thoughts, and temptations.

The circumstances I realized later down the line that led me to lead off of my feelings and thoughts was that I lacked motherly love. My mother chose drugs over me daily throughout my life, and then later down the road in my teenage years, my stepmother who was an alcoholic at the time did not like me being around. I started to search for love in women because I was yearning for that nurturing, caring love a mother has, and women naturally carry that.

Stepping into Chi Alpha, the community surrounded me with real love, a love that felt so undeniable, a love that was so heavy each time I stepped foot into my small group leaders room, or into a Chi Alpha service, a love that sort of terrified me.

This love was Jesus. His grace, His redemption, His mercy, and most of all His love. Jesus met me where I was, and transformed my life from one of shame, anger, and confusion; to grace, joy, and steadiness.

The Lord met me one on one and showed me that He had a name already for me, a name that was firm in His foundation. That name was a daughter of God.

What is holding you back from inviting Jesus into your heart? (Read My Heart Christ's Home by Robert Boyd Munger) (p.s. You can find a pdf.)

Have you taken a look at who Jesus is yourself, or have you let others and the world describe who Jesus is?

Jackie Hill Perry, Author of Gay girl, Good God says, "Every single thing He has ever or will ever say is true. The simplicity of faith is this: taking God's Word for it. And I might not have felt like it, but I had no choice but to believe Him." God showed me what it looked like when I chose to let Him completely enter my heart and ascertain all that He had for me. Not what MY feelings had for me, but what HE had for me. God is the ultimate creator of all, He created us to be directly in His image.

Take a look at Genesis 1:27: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." Looking back on what the Lord has done, I know that He has not called me to be in the world's identity, nor to not walk in the world's definition of love, but in His. Through that truth, I was able to give all of myself to Him, fully. My identity, my thoughts, my actions. All of it.

**Sadey
Simmons**

SHSU Chi Alpha Intern



"Servanthood"

In high school I was a part of a ministry at my church called the Handyman Ministry. This ministry put together a directory of names and jobs that people were able to perform. These jobs included plumbing, woodwork, lawn care, mechanic work, etc. This directory was meant for people in the church, young families, single moms, or really anyone that needed help on something in their home for zero cost.

A group of friends and myself wanted to help so we decided to put moving services on there because we didn't have much else to offer except our strength. It started off well, as we received a call every few months, but then things grew hectic. Every weekend or so we were helping people move and it started off with a willing heart, but it quickly turned into us waking up bitter that another Saturday had been taken up by moving washers and dryers up and down stairs. My attitude got the best of me, and some days I wanted to call the person and say that I was sick because I didn't want to serve.

You can do acts of service and still not be a servant if your motivation is benefitting yourself, recognition, or selfish ambition. True servanthood begins in selflessness and Love. I look at Jesus in John 13:1-17 as a perfect example of this. Servanthood starts with Love because to be servants of God we must love his creation! Love is unselfishly choosing for the highest good of God and his kingdom and when we love those around us it makes it easier for us to serve because we already have that kingdom mindset!

Christ's action here was motivated by Love, It was not the worthiness of the disciples that drove Jesus to serve them. They had just been bickering about who was the best among them. He wasn't expressing gratitude, but he was expressing grace. Love made him serve his disciples. Think about it: Jesus even washed the feet of Judas Iscariot, the man whom he knew would send him to hang on the cross.

When we give our lives to Jesus, everything changes. We no longer live for ourselves, but we live for the father who lives within us! We are to be responsible for our brothers and sisters and serve those who have needs that need to be met. When we serve in humility we get to show others that what we are doing is coming straight from the heart of God. Jesus uses a simple act, no miracles, no loaves and fishes moment, just a simple act.

Jesus saw a need and met it. Your choices reveal what you value, not your words. Jesus, in essence, is saying, "Look, no task is beneath you. Serve one another. Take the attitude of a servant towards each other. Be willing to give yourself to serve another person's needs. Don't put yourself on pedestals. Don't exalt yourself. Don't get so high and mighty that you begin to demand people to serve you. Look, I've set for you an example here. The example that I have set is for you to take the place of a servant."

Charles Spurgeon said, "Let me be as the bull which stands between the plough and the altar, to work or to be sacrificed, and let my motto be ready for either." While the bull waits for its time at the altar to be sacrificed (which means death), he will pull the plough because that is what his master asks of him.

Where is there an opportunity to serve within your small group? House? Church? Chi Alpha?

What steps can I take to be a servant hearted follower of Christ?

**Craig
Cox**



SHSU Chi Alpha Intern

"God Has a Right on Our Life"

Mark 10: 17-22

17 As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 18 "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. 19 You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.' 20 "Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I was a boy." 21 Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." 22 At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

God's command to us is to lay down our own life, surrender our plans to Him, and take up our cross. He asks this of us only because He knows what is best for us, after all He did create us and promises a plan for our life. He is worthy of being trusted with our life and often we do give up much to God, but it can be difficult to give Him control of everything.

We surrender our lives to Him and claim to give Him control over everything, but as anxiety and fear begin to rise in our hearts there is a clear indicator that we are still trying to be in control of something. The rich young ruler followed all the commandments that God had given and he was loved by Jesus.

It even goes as far to state that the man lacked just one thing, I sure wish it was ONLY one thing that I lacked! When asked to give up all his possessions in order to have treasure in heaven, the man went away sad.

Often we start our Christian walk joyfully following Jesus' lead and as we follow Him we can tend to still hold some things in our own hands. It is not too heavy yet and we quite enjoy still holding onto a few things while of course keeping a close eye on Jesus.

As we continue to follow Him, more and more things pile into our arms. It starts to get a bit heavier, we can still see Jesus but we can begin to feel the fatigue in our arms. We will soon find ourselves with our arms so full with all we are carrying and we completely lose sight of where Jesus is leading. We cannot follow God from a distance while still holding onto our own rights for our life. God is not a dictator and will never force us into surrendering, but what a beautiful picture it is when we come to God in willing surrender.

When we come with open hands He is able to shape and mold us into who He created us to be. Giving up control should not equal worry or doubt. Giving up control shows that we trust God and His plans for our life. Oh the freedom that comes from a willing surrender!

What areas of your life have you not fully and willingly surrendered to God?

Is there anxiety and fear in an area of your life, are you trusting God there?



*Kim
Lauritano*

SHSU Chi Alpha Intern

"Go And Sin No More"

"Jesus said to him, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk.' And immediately the man was made well, too up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath... Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, 'See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.'" - John 5:8-9, 14

"When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, 'Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?' She said, 'No one, Lord.' And Jesus said to her, 'Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.'" - John 8:10-11

These are two examples of scripture where Jesus tells someone to "go and sin no more". In both of these examples, the command was followed by a restorative work in their hearts: one where a physical healing takes place, the other where a healing of the heart takes place. After Jesus made them well, then He tells them to sin no more.

Is it possible to sin no more? 1 Peter 1 says to be holy, and Matthew 5 says to be perfect. As humans, it seems difficult, because people are keenly aware of the past life they have lived before Christ, and the sins they have committed. Living a sinless life seems impossible, because on our own accord and effort, it is.

This is the importance of the two passages of scripture above: in order for someone to live a sinless life, God must restore relationship with them first. They must go to God in repentance, ask for forgiveness, and God will wipe the slate clean. With that, God sees the heart, and then makes the command to sin no more.

Just as the man at the well could not make himself well, and just like the accused woman could not make herself innocent in front of people, man cannot free themselves of a sinful life without the loving help of Christ. God calls man to repentance and forgiveness, and then He will call us to holiness and a sinless life.

God loves His children so dearly that He made a relationship with Him attainable when man does not deserve it. That comes with a promise of holiness, and that comes with the action of walking in His word and His heart, leading man to a sinless life. God's heart is for His children to love and enjoy Him forever, and a sinless life will draw them closer.

If living a sinless life seems impossible, why does God call us to do so?

Why does God require repentance before we can live a sinless life? What can you do practically to live sinlessly?

Look at your life and see what needs to change.



**Zach
Campbell**

SHSU Chi Alpha student leader

"Fear & Anxiety: The Bane Of Our Faith"

I often get emotional over movies with a hero, especially when the hero is invested in a person and dealing with their fear to achieve a world changing goal. Some examples that come to my mind are in movies like *The King's Speech*. You have speech therapist Lionel Logue and King George the 6th who possesses a stammer, and yet learns how to speak to the nation. All the while, through his relationship with Lionel, he finds his "voice" during WW2 with Hitler and Stalin on the brink of threatening the country.

In *Braveheart*, we have William Wallace and Robert the Bruce. William was not ruled by fear or intimidation from the English and inspired Scotsman to fight for their freedom. At the same, he wanted to inspire the Scottish king Robert the Bruce to lead them against the English and he told him, "Men do not follow titles. They follow courage."

Lastly, in *The Lord of the Rings*, an overwhelmed Frodo Baggins tells Gandalf the Gray, "I wish the ring had never come to me. I wish none of this ever happened." Gandalf responds saying, "So do all who live to see such times, but that is not for them to decide."

All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given to us." It is through this very moment that Gandalf instills hope in Frodo and for Middle-Earth to be spared from the evil of Sauron.

I say all of this because we have one particular event in the Bible I could envision being like a movie that I'd like to highlight that will run along these lines. I know it simply as *The Storm*.

Jesus was sharing parables with multitudes by the sea in a boat, but when he was alone, he explained all things regarding the parable he spoke of to his disciples. His time spent with them was intentional, so the disciples knew quite a bit about Him as a teacher.

Mark 4:35-41 says, *On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"*

We can assume that these fishermen were very skilled, even in storms, for their means of living came by being on the water often. They have dealt with storms before, yet this one got exceptionally bad. The disciples grew in despair and awoke Jesus in a panic, as if he's a lazy man on deck, asking Him, "Teacher! Do you not care that we are perishing?!" The disciples held their own before things got bad, but it's when the storm got so bad, they held Jesus responsible for their lives.

Alexander MacLaren says, *"Much like the disciples, we also often may catch ourselves thinking that Jesus has gone to sleep when storms come on ourselves, and that He is ignorant of, or indifferent to, our plight. But though the disciples were wrong in their fright, and not altogether right in the tone of their appeal to Jesus, they were supremely right in that they did appeal to Him. Fear which drives us to Jesus is not all wrong. The cry to Him, even though it is the cry of unnecessary terror, brings Him to His feet for our help."*

I'm sure Jesus woke up not in a pleasant mood to hear the panic in his disciples cries. His words were POWER. "Peace, be still!" Those words were louder than the storm itself.

The rebuke to the disciples must have been firm and swift. “Why are you so afraid? Have you STILL no faith?” They feared Him exceedingly. “What manner of man is this? This is no longer just a man, lads.” These men just had a life-changing experience together. Experiences with Jesus and each other are often the best lessons we can learn in life. To me, this wasn’t just about a storm that Jesus and the 12 came across so that Mark could make the gospel more entertaining, but this was about their lack of faith and lack of understanding as to who Jesus is. He was more than just a teacher. It was a healthy fear that had been established in themselves. Do not fear the storm, but the Lord God Himself and He is with us.

At 19, I lost my Dad and it would prove itself to be the most difficult life-changing experience I’ve ever encountered. What is a young man at 19 years old supposed to say to his 79 year old grandfather upon first sight of each other at the hospital when he asks him, “What are we going to do, son?”

I was handed responsibility that I didn’t quite feel ready for and my heart was filled with fear after I had just lost my hero. A year and a half later, what I ultimately learned I needed was The Shepherd. With Jesus, I would no longer need to fear again. I cried out and He came to help me. That’s what the Good Shepherd does when His sheep are in need. In the times I do find myself being ruled by fear, it’s because I’m looking at myself, and not at Jesus. He knows us far better than we know ourselves.

“Fear can give no reasonable account of itself, if Christ is in the boat. If our faith unites us to Jesus, there is nothing that need shake our courage.” - Alexander MacLaren

The disciples were looking at their situation and not trusting their faith in the man asleep on deck. He never intended, nor intends to leave us drowning in fear.

G. Campbell Morgan will bring this home for us. *“Following Him they beheld his method and became imbued with some measure of His Spirit. By the way of this comradeship He was preparing them for immediate service, and commencing their preparation for the larger work which would devolve upon them in the days when He, as to bodily presence, was removed from them. They were to be servants of the Servant, and consequently it was necessary that in every way they should represent Him. Their sorrow brought Him to them miraculously, and mightily; and the storm was stilled. His presence is home, His voice is music, His look is sunshine, His touch is life.”*

What things in your life are you presently holding onto that are hindering your faith?

What are the moments in your life where Jesus has rescued you and reminded you to trust Him?

Will you pray right now for Jesus to restore and strengthen our faith and hope in Him?

**Taylor
Simmons**

SHSU Chi Alpha Staff



"Why Christmas?"

Merry Christmas, from our home to yours!

This is such a special season, and a lovely way to end each year. We all slow down a little from the work-and-school rush, spend time with our loved ones, and reflect on some of the most important things - like gratitude for the blessings we have received, and the wondrous fact we can express that gratitude to a caring Father who loves and provides for us.

As Christmas Day draws near, let's take just a moment to reflect on why this day is such an important remembrance...

Recently, I had to drive down into Houston for a meeting. Our little town of Huntsville does not have traffic jams; in fact, we rarely have to stop at a light for more than one cycle. When the college students are out on break, you can actually get anywhere at all in less than ten minutes. Of course, Houston is not like our little town. I am not sure there is ever a time with only light traffic in such a huge city, but this day was much worse than normal. I was so grateful that I did not have a deadline to be anywhere, because the freeway came to a complete standstill for an hour and a half. Evidently, someone had been driving under the influence of some substance and had caused a horrific accident. Thankfully no one was killed, but as I sat and waited, I began to think of the real-world cost of just one person's one day of selfishness.

The traffic was stopped across all four lanes of the interstate for a seven mile stretch. Conservatively speaking, that would be roughly 5600 cars and the people inside of them whose plans were impacted by the wreck. Even accounting for just one person in every car, and assuming that every one of them made a modest \$10 per hour, that would total \$84,000 lost as they were stuck waiting. But what about other costs - who might have been on their way to a much-needed job interview and missed it? Who might have been rushing to the hospital, or to help someone, or to catch a flight?

This brings up two very important points.

Sin is terribly costly. The example of a traffic accident shows a picture of what selfishness does. It causes great damage to oneself and others with far-reaching repercussions. Causing that one wreck is certainly not the only selfish thing that person had ever done, but just look at the effect of one day's worth of selfish choices by one person. What could decades of sin cost, in both material and spiritual currency? Not just money or work lost, but spirits crushed, bodies abused, minds wasted, hope lost - the Bible tells us clearly that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23).

The truth of the matter is that each of us is born with that same capacity for a lifetime of selfishness. The almost eight billion of us alive today combined with all of those who came before us continue to wrack up an enormous debt of costly, devastating sin.

Many, many people do not know or believe that each of us is sinful and responsible for our own sinfulness. But not knowing and not believing are not qualified excuses. This would be like not knowing or believing that you owed income tax each year. The debt is real, and one day a settling of accounts must happen. Which leads to the next thought...

Someone has to pay the price. Who can possibly afford to pay for this costly sin, which separates each of us from our holy God? The tempter thought he had a foolproof plan in offering the forbidden fruit to mankind. As a result of that awful Fall, all of us are impacted by sinfulness and selfishness - and therefore none of us can be with God forever. On our own, the best we can hope for is bleak eternal death to settle our debt.

CS Lewis describes this dilemma so perfectly in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, a delightful children's book that I encourage you to read again if you have not lately. One of the children in the story has betrayed everyone in exchange for some enchanted candy, and now the horrible witch is rightfully demanding payment for the betrayal, and the price is the boy's life. His brother and sisters are devastated, but unknown to them is that the good King Aslan has a different plan in mind to settle the horribly real debt. In fact, Aslan offers his own life as payment in exchange for the boy's.

The witch ecstatically murders the king atop the ancient Stone Table, and she and all of her evil minions rejoice. This was better than they ever could have imagined. Now the great king himself was dead, and her wicked reign of terror could last forever.

But no. In the earliest hours of the morning, a tremendous shaking occurred, the Stone Table broke into pieces, and the body of the king was gone - or was it? Aslan soon came back to the children, very much alive, and explained all that had happened...

"It means," said Aslan, "that though the Witch knew the Deep Magic, there is a magic deeper still which she did not know. Her knowledge goes back only to the dawn of time. But if she could have looked a little further back, into the stillness and the darkness before Time dawned, she would have read there a different incantation. She would have known that when a willing victim who had committed no treachery was killed in a traitor's stead, the Table would crack and Death itself would start working backward."

And this is why we remember and celebrate the tremendous occasion of Christmas.

God is Creator and King of all things, and His holiness and justice are perfect. Our sin is awful and separates us from Him; our debt is real and terrible and requires our death as payment. Only one, perfect in holiness and without sin, could pay the price; a man who never sinned and who willingly gave himself for all.

On that first Christmas so long ago, a far more extravagant a gift than anyone could ever have asked or imagined was given. Jesus, the mighty King of Kings and Lord of Lords, was born as a tiny, helpless baby - not in a palace, but in a rude and smelly stable in a village few had ever heard of, God became man so He could offer Himself as the payment for our debt. How great is the love of God for His children!

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

This week, as we stop to remember the first Christmas, may our homes radiate the warmth and love of God. As we give and receive gifts, may our hearts be full of gratitude and remembrance of this perfect gift of Jesus our Savior.

*Mary
Gautreaux*



"The Unknowing Peace"

December of 2016 was probably the hardest season of my life. It was during that time that I suddenly lost my dad to pneumonia, and a lot of my ideas of death and brokenness were turned on its head. I was never naive to death.

I knew people died everyday, but I never thought death would knock at my dad's doorstep so soon. Grief did not look like I thought it would. I imagined a lot more sobbing in the shower, but instead I was met by a lot of anger and frustration. I was mad that my dad wasn't here anymore and upset that it seemingly felt like no one understood me and what I was going through.

Even amongst the healthiest community in Chi Alpha and the most incredible friends I could ask for, I was left with this hole inside my heart and a longing for my dad to return. It was in this season of loss where the Lord started revealing more of His character to me. I clung closely to Psalm 34:18: "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." Losing my dad did not mean I was losing Jesus, in fact I was closer to the Father than I had ever realized.

The night I was driving home from the hospital after visiting my dad, I had this sense of peace wash over me. I felt like my dad was going to pull through and everything was going to be okay. The next morning I got a phone call saying that my dad passed away in the middle of the night...so what the heck was that peace?

A year later I started reading this book "To Live Again" by Catherine Marshall. Catherine describes the night her husband was sent to the hospital and as she was sitting by his bed she felt an overwhelming sense of peace. Like my dad, her husband did not make it, so what was this "peace" that we both experienced? She explains it like this: It was not a peace that my husband would be okay, it was a peace that my Heavenly Father had not abandoned me. Jesus is a comforter and healer, and not even death can change that. Even amongst the hardest moments the Lord still uses those moments for good and to bring us closer to Him.

Healing takes time and is a process but it is possible, but having grace for yourself during the mourning period is important. Having grace in knowing that the Lord is walking you through the darkest valleys and is bringing you to green pastures.

In your hardest moments, where and who do you turn to?

What is peace to you?

**Cooper
Cox**



SHSU Chi Alpha Intern

"You're as Close to God as You Want to Be"

When I was a senior in high school, we went on a big senior trip to Six Flags in Arlington. I had never been there before, so I was really excited! The park was massive, and I could hear the screams of joy and screams of terror all over the complex. We walked from ride to ride until we got to the Texas Giant. This was the main attraction at Six Flags. It is 3 minutes and 25 seconds of high-speed adrenaline with a 153-foot drop. The ride was scary, yet thrilling, all at the same time. I got in the line and was excited to experience the Texas Giant. However, my excitement faded as soon as I saw how massive the line was.

My friends tried to convince me to stay, but since I was way too impatient to wait that long, I decided to go somewhere with a shorter line. Over an hour later, I met back up with my friends and they described to me what seemed to be the best ride of their life! Every detail sounded so incredible and the joy on their faces showed me everything I needed to know about the ride. However, instead of being happy for them, I became jealous of them. Why didn't I get to have that experience? How is it fair that I didn't get to ride the best ride in the park? Well, you know why I didn't have that experience? It's because I chose not to have it. I had the exact same opportunity as them to ride the Texas Giant, yet I chose not to. My lack of sacrifice and commitment led me to missing out on the best ride at Six Flags.

It is an undeniable fact that some Christians seem to experience a much closer intimacy with God than others. They appear to enjoy a reverent familiarity with Him that is foreign to us. Is it a matter of favoritism on the part of God? Or do such people qualify in some way for that desirable intimacy? "Both Scripture and experience teach that it is we, not God, who determine the degree of intimacy with Him that we enjoy. We are at this moment as close to God as we really choose to be"- J Oswald Sanders. That is the most comforting yet scary thought. We truly are as close to God as we choose to be. That means we are responsible if we have a deep and loving relationship with God, and also responsible if we have a distant and cold relationship with God.

Why did the 12 disciples have such a closer relationship with Jesus? Jesus had encounters with thousands of people, yet the 12 disciples seemed to have a much deeper relationship with Jesus than anyone else. I want to look at two different encounters Jesus had in the Bible. The first is with Peter and his brother Andrew. "One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers-Simon, also called Peter, and Andrew- throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living.

Jesus called out to them, come follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people! And they left their nets at once and followed him”- Matthew 4:18-20. The second encounter is with the rich young ruler. “I’ve obeyed all these commandments’, the young man replied. ‘What else must I do?’ Jesus told him, ‘If you want to be perfect, go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me’. But when the young man heard this, he went away sad, for he had many possessions”- Matthew 19:20-22. See Peter, Andrew, and the rich young ruler all were given a chance to follow Jesus, yet only Peter and Andrew chose to drop everything to follow Him. “Only those who count such intimacy as a prize worth sacrificing anything else for are likely to attain it. If other intimacies are more desirable to us, we will not gain entry to that circle.”- J Oswald Sanders.

I had the same opportunity to experience the joy and the thrill of the Texas Giant that my other friends did, but I chose not to sacrifice my impatience to obtain that experience. Just like me, the rich young ruler had the same opportunity as Peter and Andrew to have a real intimate relationship with Jesus, yet he was unwilling to sacrifice his own desires to obtain that closeness with Jesus. You’re as close to God as you want to be, and the rich young ruler chose not to be close to God.

Do you ever wonder why it seems like the Lord speaks more to your friends than to you? It isn’t because they are more qualified or are more favored. It is because they are choosing to be closer to God. They are choosing to sacrifice other intimacies and desires, so that they can attain such an intimacy with the Lord. The good news is that you, too, can have a real intimate relationship with the Lord! You’re as close to God as you want to be, so you get to determine the depth of your relationship with God. To gain a deeper relationship with God requires two steps. The first is repentance. Intimacy with God is preceded by cleansing. This means we have to be truly repentant and cleansed of anything in the way of a deeper relationship with God.

The second step is to abide. Spending time in God’s word is how you get to know God’s character. Spending time in prayer is how you have real communication with God. Spending time in worship is how you praise God and put Him on the throne of your heart instead of yourself. Reading, prayer, and worship is how you abide with Jesus. The more you abide, the more intimate your relationship will be with Jesus. So make this winter break count! Use these extra hours intentionally to get a closer relationship with the Lord because remember, you are as close to God as you want to be.

CJ
Hopper

SHSU Chi Alpha Staff



"Family Redeemer"

In the book of Ruth, it talks about two women: Naomi and Ruth, who come to faith and see God. The story starts off bitterly, as Naomi went to the land of Moab with her husband and her two sons that ended up marrying two Moabite women, one of them being Ruth. Years later, Naomi's husband and two sons have died, making both Naomi and Ruth widows. Naomi told Ruth to stay and remarry, but Ruth decided to stay with her in her old age, to support her. Moreover, she also said a bold statement of faith in Ruth 1:16, "Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God." In faithfulness, kindness, and great unselfishness, she decided to go with her back to Judah, and potentially miss out on a husband in her hometown.

As they arrived in Judah, Ruth went to work in the barley fields, and she met Boaz, who owns the field she's working in. Boaz showed great kindness in Ruth 2:8-9, he told her to stick with other women in the field, that she will find protection as Boaz told the men not to treat her badly, and draw water when she's thirsty. Ruth didn't randomly step on this field, God guided her to it, and what did she get? She would find companionship with the other women, protection so that the men wouldn't bother her, and find refreshment when she is thirsty. Naomi told her that Boaz was their family redeemer and pushed Ruth to marry him because it gave hope to a renewed future. Family redeemers were a specifically defined role in Israel's family life.

The kinsman-redeemer was responsible to buy a fellow out of slavery, to buy back family land that had been forfeited, to carry on the family name by marrying a childless widow. Family redeemers were very useful, and as the story progresses, Ruth performs an Israelite custom by going as a servant to the feet of the master and sharing a part of his covering. That's when she asked him to marry her. Ruth showed great humility and submissiveness to Boaz, presenting herself as a servant.

God uses the same terminology in Ezekiel 16:8, where God takes us under his protection. Ruth and Boaz end up getting married, and Ruth and Naomi go on to be redeemed, no longer living in poverty. Naomi would have a grandson, and see everything come all together. She felt bitter in the beginning as her life was bitter, only if Naomi could've seen how greatly the Lord would've blessed her in the end. We can't blame Naomi, as we definitely act the same way. However, we don't have too. God's plan is perfect and filled with love for Naomi, and you, even if we may not understand what God is doing behind the scenes. When things are seemingly so desperate and dire, He still knows what He's doing, so we should keep leaning on him when times look bleak.

If you read all four chapters of Ruth, people talk about God, but the narrator of the book never one time has God said something, or shown God directly doing something, why?

As Boaz was Ruth's & Naomi's family redeemer, who is your family redeemer? (Isaiah 54:4-8)

**Drew
Rocha**



SHSU Chi Alpha student leader

"Knowledge = Responsibility"

It doesn't always happen, but sometimes a huge blockbuster movie releases and grabs the minds of America by a single quote. In 2002, "Spiderman" had done just this with the ever famous quote Uncle Ben told young Peter Parker before becoming Spiderman, "With great power, comes great responsibility." Have you heard of it? I wondered why this was such a big deal until I came into Chi Alpha, where many quotes were repeated frequently. One quote "ism" in particular that stuck in my mind is "Knowledge = Responsibility".

For the most part, we all have a basic understanding of this. If I don't put in the work to study for my classes, I will fail my classes. If I don't show up for work or not do my tasks at work, I won't get paid. We understand certain things are at stake if we do not put forth the effort. If I don't contact or communicate with my significant other for two weeks, I will risk losing that relationship with that person. What's the difference between your best friend and an acquaintance? The effort you put into that friendship.

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.' James 1:22-24. *Then why do we deceive ourselves that we don't need to put any effort into our relationship with God?*

I'm so grateful to be a part of a community where we can hear from our small group leader, our company leaders in what they teach us every week. But it absolutely cannot stop there. You are accountable to what you know. If you know you are struggling to have a mind in love with God, delete your social media and Netflix app and start reading the Bible and other great Christian books! If you know Jesus is Lord, then obey what He is telling you to do now, and do it quickly! Be quick to forgive your parents and siblings since we're all back at home. Be quick to be patient and give to those around you. Act on what you hear! James 1:22 (MG)

"With great power comes great responsibility". What's this power we have? For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes. Romans 1:16.

You have the power of salvation! The Gospel living in and out of you! Jesus is alive in you. That saves not just those who are not Christian, but Christians too, because even as Christians, we still need the power of salvation to work in us continually!

What have I been hearing lately, but not doing?

How can I do those things God is asking me to do today?

Do those things today! Act now! Do not wait anymore. Another one of our Chi Alpha "isms" is connected to this one is this: "Obedience is doing what you are told and doing it quickly because you love that person".

Sultana Jiron

SHSU Chi Alpha Staff



"There are No Little People"

How do we think of people? Not just the general idea of “people” in the abstract, but the actual people around us every day? How do we think of our neighbors, our classmates, the people around us at the grocery store? How do we think of ourselves? Maybe more importantly, how does God think about people, these same people we deal with every day? Do the answers to these questions line up with each other?

The typical way we relate to people depends on what they mean to us. We tend to think highly of our friends, the people who are nice to us, the people who think like us. However, we tend also to think lowly of our enemies, the people who are mean to us, the people who think very differently from us. Most of us, if we were honest, wouldn't be too upset if a lot of these people just ceased to exist.

We tend to attribute significance to people based on all sorts of factors, most of them surface level, almost all of them based on what value they can bring to us. Are they attractive (are they attractive to me and/or make me look better by being with me)? Do they seem cool (can they make me seem cool)? Are they smart (can they give me good advice)? Are they nice (do they make me feel good)?

These kinds of questions tend to be how we determine our thoughts about people, and we can find this everywhere. This is how people in the world think.

We also tend to think of ourselves by comparison to all these people around us. How attractive am I compared to all these people? How smart? How cool? How capable? How valuable? Based on this assessment we tend to think of ourselves as either too significant (we are better than others) or too insignificant (everyone is better than us).

I would like to emphatically point out that both of these viewpoints of self are not only inaccurate, they are both sinful. Arrogance and insecurity are the two sides of pride: both focus entirely on self. A person who is so down on themselves as to be on the verge of suicide and an extreme narcissist both think of themselves a similar amount.

The difference is one thinks of self positively (way too positively) and the other thinks of self negatively (way too negatively). Both are ungodly attitudes. And these are the attitudes of the world and the attitudes we tend towards. And our view of other people always tends to fall in line with this self-focused way of thinking.

I think we can see that there's a problem here, selfishness is at the heart of all sin and makes for a terrible lens through which to view the world. To address this, we will begin with one very simple assertion: I am not the center of the universe. God is.

Therefore any way of thinking that puts me at the center is wrong. So if we want to see people rightly, those around us, those we see on the news or internet, ourselves, we must examine how God sees people. Right away, we discover that God gives all people incredible value. There are three facts about people in the Bible that show this to be the case.

The first of these facts is that all people were created by God and bear the image of God. Every person you have ever encountered in any capacity was intentionally made in the image of God! This is a huge revelation to a world that treats people as means to their own ends. We see this in Genesis: “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.

And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” (Genesis 1:26-27) And we see this reality throughout the Bible, people were made by God and people bear His image. This gives people a worth that goes beyond anything we could give them.

The second fact showing how God views people is the price He paid for us. Every person in the history of the world, except for Jesus Himself, has a life corrupted by sin and is deserving of Hell. Yet, God loved every person in the history of the world so much that He came down and died on the cross in order to redeem them.

1 Peter 1:18-19: “knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.” This is the price He was willing to pay for people, this is how much we are worth to Him. This is a reality we know well as Christians, people who have turned from our sin to Jesus. So how should we treat those who were worth so much to Jesus? Can we devalue one who Jesus chose to die for?

The final fact showing the immense value God gives people is the reality that the people around us are eternal. All of us will either spend eternity in heaven with Jesus, or eternity separated from Him. C.S. Lewis said it this way: “There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations - these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat.

But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub and exploit - immortal horrors or everlasting splendors.” How quickly we can forget this fact! The person I get irritated with on the road has an eternal future, the grumpy cashier who rings up my groceries wrong will be forever with Jesus or forever separated from him, the person on Facebook who I disagree with about politics is an immortal. All people have this significant fact about them, all of us will spend eternity somewhere.

That is more significant than anything else we face in our lives! Do we see people as eternal? Even more sobering, how are we affecting the eternity of the people we interact with everyday?

These three facts; that all people were made in the image of God, Jesus died to redeem all people because He loves them, and that all people have an eternal destination; show us clearly that people have an incredible intrinsic value, given to them by God. This is the only source, by the way, that people possibly could derive value.

People are valuable to God and as we recognize that He is the supreme being in the universe, therefore they must be valuable to us as well. Every person has value. It doesn't matter how they relate to us.

There are NO little people. Every single person must be valued by us if we value Jesus. There is nothing, not race, social status, gender, political views, interests, or even my own feelings towards a person, that can decrease or increase the immense value that a person has been given by God. To view people any other way is to not line up with reality.

This goes for ourselves also, do we tend to think of ourselves as better than another person? This is insanity! Completely out of touch with the reality of the universe. I'm no better than any other person on this earth, our values come from the same God. To think otherwise is to think in a way that is detached from reality and is sinful. We must repent of our arrogance. Likewise, do we think lowly of ourselves? Are our thoughts of self disparaging? This too is out of touch with reality. You are made in the image of God, Jesus was willing to die for you, and you have an eternity ahead of you. You have value and to rob yourself of that value in your thoughts is not in line with the heart of God. We must repent of this too.

So how do we view people? Do we see them as God does? Full of value, more significant than anything else in the world? If we don't, why not?

How can we come to a place of viewing people rightly? Let's pray that the Lord would help us to see people the way He does and that we would always remember that there are no little people..



**Sam
Pitt**

SHSU Chi Alpha Staff



SAM HOUSTON STATE

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