

Monday: Matthew 6:24-34. Jesus, like the Buddha, saw clearly that we suffer anxiety when we fear losing what we are attached to. Instead of calling for detachment, Jesus said we can attach ourselves to God and the ways of God. Jesus made the practical point that worry brings suffering, but seldom does any good. Are there things you spent a lot of time and energy worrying about that never happened? In what ways, if any, have you sensed that your commitment to Jesus has reduced the “worry quotient” in your life? What additional worries would you like to ask Jesus to help you lay aside?

Tuesday: Psalm 23:1-6. Buddhism is the only major religions that is officially non-theistic. The Buddha said the question of God’s existence is irrelevant for ending human suffering. Psalm 23 says that God is our shepherd, guiding us through the messiness of life. In what ways have you experienced Jesus leading you like a shepherd? Jesus said his “sheep” listen for his voice. How can you listen for the voice of Jesus today?

Wednesday: Romans 8:18-28. The Buddha focused his teaching on finding ways to avoid and end suffering. Christians have a different view. Suffering, for example, was almost a constant in Pauls’ life as an apostle. There is mystery and comfort in verse 26: “We don’t know what we should pray, but the Spirit himself pleads our case with unexpressed groans.” When have you faced so much pain that you felt “speechless” before God? How does it touch your heart to read that, at those very hardest times, God’s Spirit intercedes on your behalf?

Thursday: 1 Corinthians 15:3-26. Christians do not believe our life ends in absorption of our life energy back into the universe. We believe Jesus rose from the dead. Jewish or Roman authorities could have easily put a stop to early Christian preaching like Paul’s: just produce Jesus’ dead body. They had all the police and military power to find the body. They didn’t, because they couldn’t - Jesus’ tomb was empty. How can Paul’s confident appeal to hundreds of still-living eyewitnesses deepen your faith in the reality of Jesus’ resurrection? What difference does it make to you that Jesus is alive today?

Friday: Matthew 22:34-40. Design a collage entitled “Loved by God.” Gather magazines, etc., and markers or crayons. Read Genesis 1:26 - 28. Discuss how God created each person in God’s image and how God loves us all no matter our gender, race, age, size, etc. Cut out and/or draw pictures of different types of people - the great diversity of humanity. Include pictures of family and friends. Celebrate that God created and loves every person. Thank God for loving you and all people.

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