

QUIET TIME GUIDE
FOR Thursday 6/26/08
FROM JACK MILLWOOD

Greeting:

We all cracked up laughing. It was so funny. This past week after we finished our small group time several of us decided to go out to eat at a local restaurant. On our way to the restaurant several of us, in separate cars, all saw the same thing. When we got to the restaurant we were all talking it. Driving down a new four lane road in a new development we came across a stretch of land that was still in an early phase of development. The land was simply laid out in lots for buildings and the streets had been built. What caught our eyes was one of the typical ponds that are built in Florida in every subdivision to handle the water drainage and the water table. These ponds are typically less than an acre in size. This pond was still fairly new and had slopping sides all around it where grass was yet to be sodded. What we saw was a small pickup truck driving around the edge of the pond, on the ungrassed sloped edges. That in and of itself was funny, but then I noticed that attached to the ball hitch on the back of the truck's bumper was a ski rope that was extending out into the pond and yes, it is true, believe it or not, there was a young man on a knee board (*a skiing apparatus that you ride on*) being pulled around this small pond. He was skiing behind a pick up truck in a small pond!! I cracked up laughing. The first thing I thought was, "*That is so my son! He would do that in a heart beat!*" I slowed down to get a good look. I guess these ole boys did not have access to a boat but they had a rope and they had a knee board, so they decided to go skiing the only way they could. They were out for a joy road that was unique to say the least. I feel like putting a disclaimer in this story saying, "*Do not try this at home.*" The safety issues involved are beyond comprehension. The legality of what they were doing is definitely up for grabs. For me I was just riding down the road and saw a group of creative young men on a thrilling joy ride that was hilarious. I must admit that I am not so old that I could not help but think, "*That would be cool. I need to try that.*" Don't worry, I didn't and I am not going to try it. But it did look like a fun ride. Growing up I always like rides at the fair and the amusement parks. I like the ones that went up and down and back and forth. I am still a fan of the old fashioned roller coaster. To me there is nothing like a good old fashioned roller coaster ride for a thrill. However, what is fun in an amusement park and on a sand lot is not so good in your spiritual life. Many of us treat God like a theme park roller coaster. We are up and down with our commitment to him. We are in and out, back and forth. As I was reading the later part of Psalm 106 I thought about this "*roller coaster kind of Christianity.*" For the sake of space I have not printed all of the chapter below. I have printed enough for you to get the picture. Notice as you read it today how the children of Israel did the right thing then did the wrong thing, then did the right thing then did the wrong thing.

Scripture for today:

Psalm 106: "4 Remember me, O LORD, when you show favor to your people, come to my aid when you save them, 5 that I may enjoy the prosperity of your chosen ones, that I may share in the joy of your nation and join your inheritance in giving praise. 6 We

have sinned, even as our fathers did; we have done wrong and acted wickedly. 7 When our fathers were in Egypt, they gave no thought to your miracles; they did not remember your many kindnesses, and they rebelled by the sea, the Red Sea. 8 Yet he saved them for his name's sake.... 9 He rebuked the Red Sea, and it dried up; ... 10 He saved them from the hand of the foe; 11 The waters covered their adversaries; not one of them survived. 12 Then they believed his promises and sang his praise. 13 But they soon forgot what he had done 14 In the desert they gave in to their craving; in the wasteland they put God to the test. 15 So he gave them what they asked for, but sent a wasting disease upon them. 16 In the camp they grew envious of Moses and of Aaron, 17 The earth opened up and swallowed Dathan....19 At Horeb they made a calf and worshiped an idol cast from metal. ... 21 They forgot the God who saved them, who had done great things in Egypt,So he said he would destroy them— had not Moses, his chosen one, stood in the breach before him to keep his wrath from destroying them. 24 Then they despised the pleasant land; they did not believe his promise. 25 They grumbled in their tents and did not obey the LORD. 26 So he swore to them with uplifted hand that he would make them fall in the desert, 28 They yoked themselves to the Baal of Peor and ate sacrifices offered to lifeless gods; 29 they provoked the LORD to anger by their wicked deeds, and a plague broke out among them. 30 But Phinehas stood up and intervened, and the plague was checked. ... 32 By the waters of Meribah they angered the LORD, and trouble came to Moses because of them; ... 39 They defiled themselves by what they did; by their deeds they prostituted themselves. 40 Therefore the LORD was angry with his people and abhorred his inheritance. 41 He handed them over to the nations, and their foes ruled over them... 43 Many times he delivered them, but they were bent on rebellion and they wasted away in their sin. 44 But he took note of their distress when he heard their cry; 45 for their sake he remembered his covenant and out of his great love he relented. ... 47 Save us, O LORD our God, ... that we may give thanks”

Life Application:

Did you see it? The roller coaster ride of Psalm 106 just about wore me out reading it. In Egypt they messed up by giving no thought to God’s miracles. Even after seeing the parting of the Red Sea they fell back into old habits again. Then at Horeb, by the way that is where they had gotten the ten commandments (what a great up that was) they fell into idolatry again. Then even when they arrived on good land they still **grumbled in their tents**. When God did a water miracle at Meribah they still messed up. Verse 43 sums it up pretty well, **“Many times he delivered them, but they were bent on rebellion and they wasted away in their sin.”** Isn’t that just like us. Times change but human nature seldom does. We all tend to be so inconsistent when it comes to our walk with the Lord. We are hot and cold, on again, off again. We have spiritual highs and spiritual lows. One day we are so excited about our faith and the next day we are mopping around in the doldrums complaining about this and that. On one side that greatly disturbs me about me and about you. We should seek to avoid that. I was talking to a member of our church family this week and the word “consistency” came up. This member said, *“That is a great lesson I have learned from m husband.”* I said, *“That is such a great lesson to learn.”* It is. We need to be consistent. We need to be reliable to God and to others in our lives. They need to know that they will find the same thing in us every day. They will find a person of

faith, a person of joy, a person who is willing to serve all the time. On the other side I am encouraged by the verse that follows verse 43. Right after talking about their inconsistency it says ***“But he took note of their distress when he heard their cry; 45 for their sake he remembered his covenant and out of his great love he relented...”*** What greatly encouraged me is that ever time God still came through. No matter how inconsistent the people were, God was always consistent. Even when they were faithless God was faithful. He can be counted on every time.

Spiritual exercise:

How is your level of consistency? Are you like those kids in the pond, exploring youthful exuberance but never knowing consistent dependability? I wonder if our family comes home wondering what kind of mood they will find us in tonight? I wonder if the spiritual leaders in your life know that they can count on you all the time or if they have to wonder if you will really come through. Our spiritual life should be less of a roller coaster ride and more of a consistent and steady drive that gets us from where we are to where we need to be. Steady. Consistent, Dependable. Those are words and characteristics we need to pray that God will give us today. However, remember when we fail, God is there to catch us as we come crashing down off the roller coaster ride.

Thought for the day.

I want to be consistent and dependable!