

STUDY GUIDE

Monday, November 7 – Read Psalm 69:9-13. As we read this Psalm we discover that David is not normal. All of his normal friends make fun of him and insult him. Why? He has a passion for worship. He has a heart for drawing close to God. He desires a deep relationship with his Creator. How do we react when someone puts us down because we say no to an event because we would miss worship? How many times do we choose to participate in something with no consideration of missing worship or skipping our small group? It is tempting to just want to be normal so that no one even notices our faith. The way of the weird is the way of faith. Draw strength and encouragement when someone makes fun of your faith in Christ – it just means you aren't normal, which is where you want to be because normal isn't working.

Tuesday, November 8 – Read 1 Samuel 15:1-26. In this disturbing story we see a picture of a man who was being normal. All kings, after a victory, keep the best of what has survived the attack. But Saul forgot his original instructions – destroy everything. The main point is not what God instructs Saul to do, but the fact that Saul disobeyed God. Saul probably was pressured by his generals and men to take some animals as was customary. Normal in this case didn't work. God had called on Saul to be weird. Instead Saul was rebellious and stubborn. God rejected him and took away his kingdom. When have you been pressured to do something normal, but knew in your heart what God wanted you to do?

Wednesday, November 9 – Read John 15:17-20. A believer in Christ will always get hatred, insults and ridicule from the 'normal' world so from each other we need love and support. We must all realize that as believers, those who accept the grace of God and follow Christ as Lord and Savior, we are just passing through this world. Just as small established towns have difficulty accepting new people and like a group of friends that grew up together don't want different people hanging around them, so it is with us. We are the out-of-towners, the new kid at school. Most of the time we don't like the role we have been given and will go to extreme lengths to fit in. Jesus reminds us to embrace our position. He has chosen us for specifically.

Thursday, November 10– Read Matthew 5:10-12. Think of the benefits of not being normal and thus having people 'persecute' us. This hardship (1) takes our eyes off earthly rewards, (2) it strips away superficial belief, (3) it strengthens the faith of those who endure, (4) may help us set an example for others. How consumed are you with what people think about you? How has that influenced your actions? Why is it so important that we not become obsessed with what others think about us? How can being criticized for your faith be good for your relationship with Christ? Who is someone you admire for handling criticism for their faith? What did you learn from this person?

Friday, November 11 - “..we speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts.” 1 Thessalonians 2:4. “Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe.” Proverbs 29:25.

These verses show us that we can't please everyone, but we can please God. A normal person tries to be a people pleaser. Since normal isn't working it's time to be a God pleaser. What are some of the blessings you have experienced as a result of your pleasing God? What are some things you can do this week to help you focus more on pleasing God instead of others?

Daily Prayer Time: *Thank God for making you weird in His own unique way. Tell Him how that has impacted your life. Ask God to help you overcome any criticism you are facing because of your faith. Confess to God those areas of life where you are consumed with what others think about you. Commit to God that you will strive to please Him and not others in all areas of your life. Ask God to help you remove all barriers that are keeping you from becoming weird in a God way.*