

At a junction

Julia McGuinness *reflects on* Galatians 5:1. 13-25

Have you ever felt so busy with work and others' demands that all you long for is some free time? Sometimes when we finally have space to do whatever we want, we don't know where to begin. We may even just find another job to do!

Paul reminds the Galatian Christians that being set free for life in Christ is just the start of the story. Freedom brings the opportunity and the responsibility of choice. There is a chance to do things differently, but real freedom means there is also the possibility that we'll go back to our old ways. Paul details the fork in the road of our faith journey. Down the old track lie negative passions – ambition, pride, anger and licentiousness. Along the new road, the Spirit brings growth in the beauty of Christ-like character – love, joy, peace and more.

The Spirit's fruit will not automatically download into our being any more than you can grow an orange on a computer. We need to cooperate with God's process of transformation by choosing to walk in step with the Spirit down the right road. Our feet need to make the first move.

Which direction will you take as you face the junctions of your day? 😊



The books of the Old Testament – 2 Samuel

by Trevor Dennis

The first book of Samuel ends with the deaths of Samuel, Saul and Jonathan. 2 Samuel begins with David's lament for Saul and Jonathan, before descending into brutal civil war.

We know that David is chosen by God, and it's inevitable that he should be anointed king over Israel. Yet even the likes of David must be reminded that there is really only one king in Israel, and that is God. In chapter 11 we come

to Bathsheba's story – a story of rape and murder, and David is the perpetrator. The family spirals into bloodshed, with Absalom, Tamar's brother, getting Amnon killed then making a bid for the throne. Civil war breaks out, and David is soon on the run from his own son.

In all this chaos we glimpse in David astonishing magnanimity, compassion, vulnerability and guilt. Near the end Psalm 18 is put into David's mouth – he declares himself blameless!

1 and 2 Samuel speak candidly and truthfully of an inspiring but deeply flawed man. 😊

“David was the last one we would have chosen to fight the giant, but he was chosen of God.”

Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899), American evangelist and publisher

Lord, we thank you that it is not your plan to bind your people in religious practice, but to set them free through relationship with you. We pray that we may use your freedom with reverence and wisdom; that our lives may be filled with the joy of your fruitfulness. Amen.

Finding God in Ordinary Time Part IV – the stuff of everyday life

by Caroline Hodgson

Go back to your list of “ordinary” activities, and look in more depth at WHY and HOW you do them, and WHAT could be different. The idea is to come up with positive changes, and jot your ideas in the bottom half of the paper. Is there a good reason why you always do the shopping, or could you ask for help? Sometimes we hang on to things because we don't trust other people to do

them our way. So could this be a good time for the kids to start helping with the housework? Just because they're ordinary activities, don't undermine their importance – a dog walk is the stuff that everyday life is made of, and it can radically affect our relationships with those we're closest to – including God. So it does matter and it is worth taking time over! Don't pull any punches, and use prayer to go deeper. 😊