

Devotional Response Papers

- ↘ Students will write four papers aimed at bringing about personal reflection and spiritual formation. Students have the option to choose to interact with any select four related to the following readings, with no more than two from one single author.
- ↘ DR due 2/7, 2/14, 3/6, 3/20
- ↘ Format for responses: typed, two pages (part of a third page is acceptable), double-spaced, 1" margins, Times New Roman font, size 11. (Must follow these formatting directions.)

Questions for Devotional Responses (first set)

There will be potential questions on at least a half dozen more of the assigned readings. No need to pick more than two from the following list.

Owen Strachan, "The Double-Minded Man..." (reading B2)

- Consider: Many (most?) scholars have simply declared the Epistle of James to be a simple call to obedience, with no true structure. Yet Strachan introduces a more interwoven view of the book and the argument James gives. (He has written more about this on his website; ask your teacher for the links if you are interested.)
 - a. In a couple of paragraphs, What is Strachan's argument as to the thesis of the Epistle of James?
 - b. Then for the remainder of your response:
 - ↘ What struck you most about James from reading this article?
 - ↘ Do you know a "double-minded" person in the way James and Strachan explain, and what could you plan on doing and saying to lovingly bring that person towards knowing Christ and potentially be saved?

G. Campbell Morgan, "1 Peter" (C)

- Consider each of the following questions in your response.
 - a. How do you see the "spirit of love" woven in Morgan's synopsis of 1st Peter? Does this book and Morgan's brief summary stir you to love God and others more? How or why not?
 - b. In discussing chapter four Morgan highlights the theme about the readers' "fiery trial" and how it should not seem "strange." This relates to chapter one, and the rest of the book. How would God comfort them as they face these trials?
 - c. What is the purpose of *your* suffering in light of 1st Peter? How does God comfort you with His presence in your hardships? Do you experience Him?

G. Campbell Morgan, "Hebrews" (F)

- Consider each of the following questions in your response.
 - a. The first chapter opens up with two key truths: (1) God, and (2) that God has revealed Himself? Pause and consider what that means... How do you think about our great God who has chosen to reveal Himself to us?
 - b. Jesus is the perfect Image of God, the "very image of His substance." How can we (and do *you*) see God clearly in Christ?
 - c. How does Morgan describe Jesus as "better" than all other aspects of the OT Jewish religion? Why does that matter?
 - d. Do the exhortations of Hebrews make you feel urged on to follow Christ more, or do they produce fear in you? (Or both, or something else?)

Jeff Patterson, "Hebrews: The Superiority of Jesus Christ" (G)

- Consider at least three of the following questions in your response.
- a. What is the value of 'walking' through the book of Hebrews, like was done on pages 11-20? Did that help you grasp the themes of Hebrews better?
 - b. What is your take on the five warning passages in Hebrews? Do you see them as warning against discipline or loss of (leaving) salvation, or something else? What purpose do they serve?
 - c. What is the importance of Jesus the Messiah's *humanity*? What is the import of Messiah's *divinity*?
 - d. What spoke to you from the Practical Lesson Plans?
 - e. Receiving the righteousness of God as part of the great exchange grants a redeemed sinner access to God. The Old Testament sacrificial system did not accomplish this, nor did it pretend to grant it. Without the righteousness of God, is it possible for any person to have access to God? Why/why not?
 - f. How do you think about martyrdom, in your own life? How do you feel you would respond if for the sake of Christ you were persecuted, even unto death? (The Christian has a unique hope when facing death. The stories recounted in Hebrews chapter 11 are stirring. Several Christian organizations report that more Christians have been martyred in the last century years than in the previous 1900 years since Christ's victory over death. Consider reading some of the stories of martyrs as a means of encouraging you in your life with Christ. Two helpful places to start are at persecution.com or reading *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*.)

Michael Nevens, "Contextual Summary of Hebrews 12" (H)

- Consider each of the following questions in your response.
- a. How do you see "discipline" from your Father, God?
 - b. How do you see Christ as your Example in receiving discipline from His Father, as you also receive discipline as a true son in the faith? What does that stir in you, and how does it mark how you see trials?
 - c. Nevens makes the argument that chapter 12 is climaxing in verses 12-13, the point of the argument of the passage. The disciplining taking place is from God their Father, and is a *family event*. How can we (you, me) today "make straight" and "build up" the weak as is argued?
 - d. Related, how can we look over the state of others so that they *persevere* and all *finish* the race marked out for them by God?