

Week 3 Day 1

Readings: Matthew 6:1-4; Acts 5:22-32; Psalm 15; Proverbs 4:1-6; Genesis 28-29.

Focus Verse: "Get wisdom! Get understanding! Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth." (Proverbs 4:5)

Key Concept: Quiet Charity (Matthew 6:1-4). The idea of charity has been abused for thousands of years. There are still those, like the hypocrites of Jesus' time, who use charity as a means of gaining recognition and respect in the community. There are many who are quick to tell of their acts of kindness toward others.

Quiet charity stands in stark contrast to the trumpet-blowing variety. Nothing is more heart-warming than to see the trails of good works left by godly people. Such trails are not marked by their words of boasting, but by the many admiring reports of those who have been helped. God will reward those who share because they care.

Action: Today, find occasion to do something nice for someone who really needs it--and then don't tell anyone!

Week 3 Day 2

Readings: Matthew 6:5-15; Acts 5:33-42; Psalm 16; Proverbs 4:7-13; Genesis 30.

Focus Verse: "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." (Matthew 6:14)

Key Concept: Quiet and Reverent Prayer (Matthew 6:5-15). Jesus' instructions on prayer emphasize the importance of sincere communication with God rather than self-righteous displays before men. His model of prayer shows that we are to approach God with reverence and respect for His will. He also shows the futility of prayer if we are not seeking to treat others properly. If we won't forgive, we won't be forgiven.

Action: Are there people who have wronged you that you've refused to forgive? If so, make correction today! Don't forget to humbly seek God's mercy.

Week 3 Day 3

Readings: Matthew 6:16-24; Acts 6; Psalm 17; Proverbs 4:14-19; Genesis 31.

Focus Verse: "Do not enter the path of the wicked, and do not walk in the way of evil." (Proverbs 4:14)

Key Concept: Treasures in Heaven (Matthew 6:19-21). It is so easy to become accustomed to this world that we forget where our true treasures should be. We are surrounded by things that will soon decay. We must remember to look at material possessions and pursuits from God's perspective. If our treasures are on earth, our home will not be in heaven!

Action: Evaluate your plans for the day. Will you be working toward economic advancement, career progress and retirement security? Will you be working to lay up eternal treasures? Keep the priorities straight!

Week 3 Day 4

Readings: Matthew 6:25-34; Acts 7:1-16; Psalm 18:1-19; Proverbs 4:20-27; Genesis 32-34.

Focus Verse: "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." (Matthew 6:33)

Key Concept: Overcoming Worry (Matthew 6:25-34). Jesus tells us to discard worry because it is futile and faithless. Worry doesn't change anything for the better (including stature and hair color), but it robs us of faith and trust in God. Satan effectively uses worry to distract us from our service to God. If he can get us preoccupied with fleshly concerns, he has no concern about us being spiritually victorious.

Action: Make your requests to God and use your energy today to change things that are in your power.

Week 3 Day 5

Readings: Matthew 7:1-6; Acts 7:17-36; Psalm 18:20-42; Proverbs 5:1-6; Genesis 35-36.

Focus Verse: "For by You I can run against a troop, And by My God I can leap over a wall." (Psalm 18:29)

Key Concept: Avoiding Hypocritical Judgment (Matthew 7:1-5). Jesus does not condemn righteous discernment, but does warn us to avoid the common tendency to judge by a double standard of hypocrisy. To demand perfection of others while tolerating and excusing our own failures is a display of an evil attitude. Yet Satan often uses the shortcomings of others to distract us from correcting our own sins.

Action: Apply this thought: "Time invested in improving ourselves cuts down on time wasted in disapproving of others."

Week 3 Day 6

Readings: Matthew 7:7-12; Acts 7:37-40; Psalm 18:43-50; Proverbs 5:7-14; Genesis 37.

Focus Verse: "The Lord lives! Blessed be my Rock! Let the God of my salvation be exalted." (Psalm 18:46)

Key Concept: "The Golden Rule" (Matthew 7:12). Jesus shows in a few words how God's standard of ethics surpasses all the human philosophies of vengeance and retribution. Our behavior toward others is not to be based on their actions toward us. We are to treat them as we desire to be treated. It is an easy concept to recite, but a challenge to apply!

Action: Measure every action today by this rule. Are you demonstrating the love and respect you would desire from others?

Week 3 Day 7

Readings: Matthew 7:13-20; Acts 7:51-60; Psalm 19; Proverbs 5:15-23; Genesis 38-40.

Focus Verse: "The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork." (Psalm 19:1)

Key Concept: Narrow and Wide Ways (Matthew 7:13-20). There are several significant implications of this text. We must recognize that few will be saved, thus seeing the need for caution in our service and haste in our efforts to rescue the perishing. We must be aware of the attractive and persuasive false teachers who would guide us down the broad way. We must judge others by their fruits, comparing their teaching with the standard of God's word.

Action: Keep pressing toward the heavenly goal, and take a friend along.