

Week 49 Day 1

Readings: John 14:19-24; 1 John 5:14-21; Psalm 124; Ecclesiastes 3:9-15; 2 Chronicles 4-5.

Focus Verse: "He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me." (John 14:24)

Key Concept: Do You Really Love Jesus? (John 14:23-24). "Love" is an easy word to say, but true love is much more than an empty expression of speech. Love is action. Notice what Jesus tells us about love in these two verses:

oLove for Jesus includes obedience of His instructions.

oWhen we show love for Jesus, His Father shows love for us.

oLove for Jesus results in fellowship with the Father and Son.

oDisobedience reflects an absence of love for Jesus.

oThe word we obey in love is not merely from Jesus, but came through Him from His Father.

Action: Demonstrate your love by respectful obedience of Jesus.

Week 49 Day 2

Readings: John 14:25-31; 2 John; Psalm 125; Ecclesiastes 3:16-22; 2 Chronicles 6.

Focus Verse: "Now, my God, I pray, let Your eyes be open and let Your ears be attentive to the prayer made in this place." (2 Chronicles 6:40)

Key Concept: "Then Hear from Heaven" (2 Chronicles 6). Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple in Jerusalem gives glory to the greatness of God (especially see v. 18) and displays great faith in the power of prayer. His refrain throughout the prayer is: "then hear from heaven Your dwelling place." Today, God still hears and responds to prayer. As we approach God in prayer, we need the trust and humility displayed here by a wise and powerful king.

Action: Pray today with confidence that God hears.

Week 49 Day 3

Readings: John 15:1-8; 3 John; Psalm 126; Ecclesiastes 4:1-8; 2 Chronicles 7-8.

Focus Verse: "The Lord has done great things for us, Whereof we are glad." (Psalm 126:3)

Key Concept: A Threshold of Blood (2 Chronicles 7:1-11). "King Solomon offered a sacrifice of 22,000 bulls and 120,000 sheep" (v. 5). Imagine the blood that flowed from the temple! Why such a gruesome sight (not to mention the odor) at the entrance to God's house? It reminded the people of the price of sin--the suffering and bloodshed required for them to approach God. People acquainted with the bloodstains at the temple entrance could appreciate the meaning of Christ's blood, as He offers access to the Most Holy Place.

Action: Thank the Lord for the unselfish sacrifice of Jesus. Don't ever forget the bloodstains at the door!

Week 49 Day 4

Readings: John 15:9-17; Jude 1-11; Psalm 127; Ecclesiastes 4:9-127; 2 Chronicles 9-10.

Focus Verse: "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." (John 15:12)

Key Concept: No Greater Love (John 15:13). Love is to be unselfish. It seeks the very best for another person. Therefore Jesus says that the greatest love is one that is willing to sacrifice life for the good of another. These words of Jesus are amplified by His own example--He demonstrated supreme love for people who regarded Him as an enemy! While it is possible that we will some day be asked to die to save another person, it is certain that we have opportunity to live to help others. We need to give of ourselves daily.

Action: Show that you love by seeking what is best for others.

Week 49 Day 5

Readings: John 15:18-27; Jude 12-25; Psalm 128; Ecclesiastes 4:13-16; 2 Chronicles 11-13.

Focus Verse: "And he did evil, because he did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord." (2 Chronicles 12:14)

Key Concept: Preparing the Heart (2 Chronicles 12:14). Our concepts of good and evil can often be oversimplified as we focus only on external actions. With such emphasis, we can do all of our teaching on specific applications, sometimes forgetting that outward actions are fruits reflecting the disposition of the heart. We should study and teach about actions, but we must also teach each other to prepare our hearts to seek the Lord. God wants more than outward forms. He wants inward dedication.

Action: As you study and pray today, focus on your heart.

Week 49 Day 6

Readings: John 16:1-4; Revelation 1; Psalm 129; Ecclesiastes 5:1-7; 2 Chronicles 14-17.

Focus Verse: "I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death." (Revelation 1:18)

Key Concept: A Picture of Power (Revelation 1). We often see Jesus depicted in weakness. Sometimes we see a baby in a manger. At other times we view a dying man hanging from a cross. Artists and film-makers often portray Jesus as a frail and weak-looking man. But Jesus is no longer a dependent baby or an abused man being crucified. He is the Awesome Ruler over all! When we struggle with temptation, we can look to our powerful Lord for aid (cf. Hebrews 2:14-18).

Action: Seek the help of the powerful Victor over death.

Week 49 Day 7

Readings: John 16:5-15; Revelation 2:1-11; Psalm 130; Ecclesiastes 5:8-12; 2 Chronicles 18-19.

Focus Verse: "Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love." (Revelation 2:4)

Key Concept: Leaving the First Love (Revelation 2:1-7). The Ephesian Christians had learned well the danger of tolerating error (cf. Acts 20:30-31; Ephesians 5:6; 1 Timothy 1:3). However, they had neglected an equally important responsibility--showing love (cf. Acts 20:35; Ephesians 5:2; 1 Timothy 1:5). Because of their imbalanced development, they were about to be rejected by Jesus Christ. We need to stand for truth at the same time that we display love toward God and other people.

Action: Review 1 Corinthians 13:1-8. It is a good summary of love in action.