

World Day of Prayer Bible Study

Bible Study 1 Advice for Living Matthew 5-7

Simple materials to have ready before you start:

- one large cardboard box, covered in advance with plain paper.
- several sheets A4 coloured paper
- one very small box each, which group members could be asked to bring (Have a few spare ones to hand)
- felt pens, coloured pencils, paints – whichever you wish
- Pritt sticks, or similar glue and spreaders, and/or Sellotape
- some further decorative materials, such as recycled wrapping paper, tissue paper, old magazines to cut up
- ask the group members to bring a Bible, use your church Bibles, or print out copies of Matthew Chapters 5-7



When your group gathers:

1. Open with a song (sing it, listen to it, or both!) that relates to any part of the Sermon on the Mount, such as, 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God.'
2. Invite people to see the big box as the 'rock' in the parable at the end of chapter 7; the foundation we build on.
3. Invite people to look through the chapters and copy out verses, as simply or elaborately as they wish, onto strips of paper cut from the A4 sheets, or footprint shapes. Glue or tape these onto the big box.

4. Intersperse the making time with continued singing or listening to songs related to these chapters, or sing and write simultaneously! Invite people to offer any other songs, remembered even from childhood, that put any of these verses into music.

This should all be a relaxed, informal time, gradually decorating the 'rock' with the teachings that give our lives a strong foundation.

When the big box is covered as much as the group wishes, each person could take their little box and decorate it with their name and any words of commitment, or simply some designs and patterns as they choose.



5. Finish with each person placing their little box on the 'rock' as a sign of building on the strong foundation of Jesus' teachings.
6. A final song could be sung ('The wise man built his house upon the rock' maybe!) or use the responses below, to finish.

For the Word of God in Scripture
Thanks be to God
For the Word of God among us
Thanks be to God
For the Word of God within us
Thanks be to God
Amen, Amen, Amen.

Bible Study 2 More Positive Teaching: Matthew 6

a retelling, with some paraphrasing, of familiar teachings of Jesus, with 'do not' reframed as 'do'.

Concerning charitable giving

“Practise your good habits quietly and unobtrusively, so that only God will see; for then you will have a reward from God in heaven. Whenever you give money voluntarily, do it simply and soundlessly. Keep the business of your left hand out of sight of your right hand. So your giving should be done in secret; and God who sees in secret will reward you.

Concerning Prayer

And whenever you pray, find a quiet place where you can be alone, out of the way of spectators. Whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

When you are praying, use simple, honest words, straight from your heart. Your few words, sincerely spoken, will be heard. Your Father knows what

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

Your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And guard us against the time of trial,
as you rescue us from the evil one.

For if you forgive others their trespasses,
your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

Concerning disciplines of denying

And whenever you practise a discipline of denying yourself something so as to concentrate on prayer, look content and normal, no different from how you look on any other day. Wash your hair and your face, so that your discipline keeping may be seen only by God who is in secret; and God who sees in secret will reward you.

Concerning Treasures

Keep yourselves detached and unconcerned with wealth, possessions and material gain, which can be consumed and broken and stolen; and store up for yourselves treasure in heaven – justice, compassion, peace - which last forever. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The Sound Eye

The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light; so make sure your eye stays well, so that your whole body will be spared the darkness. If the light in you keeps its brightness, the whole of you will be sound!

Serving One Master

You can serve only one master; a slave will only be devoted to one master. Be sure it is God you serve; God alone, your one and only Master.

Be Trusting

Therefore, I tell you, be trusting and content about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, and about your body, what you will wear. Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing! Be reminded of this by the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns - God feeds them. And you are of much more value to God than birds! Living in trust lets you savour every single hour of your span of life. And be content about clothing, reminded by the lilies of the field, how they grow, neither toiling nor spinning, yet surpassing Solomon in all his glory. God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven. How much more care he will take to clothe you. So live in trust, saying, 'Yes, we will eat' and 'Yes, we will drink' and 'Yes, we will have something to wear'. Trusting, you can let go of such concerns and rest in God who knows that you need all these things. But above everything, be concerned for the kingdom of God and God's righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

So have trust and be content about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring what it will. Today's living is enough for today."

Questions for Open Discussion: This chapter has seven sections of teaching. Which do you find most challenging? Most encouraging? Most important for you in following Jesus? What else comes to mind as you reflect on them? In what ways, if any, did you understand or appreciate these teachings differently by reading the chapter 'in the positive'?