

## DAILY BIBLE STUDY SHEET

*Daily meditation on the Word of God is imperative to our growth. As the people of God we should commitment reading Scripture every day. There are questions to help prompt your meditation. If you do not have a Bible, please contact the church office and one will be given to you. To locate the passages, use the Table of Contents to find the page number. The number before the colon will tell you the chapter to find. The numbers after the colon are the superscript numbers in your Bible indicating the verses to read.*

### **Monday, January 8<sup>th</sup> – Matthew 2:13-15**

In the Gospel of Matthew, we see an angel in a dream speaking once again to Joseph. This time it is to warn him to flee to Egypt to protect the child from Herod. A couple things come to mind when we read this passage. Today we look at the first thought—Free Will. Consider today that God protects the salvation of the world, for the time of his sacrifice has not arrived and mere humans cannot foil God's plan for salvation. But God does not take away Herod's free will, a will that will bring evil upon many a family in Bethlehem and the surrounding area. God's plan, which benefits all of humanity, including Herod, will come to pass, but the evil this salvation comes to destroy will first seek to destroy the salvation of God. Although children died during this time, we must remember that God's only son will die as well, at the appointed time and by the hands of evil. Consider how many times God gets blamed for the world's evil actions. If God took away free will to choose between good and evil, what would that be like? And would you want God to do that to you? Spend time today in prayer and consider the implications. Evil is evil, but evil does not overcome God's overall plan. Evil is man-made, while loving salvation is created by God to save creation. Do you want to lose your free will? How can your free will be used to prove your love for God and His salvation plan?

### **Tuesday, January 9<sup>th</sup> – Matthew 2:13-15**

Today we look at the second thing we should reflect on in this passage, the reason for evil: power and the need to maintain that power. It is what is in each of us, a need to be in control. Herod does not want to give up his comforts, power, or his rule to some new kid who will be king. Nor do we want to give up our self-perceived rights or comforts for anyone. This is true even in the church, the bride of Christ. And yet, it is when we give up control to God that the greatest and least expected things in our lives happen. As we begin this New Year, start by reflecting on where you hold on to control and power in your life. What do you need to yield to Jesus this year? Where do you need to lay down your sword and let the power of God be in charge? How will you intentionally turn to God for guidance in all areas of your life? How will you let God take control, so you can move forward, free from worries, concerns, and trials when they arise? How could 2018 be the best year ever with you and God?

### **Wednesday, January 10<sup>th</sup> – Matthew 26:1-5**

We saw early in Matthew the plot to kill Jesus. We are now at the end of Matthew and Jesus, a full-grown man, still has people plotting to kill him. What is so interesting is that most of these were not involved in the early plot of King Herod. No, these are the high priests and Jewish leaders, Jesus' own people. Consider verse 5. How does it point to evil plotting? How does it show premeditation? To riot during the holy days would mean that the celebration of Passover might be refused and the Jews would rebel against the priests. They would also be risking a loss in power in Pilate's eyes, thus being removed from power because they could not keep the crowds under control. How do we plot our sins? What justifications do we use to maintain our power and control? How are we like the chief priests? Today, consider where you have the feeling of losing control and consider where you fight to keep it. Is this fight in God's will? Is this fight for God or against God? How do you know?

### **Thursday, January 11<sup>th</sup> – Romans 8:1-9**

We have spent time considering where we get entangled in maintaining control and power in our lives – sinning and plotting against God, rather than walking and living in harmony with Him. Today's passage contains words of empowerment and encouragement to those of us who keep falling into this pattern. We have power, but the power is the power of the Holy Spirit, who lives within us. It is the power that frees us from having to be in control and under the control of sin. It is the power that stops us from trying to manipulate God by trying to earn God's love, when His spirit within us tells us we were loved so much Jesus came to break the evil power, and allows us to live in freedom from needing to be in control. Take time to be led by the Spirit today. When things get tough or frightening, when worry begins to rise, tune into praising God and relying on the Holy Spirit. Thank God and seek to please God. Remember Bible passages that strengthen and encourage. Read and maybe even memorize this passage, so you can live free of these things. See what a difference living free in the Spirit can make in your life.

### **Friday, January 12<sup>th</sup> – 1 Corinthians 1:26-31**

Gratitude and boasting – the need to be needed and appreciated. How does this backfire when it becomes the end-all, when our self-worth is wrapped up in public appreciations and pats on the back? Could it be possible this actually steals our joy? Are we boasting in the Lord and his works or seeking self-gratification? Appreciation is necessary as an encouragement – but is God's appreciation and relationship enough, when you don't go public? What do you boast about? Where do you find yourself in the contentment continuum? Are you able to be at peace and happy knowing that what you do, you do for the glory of Jesus, who did all for humanity? Or do you constantly need the public affirmations – public pats on the back – public kudos? Why do you do what you do for the Kingdom? Is it for your glory or God's glory? And if it is for God's glory, who should we boast about? Pray and ask God to reveal your heart to you today, so that you can truly know whether you are boasting for your own glory or boasting in the Lord for Christ's glory.

### **Saturday, January 13<sup>th</sup> – Prepare for tomorrow by reading Matthew 3:13-17.**