

DAILY BIBLE STUDY SHEET

Daily meditation on the Word of God is imperative to our growth. As the people of God, we should commit to 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, March 7th – James 5:13-18

Welcome to week one in our journey to the cross and the empty tomb. It will be a time of opportunity to begin practicing and maturing in our lives as believers. This week we will study prayer and what a mature prayer life looks like. We start in the Book of James and his description of the power of prayer. When does James say prayer should take place (vss. 13-14)? Singing praise, in verse 13 is a form of prayer. Just read the Psalms, songs, and prayers of David. What should the prayers of the sick be accompanied by (vs. 14)? There is no magic in the oil but an outward sign of God's healing grace. The use of oil and medicine are used in both the Old and New Testament. This demonstrates the spiritual and physical coming together as one to heal. But make no mistake, God does the healing. What kind of prayers are to be offered for those who are sick (vs. 15)? Note, it is not the one who is sick who is to have this faith but those who are called to pray for the sick. Besides healing, what other cure comes from these prayers (vs. 15b)? As we move on, what else are we called to do (vs. 16)? Why does confessing your sin out loud to others heal? How does having your close friends praying for you help in that healing? In 16b, you see the reason confession is good for the soul. What kind of person has great power in their prayers? Who is the example James gives of a righteous man and powerful prayers? In this particular person's case, this is just one example of the power of prayer. There are many more! Consider today the power of your prayers. Are they the prayers of a righteous person? Are they prayers that are continual, that is, in times of suffering, in times of joy, in illness, in times when temptation led to sin? Do you see healing and transformation? If not, why not? Where might you need to ask for help in maturing in your prayer life?

Tuesday, March 8th – James 1:5-8

We return to James today but back to chapter 1 now. To ask God for anything is a form of prayer. Prayer is simple a conversation with God. It is the way we are drawn deeper into God. What does James say about God's response when we ask for things like wisdom (vs. 5)? Wisdom is important because wisdom keeps us moving along the right paths and with a focus on Jesus. We need wisdom. But this lesson does not discount other things we may ask God for that will honor Him and draw us closer. What is it that James says that gets in the way of God answering that prayer (vss. 6-7)? In verse 8, James clearly delineates what a divided loyalty looks like. What is the delineation (vs. 8)? Now let's pause here and consider the things we ask God for daily. Are they things that will draw us closer and deeper into God, into the center of Jesus, or are they things we ask for because of a heart still tied to worldly desires? It is good to ask for healing for folks, but why are you asking for it? It is good to ask for relationship healing or financial security, but why are you asking for it? Remember God knows our hearts' motives, even when we may not. What do you believe about God? Jesus? The role of the Holy Spirit in prayer? Answer these questions seriously and honestly, since they will point out whether or not your loyalty is divided. If it is (and for most, if not all of us, it is!), then pray today asking for help to be less divided every day and for the Spirit to lead you in prayer. Then pray.

Wednesday, March 9th – Matthew 6:5-13

We move to a prayer we all know. In fact, because we know it so well, we sometimes just say it without really thinking it through. This prayer was taught to the disciples as an example of form. It works as a corporate prayer as well when the people of God join together in prayer. Hence the opening phrase "OUR Father." Today let's look at the prayer as a format of things that should be in a believer's prayer life. Learning this format will help us go deeper and mature in our prayer lives. Read through the prayer (vss. 9-13). Looking at the structure of the prayer, what topics would be covered if we formatted our prayers this way? Take a moment and write them down. We would start with praise and adoration of God for who He is. Next, we should pray for His work in the world to be accomplished, starting with us. Pray for our daily needs (not monthly, yearly, etc.) and for help in our daily struggles. Did your list match this? Now take this format and write out a prayer to God. What would your prayer say? Jesus says a lot about how we pray. What does Jesus tell us not to do (vss. 5-8)? Did you notice that verse 9 comes on the heels of verses 7-8? How are they tied together? What is Jesus eliminating by providing this structure? Now consider your prayer life. What words do you say over and over? Are they necessary? Is it habit? Where might you need to grow in your prayer time? Ask the Holy Spirit for help.

Thursday, March 10th – Ephesians 6:18

Today we have one verse that is so fully packed, it is like ten verses. So much in twenty-three words (at least in my translation). What is the first thing we are told to do when it comes to prayer? How often do you just start praying without the Holy Spirit? Next, how often are we to pray? You realize that every conversation we have, every place we are, is to be prayer to God. That will draw us deeper, won't it? Why do you think, based on what we have studied so far, that Paul calls us to "stay alert?" How easy is it for you to be drawn into the world from the Kingdom life? Persistence comes next. What does it mean to be persistent? Look it up if you are not sure. Are you persistent about your prayer life as a believer? For whom are our prayers to be persistent? Ponder how maturing in your prayer life like this would draw you deeper into Christ. How would this make you more useful to Christ? How might this be your richest treasure? Don't forget to ask for help. You need the Spirit. Oh yeah, that is how this text starts!

Friday, March 11th – Revelation 8:3-4

We close this first week of Lent and the call to maturing in our prayer life with why it matters so much? Read our text for today. Do you ever feel like you are praying and praying, and nothing is happening? This text tells us something is happening, even if we don't see it or sense it. Our prayers are being collected in heaven and incense is being added to them and they are ascending to God on the throne. Now for a bonus, read verse 5. At the right time, God will send us our answers. At the end of time all the prayers we made will be answered. Why? Because God is faithful. Our deepest, heartfelt, godly prayers will be answered. And the prayers that are not heartfelt and godly will not be answered, but we won't care then. We have learned a lot about maturing in our prayer life this week. We may not remember it all and we may not be able to incorporate it all. But start by asking the Holy Spirit to mature you in your prayer life. Maybe it starts with just setting aside time for quiet prayer using the format Jesus gave us. Maybe it is practicing prayer at all times and in all places. Maybe you need to mature in your loyalty when you pray? Or maybe you just need to make a commitment to pray with others to get the pump primed. The point is to ask the Holy Spirit to start showing you and maturing you in your prayer life, if this is where you know you need to mature.

Saturday, March 12th - For tomorrow, please read John 14:12-14 – Scout Sunday!