

Guided Bible Study: Week 4

April 11-17, 2020

During the time we cannot meet publicly due to the Corona Virus emergency, Rick is going to post a guided Bible study on here to help fill the void left by not having Sunday School and Wednesday night classes. We encourage you to read the passage in the Bible together with your family. Questions and brief comments to help guide your study appear here. We are going to feature Jesus' SERMON ON THE MOUNT from Matthew chapters 5-7. We will post the study for a new section of this passage each week.

Matthew 6.9: Jesus doesn't give this prayer as a ritual to be repeated but as a guide for effective and meaningful prayer. He didn't say, "Pray these words" or "Repeat these words". He says, "This, then, is how you should pray."

What's the very first thing He starts with? Praise to God, saying back to God in our words just how holy and awesome He is and that we, indeed, think of Him as a loving heavenly Father.

"Hallowed" has the idea of holy. Do we take time to reckon with just how holy God is? Do we praise His holiness? DISCUSS: Would we do a better job of living holy lives if we thought more about how holy God is and praised Him for it? Would the idea of holiness be more on our hearts and minds if we did?

Matthew 6.10: God's kingdom, in my understanding, is Christ's church. At the time Jesus gave this model prayer the church had not yet been established. Now it has, so the corresponding element in our prayers is to ask God to bless the work of Christ's church. Do you pray for our local congregation? Do you pray for things like our camp and the church planting efforts of the Men's Fellowship? Do you pray for missionaries and campus ministries that you know about? Do you pray for persecuted Christians around the world? DISCUSS: Discuss with your family people and Christian organizations they can think of that would be good to pray for. Take a few moments and pray for them.

The next part of this verse teaches us to pray that God's will be done down here on earth just as it is in heaven. DISCUSS: What did Jesus pray in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before He went to the cross? [See Matthew 26.39, 42] If Jesus prayed for God's will to be done when the stakes were so high for Himself, shouldn't we in all things big and small?

Matthew 6.11: In First Century Judea, bread was considered a necessity. It often stood as an expression for the basic food needs for an individual. From this we learn to pray for our NECESSITIES, not luxuries. We pray for needs, not wants. [DISCUSS this verse along with James 4.1-3]

Matthew 6.12: As Christians, we are taught to pray for forgiveness. [See Acts 8.22 and I John 1.9] This is an important discipline for us who are saved by God's grace. It keeps us from getting careless about sin. It helps us stay faithful and connected to Jesus. That seems really simple.

Then Jesus hits us right between the eyes. He says to pray for God to forgive us in the same way we have forgiven those who have wronged us. That might not be hard if we've had only minor things happen to us but if we've endured a major wrong, that can be very difficult. Remember that forgiveness does not necessarily mean forgetting...that's nigh impossible. Forgiveness means we no longer seek our own revenge. We are going to treat with love and grace the person who has wronged us, just like Jesus does to us. Folks let's forgive!

Note that praying for forgiveness is a privilege for those in Christ. If you have not yet become a Christian, to be forgiven you must first become one, accepting what Jesus did for you in His death and resurrection. Check out these verses to learn how to do that: John 3.16, Matthew 10.32, and Acts 2.38.

Matthew 6.13: This is easy to say and, sometimes, hard to do with meaning. Certainly we want to be delivered from the evil one (the devil), but do we really want to avoid temptation? God has promised that we won't be tempted beyond what we can handle. [See I Corinthians 10.13] This verse here in the Model Prayer is teaching us to pray for God to make that way of escape evident and even to keep the temptations from coming in the first place. DISCUSS: Do we really want to avoid sin? Do we really want to not be led into temptation?

At the end of this verse some translations end by inserting closing words of praise. Certainly the kingdom, power, and glory belong to God. We, as His people, should thank and praise Him regularly.

Close this study by simply taking time to pray. Guided by this model.