

# Weekly Study Guide

The week of May 8, 2016

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Wish to view the message again? Go to [vimeo.com/flcwb](http://vimeo.com/flcwb). Will you be out of town soon? Watch online at [livestream.com/flcwb](http://livestream.com/flcwb). Desire to ask Pastor Steve a question about today's message? Contact him at 651.429.5349 x215 or [sturnbull@flcwb.org](mailto:sturnbull@flcwb.org).

## SOUL TRAINING EXERCISES

### Option 1:

*Christian growth takes practice. Nobody runs a marathon with their first step out the door. Use these weekly "soul training exercises" to help you practice cooperating with the Holy Spirit so you can hear and walk by the Spirit's leading all throughout your life.*

You can be a secret service agent! Try to do 3-5 acts of service for other people this week without them knowing about it. They can be strangers or people close to you. If you "get caught," don't lie about it, but don't draw any attention to yourself or your actions. Practice knowing your own value by serving and valuing others secretly.

### Option 1 & 2:

*Regular habits of private Bible reading strengthen our relationship with God and teach us how to follow Jesus. In addition to the thematic exercise above, you can use this guide each week to lead you through relevant sections of the Bible.*

### MONDAY

Matthew 12:1-21

### TUESDAY

Matthew 12:22-37

### WEDNESDAY

Matthew 12:38-50

### THURSDAY

Matthew 13:1-23

### FRIDAY

Matthew 13:24-46

### SATURDAY

Matthew 13:47-58

# Group Discussion

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## CONNECT

This is the week of Mother's Day. Share one reason you are thankful for your mother.

## THIS WEEK'S LEARNING GOAL

This week we are learning to receive our value and security from God so we can be freed from self-oriented pride and insecurity and communicate love and value to others.

## LEARNING FROM THE BIBLE TOGETHER

**Read Matthew 6:1-4.** Jesus is being critical of the actions of people who make seemingly generous gifts in order to impress other people. Historically, these gifts ("alms" in most translations) were extra gifts to help the poor; above and beyond regular "tithes" (10% of one's income to support the Temple and worship life of the community).

- Is Jesus being critical of the practice of generosity?
- How would you describe the problem Jesus is addressing?
- Do you think this means all giving and generosity must be done in secret? Why or why not?

**Read Matthew 6:5-8.** Here Jesus gives some similar instructions about how people were praying.

- What does Jesus say not to do?
- What would you say is the root issue here?
- Do you struggle more with being proud of your impressive public prayers or with feeling awkward or embarrassed about praying out loud? If it's the latter (feeling awkward or embarrassed), what do you think you are afraid of?
- Could the same truth that discourages showy prayers (that we're not praying in order to be noticed by other people) actually encourage you if you feel awkward about praying out loud?

In this week's message we heard that arrogance and insecurity are often symptoms of the same problem or two sides of the same coin. Do you think that's true? Have you ever had that experience or done so with someone else?

Pastor Steve shared a working definition of humility in this week's message: "Humility isn't thinking less of yourself; it's thinking of yourself less." What makes it possible to think of yourself less without being forced to think less of yourself?

How could our relationships and conversations be different if we didn't need validation from others but were free and empowered to communicate value to others?

## **SOUL TRAINING EXERCISE**

As a group, recall last week's soul training exercise (prayer for those still far from God). Did you learn or experience anything you'd like to share with your group? Now, look at the soul training exercises on the front of this study guide and get ready to practice them this week. Is there a particular time of day or some other specific commitment which would help you succeed in doing these exercises?

## **PRAY**

In today's readings Jesus encouraged short prayers. Try going around your group today and allowing everyone to pray just one word or phrase out loud. You might say, "for my children" or "for work" or "for health" or "for my mother" or anything else you'd like to pray for.



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