

Weekly Study Guide

The week of May 22, 2016

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Learning to Live Without Greed

Things I'd like to remember about today's message...

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.

This is an exercise in de-accumulation. Try to give away five things this week. You can give them to an individual or to a charity, but be thoughtful about how you give. A personal friend may not want your old running shoes! This will be harder for some people than others, but it's a good opportunity to loosen your bonds on things which may have too strong a grip on you.

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 17:1-13

TUESDAY

Matthew 17:14-27

WEDNESDAY

Matthew 18:1-14

THURSDAY

Matthew 18:26-35

FRIDAY

Matthew 19:1-12

SATURDAY

Matthew 19:13-30

Group Discussion

CONNECT

What was the first thing you can remember that you bought yourself? Why do you think that purchase is memorable to you?

THIS WEEK'S LEARNING GOAL

We are learning this week to live without the deception of greed; finding greater joy in life when our material resources align with purposes of heaven.

LEARNING FROM THE BIBLE TOGETHER

Read Matthew 6:19-21.

- Jesus teaches his followers not to store up “treasures on earth.” Give some examples of treasures on earth, things that seem like they will bring a lot more joy and happiness than they actually do.
- Why do you think that people are so prone to seek happiness in things?
- Jesus teaches his followers to store up “treasures in heaven” instead. We learned in this week’s message it doesn’t mean earning rewards in the afterlife. It means investing in the priorities of what Jesus called “the Kingdom of Heaven” or “the Kingdom of God.” What do you think could be practical examples of Kingdom treasures?
- What makes Kingdom treasure a better way to spend our money?

Read Matthew 6:25-34. Some Christians have misunderstood this passage, imagining that Jesus was telling people not to work or earn a living, as if Jesus were saying, “You don’t have to do anything; God will simply provide.” But sparrows and lilies both did what they were made to do, and we know that Jesus’ first followers continued to work in their trades. The emphasis in this passage is on what we “worry” about (verses 25, 27, 28, and 31) and what we “run after” (verse 32) or “seek” (verse 33).

- What does Jesus say not to worry about or run after?
- What should we run after or seek instead?
- Are you prone to worry about material resources?

Group Discussion (continued)

- Why would worry be unnecessary in a community of people who seek first the Kingdom of God?

In what ways do you think you might be too invested in “treasures on earth”?

How might Jesus be leading you to divest from treasure on earth and invest in or seek first the Kingdom of Heaven?

SOUL TRAINING EXERCISES

As a group, recall last week’s soul training exercise (asking for the Holy Spirit’s guidance). 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 that would help you succeed in doing these exercises?

PRAY

Share your prayer concerns with one another. If you’re comfortable with it, go around the group and pray for one thing for the person on your left.



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