

We Believe

Personal Study Guides

MAY 8 - JUNE 26, 2022





We Believe

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SPIRITUAL MATURITY—PRAYER

MATTHEW 6:9-13

MAY 8, 2022

PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

- 1** If you had been alive when Jesus walked the earth, what do you think would have stood out to you about Him the most?

- 2** Are there any question(s) you would like to sit down with Jesus and ask Him to explain to you now?

UNDERSTANDING

> *Read Matthew 6:9-13.*

- **How do the first few words of this prayer describe God? Why is it significant that Jesus said we should address God as our Father in heaven?**

- **How do Christians honor God's name as holy? How should this petition shape our own prayers?**

- **The holiness of God is hard for many people to reconcile with the Fatherhood of God. How does Jesus make us able to relate to God in a personal way?**

- **How has God revealed Himself to you as Father?**

- **What attributes of God as Father are most important to you? Why?**

- **What can we learn about our relationship with God as our Father from Jesus's petition in verse 10?**
- **What does it mean for a person to pray for God's kingdom to come and will to be done on earth as it is in heaven?**
- **What is the means by which God brings about His kingdom in the world? What is our part in this?**
- **Why ought we pray for something that God is certainly going to do?**
- **Read again through the list of petitions made in verses 11-13. What stands out to you the most?**
- **How does God provide all of these needs for us?**
- **Reread verses 12-13. What are we acknowledging to be true about God's character when we humbly ask for forgiveness?**
- **Why do you think asking for forgiveness is so difficult for many people?**
- **Why should we pray that God won't lead us into temptation?**

- **How would your prayer life change if you prayed from a resolute posture of victory in Christ? What obstacles tend to keep you from doing so?**

- **How is God's desire to meet the needs Jesus addressed in the model prayer related to His Fatherhood?**

- **When have you experienced God as He met these needs for you?**

- **How would praying to God as Father change the way that you pray?**

APPLICATION

- 1 Are your times of prayer more often about you and what you want or about God and His glory? How are you challenged by today's study in this regard?**

- 2 How do you allow the promises of God found in Scripture to excite your prayers and petitions? How much desire do you have for the coming of God's kingdom? How might we stir one another up in this desire?**

- 3 How should our praying for God's kingdom to come motivate us to share the truth of the gospel with others?**

PRAY

Let the Lord's model prayer shape how you pray now. Pray for God's name to be honored in your own life. Repent of any sin that the Lord has revealed to you. Pray for God's kingdom to come across the earth, but first and foremost in your own heart and our local church. Pray with joy and confident anticipation. Pray for God's will as revealed in the Scriptures to be done in your own life. Pray that you would obey God's Word with faith and that He will accomplish His purposes in your life even if it means your own will being left undone.

SPIRITUAL MATURITY—BIBLE STUDY

PSALM 1:1-6

MAY 15, 2022

PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

- 1 **If you could spend this week doing some of your favorite things, what would that include?**

- 2 **What is it about those activities that you enjoy so much?**

- 3 **Who would you want to join you in those activities? What is it about that person or those people that makes you enjoy spending time with them so much?**

UNDERSTANDING

> *Read Psalm 1:1-3.*

- **How would you express what it means to be “blessed”? What does it not mean?**

 - **What are the marks of one who is “blessed,” according to verses 1-3?**

 - **Verse 1 emphasizes that blessed people detach themselves from certain things. How does this view of blessing stand in contrast to the current cultural view of what it means to be happy or blessed?**

 - **The verbs in verse 1 increase in intensity. Why is it easy to slowly drift from God’s ways and make increasing room for sin in your life?**
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- **Verse 2 is a positive command to contrast the negative command of verse 1. Why is it important to remember that God is not trying to keep things from us, but wants to give us something through His Word?**
- **Read Psalm 119:11. What are some examples of how to practice this type of meditation where our time is spent attaching ourselves to God and treasuring Him?**
- **Read Hebrews 4:12. What does true biblical meditation give us that cannot be found anywhere else? Why is this something we desperately need?**
- **How can we stir up our delight for God's Word, even in seasons or days when it isn't naturally there?**

> *Read Psalm 1:4-5.*

- **Thinking back to the point that different people define words different ways, how might a modern person in our culture define the word "wicked"?**
 - **Why must we learn to define basic ideas like happiness, wickedness, and blessing from God's perspective?**
 - **Who are the wicked in this text? How is their life described?**
 - **How does this picture speak to us about sharing the gospel?**
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> Read Psalm 1:6.

- **What encouragement do you find in verse 6? Why?**

- **What warning is there for those who reject God?**

APPLICATION

- 1 **What is most influential in shaping your heart and your thinking right now? Is it God or is it something else? Is there anything you need to detach yourself from?**

- 2 **Does reading God's Word bring you delight or does it feel more like a duty? What rhythms help foster a love and need for God's Word?**

- 3 **How might regular meditation on the truth of God's Word help you as you seek to have gospel conversations?**

PRAY

Pray that you would not only be a reader of God's Word, but one who delights in it. Ask God to help you approach your meditation not only with consistency but also faith, believing He will speak to you as you open His Word.

SPIRITUAL MATURITY—SERVING

MARK 9:33-37

MAY 22, 2022

PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

- 1 **Who do you consider to be the “greatest” athlete? Musician? Actor? Inventor?**

- 2 **What is something people might say you’re great (or good) at doing? What motivated or motivates you to do that well?**

- 3 **What is something you’d like to be great at doing?**

UNDERSTANDING

> *Read Mark 9:33-37.*

- **From verses 33-34, what was on the disciples’ minds as they traveled to Capernaum? How might the experiences of Mark 9:1-29 have contributed to the development of their thoughts about greatness?**

- **What indication is there that the disciples were not especially proud of the argument they had on the way to Capernaum?**

- **Is this the kind of environment that God wants to create at FBC Hendersonville? In your family? At your workplace? In your community? Explain.**

- **What tends to distract our focus and keep the kind of greatness Jesus described from happening?**

- **Is there a person with whom you feel you must always compare and compete? What does our tendency to compare ourselves and compete with others reveal about our hearts?**
- **What point was Jesus making by using a child as an object lesson in this context?**

> *Read Matthew 20:20-28.*

- **What did Jesus say about true greatness in this passage?**
- **What are some attitudes and obstacles that keep us from serving God and people?**
- **Why is serving an important spiritual practice in your relationship with God?**

> *Read Galatians 5:13-14.*

- **In what relationship(s) or scenario is it easy for you to think of others first? When is it hard to think of others first?**
- **What are some biblical examples of servant-minded indulgence toward others?**
- **Express verse 13 in your own words.**

- **Paul wrote that Christians are called to be free. How did the disciples in Mark 9 and Matthew 20 misunderstand and misuse that freedom? What are some ways Christians today might misunderstand or misuse that freedom?**

- **What does love have to do with this (v. 13)? Why do you think Paul included the phrase “through love” with his instruction about serving others?**

- **How is the whole law fulfilled in the one command, “Love your neighbor as yourself”?**

- **As long as you’re serving others, does your attitude or motivation really matter? Explain.**

APPLICATION

- 1 Jesus perfectly modeled the true standard of kingdom greatness. No one is greater than He is, yet He came to serve. What are some attitudes and obstacles that keep us from serving God and people?**

- 2 In what relationship or situation do you need to hear Jesus say, “Not so with you. Serve others” (Matthew 20:26)?**

- 3 What changes would take place in your life this week if you were to truly serve others in the greater way Jesus showed and taught?**

PRAY

Thank Jesus, the Lord and Ruler over everything, who came to the world as a humble servant so that you might be saved. Ask Him to help you live humbly as He did, looking for opportunities each day to serve and meet the needs of other people.

SPIRITUAL MATURITY—EVANGELISM

MATTHEW 28:16-20

MAY 29, 2022

PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

- 1 **If someone asked you what the point of life was, what would you say?**

- 2 **What about you? If you were to state the purpose of your life in one sentence, what would it be?**

- 3 **With whom is it natural for you to talk about your faith in Jesus Christ? Has it always been natural with that person or has that developed over time? Explain.**

- 4 **Who do you think (or know) it would feel awkward to talk with about your faith in Jesus Christ? Explain.**

UNDERSTANDING

> *Read Matthew 28:16-20.*

- **Is worship your first response when you see Jesus alive and at work in your life? How can you look for Jesus and respond in worship this week?**

- **Based on this passage, where does evangelism happen?**

- **If we are commanded to go into the world, then why do so many Christians leave evangelism up to preachers in Sunday morning services? What is the problem with that approach?**

- **What is the relationship between evangelism and discipleship? Why is it impossible to separate the two?**
- **The primary way people come to Jesus is through hearing the gospel. Why are words necessary in evangelism? Why isn't it enough for you to simply "let your light shine" by example?**

> *Read Mark 1:16-18.*

- **What do you think made Simon and Andrew leave behind everything they knew to follow Jesus?**
- **What did Jesus promise to do for these men who followed Him?**
- **Why do you think Jesus chose to use the metaphor of fishing?**
- **How do you think Jesus views the people you come in contact with every day? How might that be different than the way you view them?**
- **Who is one person you know that embodies focus on others for the sake of the gospel?**
- **What kind of habits characterize their lives?**

> *Read John 1:29-51.*

- **What can we learn from the way John talked with his disciples about Jesus? What stands out to you?**

- **In John 1:38, why do you think Jesus asked the two men, "What are you looking for?" Based on their response in John 1:38-39, what do we learn about being followers of Jesus?**

- **After spending the day with Jesus, what did Andrew do in John 1:40-42? What does Andrew's response teach us about our purpose?**

- **What was Nathanael's initial reaction in verse 46? How did Philip respond?**

- **What did Nathanael affirm about Jesus in verse 49? What cured his skepticism? What led him to this new understanding of the truth?**

APPLICATION

- 1 **Have you ever considered that not sharing your faith is a sin? Obviously, that doesn't mean every word that comes out of your mouth should be a gospel presentation. How then do you know when it is a sin to not share the gospel?**

- 2 **How does it affect your willingness to witness to others about the gospel if you realize you're not responsible for getting "results"?**

- 3 **In Matthew 28:20, Jesus told the disciples to teach others everything He commanded them. We've discussed the importance of using words in evangelism. In addition to speaking about Jesus, what else does teaching others about Him involve?**

- 4 **What is one practical step you can take to make sure you are fishing for people as Jesus desires?**

PRAY

Thank God for the command to go and make disciples and the power to do it. Ask Him to give you the faith and courage this week to go share the gospel with others and join First Baptist Hendersonville in the task of connecting people to a relationship with the Lord.

SPIRITUAL MATURITY—DISCIPLE

2 TIMOTHY 2:1-2

JUNE 5, 2022

PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

- 1 **Have you ever tried to “fake it ‘til you make it” in a job or task? Did you pull it off, or was your lack of adequate training obvious?**

- 2 **Would you say you received adequate training for the job you currently have or a job you once had? Why or why not?**

- 3 **Who has modeled the kind of work ethic and skill you want to emulate?**

- 4 **Why is it so important to pass along faith to others? What would happen if we didn’t pass it along?**

UNDERSTANDING

> *Read 2 Timothy 2:1.*

- **How did Paul’s life circumstances impact the purpose of his second letter to Timothy?**

- **In your own words, what commands did Paul give Timothy?**

- **What does it mean to “be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus”?**

- **How often in your daily life do you find yourself asking Jesus for His power and direction? Why? Why do you think we tend to try and accomplish even the work of God in our own strength?**
- **In what ways does the “grace that is in Christ Jesus” empower or enable? Ask a volunteer to read Ephesians 2:8-9 and Colossians 2:6-7 for insight.**
- **Why do we need the grace of Jesus in order to be disciplined and disciple others?**
- **What does it look like to rely on God’s strength instead of your own to disciple other people?**

> *Read 2 Timothy 2:2.*

- **Paul called on Timothy to teach others to live out God’s truth. What did that process look like for Timothy? What are some ways we do that today?**
 - **Why do you think Paul used the word “commit” in this verse? What does that word imply?**
 - **In what way is the calling of all Christians the same? In what ways is it different?**
 - **What about you: What does disciple-making look like in this season of your life? If you are unsure, what is a step you can take to figuring that out?**
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- **Is every Christian called to make disciples? Why or why not?**
- **Why is it significant that Paul said Timothy should commit the message to “faithful” men?**
- **How does this draw the distinction between the call to discipleship and the call to evangelism?**
- **How did Jesus model this pattern for us?**

> *Read Philippians 3:7-11.*

- **Before coming to faith in Christ, how did Paul define success in life (vv. 5-6)? How did his perspective change after coming to faith in Jesus (vv. 7-11)?**
 - **What did Paul focus his life on?**
 - **Does Paul’s goal in verse 10 sound easy or difficult for you? Why?**
 - **Based on these verses, what is the goal of discipleship? Can we grow into spiritual maturity without being disciplined and discipling others? Explain.**
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APPLICATION

- 1 **What in your life distracts you from making every effort to be discipled into Christ's likeness? What distracts you from discipling others? How might you overcome these distractions?**

- 2 **What qualifications does one need to become a disciple-maker? How might you be a mentor, instructor, or encourager to others in our church?**

- 3 **A good reproducible model for discipleship is to always have a Paul—someone you are learning from—and a Timothy—someone you are investing in. Who is your Paul, and who is your Timothy?**

- 4 **When we are making disciples, how important is it to communicate the importance of living in community with other Christians? How could you model and teach this truth?**

PRAY

Thank God for the example of Paul and Timothy. Thank God for the example of faithful men and women who have taught you the gospel and modeled it before you. Pray that God would give you the chance to reinvest what you have learned about Him into another person.

THE CHURCH

HEBREWS 10:24-25

JUNE 12, 2022

PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

- 1 **What is a group or cause you have taken efforts to join at some point in your life (i.e. high school basketball team, church choir, a college campus organization)? What motivated you to be a part of that group?**
- 2 **What happens when people bring a "membership club" mindset into the church? What problems might that cause?**
- 3 **When you think about church membership, what comes to mind? Are there requirements? Privileges? Responsibilities?**

UNDERSTANDING

> *Read Hebrews 10:24.*

- **We tend to think of the word "provoke" in a negative connotation, but Hebrews 10:24 uses the word positively. What does it mean to "provoke" someone to love and good works?**
- **Why do Christians, who have received the love of Christ and are committed to following Him, need to be provoked to show love and do good works?**
- **What does considering one another have to do with this?**

- **How does First Baptist Hendersonville encourage you to obey God and love others? Is there anything we can change in our group to help us more effectively provoke one another to love and good works?**
- **In your own words, describe the joy you find in navigating life with others in Christian community.**
- **What challenges are there in the pursuit of provoking others to love and good works?**
- **What would our church and this group be like if we never encouraged each other to live out Christ's commands?**

> *Read Hebrews 10:25.*

- **What's the big deal about coming to church? What can happen to a Christian when he or she does not gather regularly with the church?**
- **How does the word "habit" help you understand what this instruction in verse 25 does and doesn't mean?**
- **What are some common reasons why Christians today don't commit to regularly meeting together as a church?**

- **How is the church affected when individual believers don't commit to Christian community?**

- **In the past couple of years of the COVID-19 pandemic, we've all experienced separation from the body of Christ, at least physically to some extent. How would you describe the difficulty of not being in close proximity to your church family?**

- **How well do we as a group urge one another to: Do the right thing? Confront sin in one another's lives? Comfort one another when someone is hurting? What can we do better?**

- **Why do you think the writer of Hebrews included that last phrase, "and all the more as you see the day approaching"? What does this teach you about Christian community?**

APPLICATION

- 1 Based on this passage, how important is it for you to be part of a Christian community? Explain.**

- 2 Do you consider yourself responsible for provoking others to love and good works, or do you tend to think someone else should do that instead? Why?**

- 3 What are some practical ways we can "provoke love and good works" in one another this week?**

PRAY

Thank God for the gift of Christian community through the local church. Ask Him to show you opportunities to provoke other believers to love and good works, to give you the courage to step into those opportunities in the fullness of His truth and grace, and for the humility and willingness to receive that same encouragement from others.

THE RETURN OF CHRIST

1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18

JUNE 19, 2022

PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

- 1 **What are some spiritual questions people tend to wrestle with during times of crisis, like a war or pandemic?**

- 2 **In your own life, have those types of difficult seasons and the questions they've caused brought you more hope or doubt? Explain.**

- 3 **In the last few years, many people have begun to wonder if the end of the world is coming. Why do times of crisis often lead us to thoughts like this that we don't consider at other times? What does God want to teach us through that?**

UNDERSTANDING

> *Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14.*

- **Why do you think Paul described Christians who have died as being "asleep"? What does that imply about the Christian's death?**

- **Considering that Paul wrote to clear up misinformation, what questions or ideas might the Thessalonian believers have had about death? Why was it important that they not be uninformed about death?**

- **Why should the grief of Christians be different than that of unbelievers?**

- **Why did Paul want his readers to be certain about the historical fact of Jesus's death and resurrection?**
- **Paul placed his hope entirely in the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. What are some wrong hopes people have regarding death?**
- **Compare and contrast Paul's comments in verse 14 with those in 1 Corinthians 15:17-19. Why are faith and hope worthless apart from Christ's resurrection?**
- **What is the relationship between the resurrection and second coming of Jesus? Why do you think many people are confused about Jesus's return?**

> *Read 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18.*

- **What statements about the return of Christ did Paul make in verses 15-17?**
 - **Which of these statements impact you the most? Which surprises you the most?**
 - **Consider verse 18. What should be our primary response to thinking about the Lord's return?**
 - **How can you take seriously Paul's exhortation to encourage others with these words? How could you use these words to comfort a friend?**
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- **Do you anticipate the Lord's return regularly? How might a person do that without also neglecting the things God has called us to as long as we are on the earth?**

- **How do times of crisis give Christians a longing for the return of Christ? How do these times point all people to the reality of the brokenness of the world?**

> *Read 2 Peter 3:8-13.*

- **In these four verses, Peter vividly referred to the destruction of the current world order no less than six times. Why do you think he was so intent on telling us that the end of the world is coming?**

- **Peter did not intend to cause believers to fear. He meant to encourage us to live rightly. Difficult truth is still truth. Why is it important that we talk honestly about the realities of Jesus's second coming?**

- **How does God want us to wait for His return?**

APPLICATION

- 1 **What things distract you from the hope of Jesus's return?**

- 2 **Are we helping one another live each day with the hope of Christ's return in view? How can we do that more?**

- 3 **How does a sense of urgency for Jesus's return affect the way we live day-to-day? The way we relate to other people?**

PRAY

Thank God for the promise of Christ's return. Ask Him to help you convey the urgency of responding to the gospel to those who do not know Jesus. Confess the things that distract you from living in expectation of Him, and ask Him for the strength and conviction to live each day alert to His return.

HEAVEN AND HELL

MATTHEW 25:31-46

JUNE 26, 2022

PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

- 1 **Name a television show or movie that visualizes or discusses heaven or hell. In what manner are heaven and hell portrayed? Do these depictions make heaven and hell feel like real places?**

- 2 **67 percent of Americans believe heaven is a real place, and 61 percent believe hell is real. But what they believe determines how a person goes to one or the other varies widely. Generally, "Americans don't seem too worried about sin or being sent to hell."¹ Why do you think that many people tend to not believe people end up in hell?**

UNDERSTANDING

> *Read Matthew 25:31-40.*

- **What kind of scene was described in this parable? What kind of imagery did Jesus use to describe Himself in this parable?**

- **What was significant about being on the right or the left side in these verses?**

- **Why did Jesus bless the sheep in this passage? What did they do to receive Jesus's blessing?**

- **What basic human needs did the sheep meet?**

1. "Americans Believe in Heaven, Hell, and a Little Bit of Heresy," Lifeway Research, October 27, 2014, <https://lifewayresearch.com/2014/10/28/americans-believe-in-heaven-hell-and-a-little-bit-of-heresy/>.

- **What were the sheep surprised about (vv. 37-39)?**
- **How does it affect you to know that by serving the hungry, homeless, and lonely you are serving Jesus?**
- **Read John 3:16-18. What did Jesus teach was required of a person to gain eternal life? Why, then, do our works—like meeting people’s needs—matter to Him?**

> *Read Matthew 25:41-46.*

- **At the beginning of the parable, Jesus separated the sheep from the goats, and in verse 41, He transitioned from one group to the next. Why were the goats condemned to eternal fire?**
 - **How were the sheep (the first group) and the goats (the second group) similar? How were they different?**
 - **How did Jesus summarize the parable? Why do you think serving others is so important to God?**
 - **What did Jesus mean when He said, “whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me”?**
 - **How is it that by serving people, we love them and show them Jesus?**
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> *Read John 3:36.*

- **What does it mean to “believe” in Jesus? Why is this so important?**
- **What are the two possibilities (concerning eternity) Jesus pointed out in these verses?**
- **What does “the wrath of God remains on him” indicate about every person’s condition before God at some point? Have you ever thought of God’s wrath being on you? What does that mean?**
- **How is God’s wrath removed from us?**
- **Will God ever overlook someone rejecting Jesus Christ? Explain.**

APPLICATION

- 1 **When God unleashes His power of salvation in a person's life, what changes?**

- 2 **What would you say to people who believe they've "out sinned" God's grace? Do you ever feel that way yourself?**

- 3 **How does the fact that you will be judged change the way you view your life? How does it change the way you look at others?**

- 4 **Hell is punishment, banishment, suffering, and eternal. And sadly, it is a reality for many people. What do these realities of hell teach us about God? How should the realities of hell change the way you relate to others?**

PRAY

Thank God for the reality of eternal life. Thank Him for being a just God and for showing mercy to all people who follow Him. Ask His Spirit to remind you each day to look for and step into opportunities to act in faithfulness, meeting the needs of other people and sharing God's love.

