

LOVE GOD'S WORD & PRAYER

New Testament Challenge 2020

At Faith Baptist Fellowship, we *Love God's Word and Prayer*. Hearing a sermon at church on Sunday mornings alone isn't enough to be considered a healthy diet of God's word and prayer. We strongly believe that every growing disciple of Jesus needs to be regularly hearing from God through his word and personally speaking back to God through prayer.

We are challenging everyone to read through the entire New Testament in 2020 – one chapter per day, five days per week. If regular Bible reading is not yet a habit of yours, this is a great way to get started! As always, we will provide devotional thoughts and helpful prayer points on the passages. The weekend material will prepare you for the upcoming Sunday sermon as well as provide some discussion help for Faith Groups.

We recommend you set aside at least 15-20 minutes a day for this plan and prayer. If you fall behind, just start on the current day. Try to develop the habit of reading at the same time and place. We suggest having a journal and pen for answering questions and recording your thoughts and insights. Happy Bible Reading!

Monday, November 30

Read Matthew 5:1-48

THINK: Such a rich and wonderful passage to take comfort! What was it that Jesus taught them in verses 3-11? Think about the salt that you are to be on earth. Have you lost your saltiness? V 14—“You are the light of the world....”. What does this passage say in regards to Jesus, the law and prophets? How are we instructed to handle anger, lust, divorce, oaths and retaliation? What differences can you find in what the world says in how we are to treat our enemies and how the Bible instructs us to treat our enemies?

PRAY: Thank the Lord for His Word. Pray that these words would be placed deep in your heart! Pray to be a salty Christian! Pray that you would be strong in combatting anger and lust! Pray for strong marriages and that Christ would be the center! Pray for those that are facing retaliation. Pray that your love for people would replicate the love that Jesus has for you!

Tuesday, December 1

Read Matthew 6:1-34

THINK: How are we instructed to give to those in need? Right now recite the Lord's Prayer... How are we instructed to pray? Isn't that powerful? Have you any trespasses that need forgiving? Waste no more time...forgive! How does God respond when we forgive? What is the problem with earthly treasure? How is heavenly treasure different? How does our "treasure" expose our hearts? What are the two masters? How do they conflict? Are you anxious? How comforting Matthew 6:25-34. Meditate on these verses for comfort.

PRAY: Tell God that you desire to do everything for his honor and glory, and not for your own, including giving to a needy person. Pray through the model prayer of Jesus, thought by thought, making his prayer your own. Is there anyone in your life you've refused to forgive? Ask for his help to forgive that person. Ask God to show you the things that will last forever so you can treasure them! In these days there is much to be anxious about. Cast these anxieties on Him.

Wednesday, December 2

Read Matthew 7:1-29

THINK: Is Jesus calling us not to judge? What is a person calling you out on judging them actually doing? How should our demeanor be when we need to proceed with a correction of our neighbor? Have you asked of the Father? Matthew 14— "For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few." Ponder this verse. List a number of implications. Another set of rich scripture...Matthew 7:21-23. What is being said here? Hail King Jesus!

PRAY: Express to God your desire to be merciful and generous with people rather than harsh or critical. Thank God for his grand mercy toward you in Christ Jesus! Thank him for pouring grace into your life. ASK! SEEK! KNOCK! What important things do you want to talk to God about today? Ask and receive! Seek and find! Knock and see what doors God opens before you. Thank him for the gift of prayer. Thank him for being a generous and wise Father to you! Tell the Father of your commitment to walk in the narrow way of faith.

Thursday, December 3

Read Matthew 8:1-34

THINK: What kind of faith did the leper demonstrate? What about the centurion? He had much to lose but so much more to gain. Take stock of your faith in Christ. What are some of the themes of faith in this chapter? Take yourself back to the time of Jesus...Place yourself in the shoes of the different people throughout this passage. What might be some of the costs of following Jesus? What 'storms' are you currently in the middle of?

PRAY: Pray that your faith is genuine and focused on Christ! Pray that your faith would shine in moments of test! Pray for God's protection against the evil one! Pray that you would testify to the workings of Christ in your life to assist those in their faith! Pray for those that are being persecuted for their belief in Jesus Christ! Count it all joy...! Praise Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith!

Friday, December 4

Read Matthew 9:1-38

THINK: Jesus continues to display His credentials as Messiah and King by exercising His power. Note the things Jesus has power over. Jesus is often referred to as the Great Physician; who has need of a physician? Jesus heals in two ways; what are they? What does the new wine represent? When Jesus saw the crowds, He had compassion; what does He compare them to? What were His disciples to do? What are we to do?

PRAY: Jesus has power over disease, death and demons; but more importantly, over sin. This points to His divinity (being God in the flesh). The teaching of the Pharisees focused on traditions and self-righteousness which led to crowds who were harassed and helpless. Pray that our teaching and preaching at Faith be centered on the person and work of Jesus Christ. Pray for a heart of compassion for the lost. Pray earnestly for laborers to be sent out into His harvest.

Weekend, December 5-6

Read Psalm 51

If you've fallen behind this week, consider using these extra days to catch up. You can also prepare your heart and mind for this Sunday's worship service. Read the planned sermon text above and the thoughts below in advance of Sunday morning's message. If you are in a Faith Group, consider discussing the questions below together.

THINK: A psalm of David when, when Nathan the prophet confronted him after he had gone in to Bathsheba, based on 2 Samuel 12:13. What attributes of God does David mention? What does he ask God to do? What does he admit about his own sinful condition? In addition to asking for forgiveness, what else does David ask God for? What promises does David make if God were to forgive him? What does God **not** delight in and what **does** God delight in? (see vs 16 & 19).

PRAY: Psalm 51 stands as a model of prayers for forgiveness of sins. Read through this Psalm and make it your own prayer of confession. Praise God for His abundant mercies and steadfast love. Confess your own sins and inability to please God with your own efforts. Ask Him for a clean heart and to restore in you the joy of His salvation. A clean and restored heart results in worship and praise, declaring His righteousness! Pray for Pastor Jayson and Dave Vilhauer as they preach on this passage.

FAITH GROUP: Discuss in your Faith Group how you picture God. Do you see Him as angry, disappointed, or wrathful, ready to punish you for your sin? Or do you see Him as compassionate, loving, and merciful, eager to forgive you and restore the relationship? Why did David say his sin was only against God? In vs 16 David says that God does NOT delight in sacrifices yet in vs 19 God delights in sacrifices. Is this a contradiction? What is the difference? James 5:16 says to "Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another that you be healed." As you feel comfortable in your groups, pray in this way.