

LOVE GOD'S WORD & PRAYER

Daily Bible Reading

At Faith Baptist Fellowship, we *Love 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. If regular Bible reading is not yet a habit of yours, this is a great way to get started!

We are encouraging everyone to continue our Daily Bible Readings. 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 encourage you to set aside at least 15-20 minutes a day for reading 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. Have a journal and pen for answering questions and recording your thoughts and insights. For additional Bible reading plans, check out our website at faithsf.com. Enjoy your time in God's Word and Prayer!

Monday, January 3

Read Matthew 1:1-2:12

THINK: Abraham to Jesus: what did you learn? *Note: the number of generations seems to be symbolic, because there are generations not included by Matthew.* **Important:** Matthew, as a gospel writer, is passionate to convince Jewish readers that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah. Look for this key to the book throughout our reading of Matthew's gospel. What evidence of that do you find in this reading? How many wise men came to find the Child? What is troubling about Herod? *Consider: keep a list of all OT texts referred to by Matthew.*

PRAY: Thank God for making it absolutely clear that the OT scriptures are the story of Jesus Christ: Abraham to David to Christ. Having just come through the Christmas season, respond to what you have read in Matthew's account. Worship, thanking God for Immanuel. Ask God's blessing on the year ahead for yourself, your family, and our church as we *Anticipate Change*. God bless you!

Tuesday, January 4

Read Matthew 2:13-3:6

THINK: There are four OT texts referred to in this passage by our writer Matthew. List them. Why is each included?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

How are they fulfilled in Jesus Christ? What is Matthew doing in this passage? Of what does he want to persuade his readers--like us!

PRAY: The horrific slaughter of the children in Matthew 2 reminds us of the killing and persecuting of Christians, including children, in our day. Pray for those suffering families. Pray also for Jewish people today who do not see Jesus as the Promised Messiah. Thank God for clearly fulfilled prophecy. *Pray for both Faith West and South.*

Wednesday, January 5

Read Matthew 3:7-4:11

THINK: What was John the Baptist's critique of the leaders coming to him for baptism? How does he prophesy that the coming Messiah's baptism will be different? If Jesus never sinned, why did he want John to baptize him? Note how Jesus responds to temptation with Scripture. What can we learn from that? This year, may God increase our love for his word.

PRAY: One at a time, read through each of the temptations of Jesus a second time, and then respond with prayer. Your prayers might be something like this: *"Heavenly Father, help me live today by the food of your word, the Bible. I trust you completely, and I have no need to test your faithfulness. Great is your faithfulness! Thank you."*

Ask God to supply our financial needs as a church in 2022.

Thursday, January 6

Read Matthew 4:12-25

THINK: Another prophetic fulfillment to add to your list! Jesus came as the Light of the World, and Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled. Why do you think Jesus preached, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"? "Follow me" is Jesus's invitation to discipleship – have you accepted that invitation? What did he mean by "fishers of men"? Notice the repetition of the word "immediately" – why is that important? What was the threefold nature of Jesus' ministry?

PRAY: Ask God to help you respond immediately when he calls you to follow him and obey him by faith. Pray that in this year ahead, our church would have maximum kingdom impact, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Ask God to lead us as we *Anticipate Change* and seek to keep the main thing the main thing in the process: magnifying Christ, sharing his gospel as fishers of people!

Friday, January 7

Read Matthew 5:1-26

THINK: Some consider the Sermon on the Mount to be the very heart of Jesus' teaching. The Beatitudes may summarize the Sermon. Jesus begins His ministry with a call to repent (Matt. 4:17) and to follow Him (4:19). How do the Beatitudes illustrate what repentance and following Jesus might look like? Consider writing a brief, personal response to each one. How are we *salt*? Where does our 'Light' come from? What is the ultimate goal of letting our Light shine? Jesus takes *anger* very seriously. Do you consider it a serious matter? What does reconciliation look like in everyday life?

PRAY: Pray one by one through the Beatitudes. Through repentance and obedience to Christ, we become lights, lights that attract others to Christ and bring glory to God. We are to do good works, not for our own glory, but for God's glory. As we enter the New Year, pray for hearts that are humble, repentant, and eager to be obedient to the teachings of Jesus Christ. Pray for opportunities to let your 'Light' shine, acting as Jesus would act.

Ask God to clearly direct our church in this coming year.

Weekend, January 8-9

Read Colossians 3:18-4:1

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: Contemplate: why would submission be "fitting in the Lord"? Perhaps Paul's exhortation for husbands to love their wives and not be harsh is because harshness toward women has been a sin problem for men in every generation; that's worth contemplating also. The obedience of a child to loving, godly parents pleases the Lord! Fathers have a key role in this (v.21).

How does the remainder of the chapter inform your own work as a Christian employee? Or being a boss over workers (4:1)?

PRAY: This is a challenging passage to preach in our current cultural environment. Pray for our pastors as they preach it. Ask God to raise up godly, loving, wise, Christ-like men who will stand out from the crowd in our society and culture. God give us godly men! Pray for our church's children and youth, and those who work with them at Faith (Angela Myers and her entire team of volunteers). Pray about your testimony in the workplace.

FAITH GROUP: Not only are role relationships under attack in our culture, even maleness and femaleness are under attack. How have you observed this in your work or in our media? How can the church wisely and lovingly respond? Discuss this as a group, and then spend a season in prayer for healthy marriages, healthy parent-child relationships, and for Christians in the workforce. Ask God to bring revival and spiritual awakening to our land.