

Weekly Study Guide

The Week of September 29, 2013

Daily Readings

Monday	Matthew 5:33-37	Tuesday	Matthew 5:38-42	Wednesday	Matthew 5:43-48
Thursday	Leviticus 19:18	Friday	1 John 3:1-3	Saturday	Romans 8:29

My notes on this week's readings...

Next Week in Worship

Next week's message: *Who are you trying to please?*

Next week's readings: Matthew 6:1-18

It's not a competition, and it's not a show. Our Heavenly Father loves us as his own, and he invites us to serve him from the heart. Showy religious displays are a burden and a trap, and Jesus teaches us the joy of quiet faithfulness to our Father.



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Group Discussion

Connect

Have you ever been struck by the way a child has grown up to be like one of their parents? Share an example.

Learn

Read **Matthew 5:33-37**. Jesus was partly criticizing a culture among the Pharisees that used oaths and vows manipulatively to serve their own advantage and partly teaching his own disciples about truth and integrity.

- When have you seen oaths or vows be helpful? What can be dangerous about them?
- Jesus tells his disciples to simply say “yes” or “no” without ever needing to swear oaths. Why is this important?
- Jesus intends for the community of his followers to be different from the world in the practice of their integrity. Where can you imagine that this difference might be noticeable in today’s world?

Read **Matthew 5:38-42**.

- When have you heard or seen these kinds of phrases, like “eye for an eye”? What are your first reactions to this?
- What’s good about the “eye for an eye” approach for responding to being wronged?
- What does Jesus suggest instead of this approach?
- Can you imagine what it would mean to “turn the other cheek,” “give your coat also,” or “go with them two miles” in our context? What might be the results of this?

Read **Matthew 5:43-48**. The Old Testament says to love your enemies (Leviticus 19:18), but it does not say to hate your enemies. But people then and now still speak, feel, and hear hatred for our enemies.

- It seems “natural” to work against our enemies. Have you ever seen someone love or serve someone who had hurt or opposed them?
- It also seems “natural” to love and serve those who are like us or who are on our side. What does Jesus say about that? What’s the problem with this?

Apply

Jesus says to be “perfect” in v. 48, but that word is very hard to translate. It doesn’t imply “perfectionism” as we might think of it. It’s a better description of becoming who God made us to be, children who are growing up into the goal of their heavenly Father’s character.

- What’s the difference between a demand to “be perfect” and a goal for the children of God to grow into the image of God?
- Is God calling you to grow in his image in the area of truth telling, retaliation, or love of enemies?

Pray

In prayer today, give thanks to God for making us his children and ask for God to grow you in His character.