

Weekly Study Guide

The Week of October 6, 2013

Daily Readings

Monday	Matthew 6:1-8	Tuesday	Matthew 6:16-18	Wednesday	Hebrews 11:6 Psalm 86:11
Thursday	Romans 12:2 Hebrews 12:11	Friday	Galatians 1:10	Saturday	Acts 4:18-20 Acts 5:28-29

My notes on this week's readings...

Next Week in Worship

Next week's message: *This is How You Should Pray*

Next week's readings: Matthew 6:9-13

Prayer is personal and natural, but just like everything else, it can also be learned. In the "Lord's Prayer", Jesus teaches us how to pray for God's will in our lives and our world and leads us on a journey that has the power to reshape our deepest desires.



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Group Discussion

Connect	<p>How do you think of the word 'reward'? When is a reward outside of our usual experience? What kinds of rewards are a natural result of a our choices? Is it good to think in terms or reward? Why or why not?</p>
Learn	<p>Read Matthew 6:1-8 and 15-18. Jesus tells us not to perform our acts of righteousness in front of others "to be seen by them." What kinds of rewards come from this? What are we seeking to gain for ourselves when we perform acts of righteousness to be seen by others?</p> <p>From a human point of view, these blunders seem pretty minor. If someone brags about giving, the needy are still helped. If someone prays to gain status, people are still being reminded of God's presence. But this difference is not minor to God. What he cares about most is not the action itself, but what it does to the formulation of our hearts in relationship with himself.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How are we tempted to take glory for ourselves, or gain impact with others in our giving, our prayer lives, our fasting?• Why might it be dangerous to our lives of faith to put other people's opinions of us at the center of our motivation? How might that impact who we become? <p>Read Galatians 1:10, Read Acts 4:18-20. What happens when what society thinks (approves of) and what God calls us to be about begin to clash?</p> <p>Read Hebrews 12:11 and Romans 12:2. How might training our hearts to seek after God's approval instead of human approval help us to grow more like Jesus?</p> <p>Human beings are a crazy mix of selfish motivations. Trying to please people is a never ending and contradictory no win struggle. What does it look like to seek to please God? Read Hebrews 11:6. What kinds of rewards do you think come with this relationship?</p> <p>How might the course of how we live our lives be set by whom we are trying to please?</p> <p>Read Micah 6:8. How do Jesus' words show us how to live into this verse?</p>
Apply	<p>This week, spend time thinking about your motivations. Why do you do what you do? How do you seek approval of others? Do you find your identity in the Lord's love for you? What rewards do you feel God gives to those who seek him?</p>
Pray	<p>Find a place in your house to be your dedicated "prayer place" where you will go to pray privately. (Depending on how populated your household, for some, that may have to be the restroom!) Find some alone space and ask the Lord to search your motivations and draw you more closely to him.</p>