

Life Group Homework

For the week of February 19, 2017

QUICK REVIEW

- 1) Upon reviewing your notes from Sunday's teaching, was there anything that caught your attention?

MY STORY

- 2) What theme or idea has God been speaking to you about personally throughout this study?
- 3) What was your takeaway from last week's study?

DIGGING DEEPER

A couple of years ago I began to disciple a young man, and he asked me how to read the Bible. Below are some thoughts I penned to help people understand and apply the Bible to their own life.

- 1) **Context is king!** What does the whole chapter say? What is the main theme or idea the writer is trying to get across? Pulling verses out of context to make them say what we want them to say is a sure-fire way to be misled. Christians do this all the time, but unfortunately so do cults. I like to use this question: What does the whole passage say?
- 2) **Who is the author and what do we know about him?** Knowing the person is important because it can give insight into why and what they are writing about. A great example is Luke and the two books that he authored, Luke and Acts. We learn that Luke was highly educated and a physician. He is detail-oriented, and this is seen in his attention to detail in his writing. Luke was also a traveling companion of Paul and a first-hand witness to many of the stories in the book of Acts. He would have had access to doing interviews and investigating the life of Christ.
- 3) **Who is the recipient?** Sometimes in our culture we try to apply Scriptures to daily life without remembering that these were written in a very different time, place, and culture. Knowing who the recipient was and the culture of the time is helpful in applying the word of God into our daily life. In the example of

Luke and Acts, Luke was writing to a Gentile named Theophilus. This explains why Luke took time to explain Jewish tradition and why some of the style is different than the other Gospels. The question we need to ask ourselves is how do the principles presented apply today?

- 4) **What kind of literature is it?** Is it an epistle, a Gospel, or historical, poetic, or wisdom literature? Reading the book of Proverbs like it is a commandment is a mistake. Proverbs is considered wisdom literature and should be viewed as practical guidelines for wise living. They don't always apply. The words of Jesus on how to live found in a Gospel do apply on a regular basis.
- 5) **What does the passage say? What is the main idea or key thought?** What does it mean? What are the definitions of the words? Remember English was not the language used while writing the Bible, so every English Bible we read is a translation or a paraphrase. You can read more than one translation if you find a confusing passage. Tools like *biblegateway.com* and Bible apps like *You Version* offer multiple English translations to compare to each other.
- 6) **How does this passage apply to my life?** What is God saying to me personally?

Once a person has determined the answers for 2-4, the rest are simple questions to ask as you read through a passage. For example, Matthew 5: the author is Matthew, he was one of Jesus' disciples and was an eyewitness to the Sermon on the Mount. He was a tax collector, and we can read portions of his story in other gospels. The recipients of this book are the Church and was given as a record of what Jesus said and did. The type of literature is a Gospel. The context of this sermon can be found in the opening sentences of Matthew Chapter 5.

TAKING IT HOME

Read Matthew Chapter 5 and ask the following questions. You may need to break it down into smaller sections than a full chapter, such as 5:1-12. I find using the sections designated in my Bible helps.

- 1) What does the passage say about specific topics?
- 2) What is the main idea?

- 3) Is there something I need to apply in my life? Do I need to start or stop doing something?

If you have completed all of Chapter 5, continue asking these questions with Chapters 6-7. This is a basic Bible study method and can be used with any section of the Bible. Just be sure to use the previous guidelines. This is when a good Study Bible comes in handy. Some great examples are the Life Application Bible, the Ryrie Study Bible, and the Serendipity Bible. There are also great computer programs like Logos Bible software.

CHAIR TIME TOOL

We have been writing values and heading toward our vision statement. This week keep using the tools presented above and use them with Matthew Chapters 5-7. You do not have to do all this in one sitting. Break it into sections and ask the questions.

Continue writing your values this week based on the foundations presented the previous three weeks and now add three more. Below are my values continued from last week.

- 1) People (others)
I will seek to let the love of Christ flow through to others in my life. I will seek forgiveness in this area when I fall short of this value. I will pray earnestly for the needs of others when they ask.
- 2) Be present
I will seek to not be easily distracted when in conversation with another person. I will put my phone away when with others. I will surrender my worries of the future to God and not continually think about them. I will also trust the forgiveness I have in Jesus and not live in shame and guilt any longer.
- 3) Grow
I will seek to grow in every area of my life. In leadership, I will strive to be a teachable leader who raises the level of others around me. I will encourage and challenge when needed. I will seek to develop my natural gifts and wiring while shoring up my weaknesses. I will grow as a better husband and father, being a man of God for my wife and my son.

TOO COMFORTABLE?

When my comfort meets God's challenges

Pastor Craig Sweeney

Matthew 6:10-13:

"Pray like this: Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. ¹⁰ May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us today the food we need, ¹² and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. ¹³ And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one."

¹⁰ **May your Kingdom come soon.** (My choice)

- The **rule and reign** of God.

May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. (My choice)

Matthew 13:10-17

God's "will" = God's **desire, choice** FOR me.

The Bible:

- HIS **HEART** FOR us...
- HIS **TRUTH...**
- HIS **WAY** made clear...
- OUR **INVITATION** to live LIFE at the side of GOD.
- A **FRAMEWORK** for life. (*Great place to start seeing the framework...*)

Matthew Chapters 5,6,7

Action Items:

- Vision Clarity: Who am I becoming in Christ? (*I don't know everything but what do I know?*)
- Is my foundation strong?
- What needs to be built first?
- Who will encourage me to keep building? (*Life Groups*)
- What about God's will am I resisting today?

¹¹ **Give us today the food we need...** (My choice)

The bending of my will is a combination of:

- **Humility**
- My **disciplined** choices
- The **Grace** of God **daily** provided and gathered.
 - GRACE to KEEP my **debts** clean.
 - GRACE is the **power** to do WITH HIM, what I cannot do WITHOUT HIM.

¹² **and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us.** (My choice)

¹³ **And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.** (My choice)