

# SEPTEMBER

2022

MATTHEW

## MONTHLY PRAYER SHEET

**"...The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." James 5:16**

Who I Will Reach

How I Will Do It

How It Went

Other Requests

Date Answered

How It Was Answered

## MONTHLY COMMITMENT SHEET

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

This sheet is designed to help you make personal commitments each month that will **help you grow in your walk with God**. Fill it out by determining

1. What will push you
2. What you think you can achieve

If you need help filling out your commitments, seek out someone you trust who can help you. Share your commitments with those who will help keep you accountable.

### **Personal Devotions:**

How did I do with my commitment last month? \_\_\_\_\_

I will commit to read the OnTrack Bible passage and devotional thought \_\_\_\_\_ day(s) each week this month.

### **Church Attendance:**

How did I do last month with my attendance? \_\_\_\_\_

I will attend church \_\_\_\_\_ time(s) this month.

I will attend small group \_\_\_\_\_ time(s) this month.

I will attend \_\_\_\_\_ time(s) this month.

(List any other activities you will participate in this month—Bible study, church events, etc.)

### **Bible Memory:**

How did I do with Bible memory last month? \_\_\_\_\_

I will memorize \_\_\_\_\_ verse(s) this month.

### **Outreach:**

How did I do last month with sharing Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_

I will share Jesus with \_\_\_\_\_ this month.

I will serve my local church this month by \_\_\_\_\_

**SOVEREIGNTY****MATTHEW 1:1-17**

As you read through the genealogy of Jesus, what thoughts went through your mind? In His genealogy, there are great people, common people, and even wicked people. We live in a culture that often blames the negative characteristics of people on their background—where they grew up, who raised them, and what's in their past. We can learn from today's reading that, although Jesus' genealogy listed many wicked people, that did not determine the kind of person He was. You may not have a past that would appear to set you up for greatness, but it does not guarantee failure either. God designed your past to best prepare you for His plan in the future. God uses your history to prepare you, not limit you. Are you allowing it to?

**SAY WHAT?**


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What in a person's past could cause them to wonder if God can use them?

**SO WHAT?**


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What reasons could God have for giving someone a difficult past?

**NOW WHAT?**


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How can you avoid allowing your past to become an obstacle to spiritual growth?

**THEN WHAT?**


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In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

## EXTRA READING

MATTHEW 1

**MATTHEW 2:13-23****WAS FULFILLED****SAY WHAT?**

Observation: What do I see?

**SO WHAT?**

Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**

Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**

Implementation: What do I do?

Whenever a phrase is repeated in a passage, it is generally a sign that it is there for a reason. There is a phrase used many times in today's reading. It is the phrase "was fulfilled." One of the reasons the book of Matthew was written was to show the nation of Israel that Jesus Christ was the Messiah. Matthew needed to demonstrate that Jesus had a rightful claim to the throne, and that He was the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. Throughout this book, the phrase "was fulfilled" is used to describe who Jesus Christ truly was. Every decision that Joseph and Mary made in today's reading is a fulfillment of prophecy about the Messiah made thousands of years before. How could the Jews have missed what is so obvious to us? As you read this book, count the number of times you read the phrase, "was fulfilled" or "to fulfill." Hopefully, as the number increases, you will have even greater confidence that Jesus Christ was the Messiah sent from God to take away our sin. May that confidence change you!

## EXTRA READING

### MATTHEW 2

SATURDAY | 09.03.22

## COUNTING THE COST

MATTHEW 3:1-12

In order to do the will of God, what did John the Baptist have to give up? What did it cost him to follow Jesus? What might it cost for you to follow Jesus? In some cases, like John's, it may require a lot. Following Jesus may involve having to live in a place that is not as comfortable as you would like, eating food that you may not like or dressing in a way that is different, like John the Baptist. If following Jesus meant these kinds of changes for you, would you still be a disciple? It may mean leaving your business and choosing a different career, like Peter and Andrew did. If being a disciple meant pursuing a different career than the one you are now interested in, would you still be a disciple of Jesus? For John the Baptist, Andrew, and Peter, the choice was not a hard one. They wanted to follow Jesus regardless of the cost involved. Why? Because they loved Him and He alone had what they were looking for. What are you willing to give up in order to fully follow Jesus? Maybe a better question is, what is preventing you from following Jesus with all you have and all you are? Are you willing to give it up?

### SAY WHAT?

What cost was required of John?

### SO WHAT?

What might it cost to follow Jesus today?

### NOW WHAT?

What should you be willing to give up in order to be a disciple of Jesus?

### THEN WHAT?

What personal commitment can you make in light of this passage?

## EXTRA READING

MATTHEW 3, 4



## PROVERBS 11

The book of Proverbs was designed to help us in “gaining wisdom and instruction; for understanding words of insight; for receiving instruction in prudent behavior, doing what is right and just and fair; for giving prudence to those who are simple, knowledge and discretion to the young.” As you read through this chapter, write down the verses that are most significant to you in your present circumstances.

VERSE | WHAT TRUTH IT COMMUNICATES | HOW IT IMPACTS MY LIFE

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**HEART ISSUES****MATTHEW 5:21-30**

How did Jesus Christ change what the people of that day believed was true religion? If you look closely at the Beatitudes, you find He did not really change the definition, but actually made it more difficult to obey. At first glance, it appears as if Jesus was teaching that the law was wrong and He revised and corrected it. In actuality, He took what they accepted as law one step further. For example, He said that they had heard murder was wrong, but He told them that it is wrong to even become angry with your brother. They had heard it was wrong to commit adultery. He said that it is wrong to have lustful thoughts. Through this, He demonstrated that His expectation for godliness was greater than they thought. We often look at our external behavior and feel acceptable because we do not violate obvious Biblical standards. God would say that while that is good, there is more than the obvious to be concerned about. While Jesus did not say that the heart issue was equal to the action, He did say the heart issue was also sin. We need to examine our hearts for the beginning signs of sin and deal with them. We must not be satisfied to simply avoid the actions.

**SAY WHAT?**


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Observation: What do I see?

**SO WHAT?**


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Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**


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Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**


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Implementation: What do I do?

## EXTRA READING

MATTHEW 5

**MATTHEW 6:1-18****PLEASING PEOPLE****SAY WHAT?**

How can you tell whether the motive of your behavior is to please God or people?

**SO WHAT?**

In what areas do you struggle the most in seeking to please people more than God?

**NOW WHAT?**

What can you do to avoid seeking the attention of people instead of God?

**THEN WHAT?**

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

How many times in this chapter did Matthew use the words "in secret?" Why did he emphasize that we should do these things when no one can see what we are doing? One reason was that the religious rulers made their worship public and were prideful when people noticed. A second reason is what it says about our motives. We can tell a lot about ourselves by comparing our behavior while people are watching to our behavior when they are not. If our motivation is to please people, we will usually do things so they will notice, reward us, or compliment us. If we do it in secret, when no one is watching or even knows about it, then our motivation is more likely about pleasing God. Jesus wanted these people to be aware that they should seek to please God alone. Do your actions reveal a motive that is concerned with pleasing God or pleasing people? When you pray, give, or fast, do it only to please God. Our love for God needs to be our motivation and focus. Is it yours?

## EXTRA READING

MATTHEW 6

**JUDGMENT STANDARDS****MATTHEW 7:1-6**

In today's reading, we find a verse with serious implications in the life of a follower of Jesus. It is one that should have great impact on our attitude and response toward others. Verse 2 tells us that we will be judged in the same way that we judge others. Also, Matthew tells us that we will be judged according to the same measure that we use in judging others. That means if we are highly critical and judge everything in someone's life, then God will judge us the same way. We are often critical of others and judge them as though they should be perfect. We tolerate very few mistakes. When they fail, we jump all over them. Think about what that means for you. Since God will judge you the same way that you judge others, how will you do? Since God will use the same measure that you use for judging teachers, pastors, and other authorities in your life, how are you going to do when it is time for God to judge you? This passage ought to motivate us to be kind, generous, tolerant and forgiving people. Use today's questions to help you get started.

**SAY WHAT?**


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In what ways do you judge others?

**SO WHAT?**


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If God used that same standard in judging you, what would your judgment be like?

**NOW WHAT?**


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What can you do to become a more gracious and forgiving person?

**THEN WHAT?**


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What personal commitment can you make in light of this passage?

## EXTRA READING

MATTHEW 7



**MATTHEW 8:23-34****WHO IS HE?****SAY WHAT?**

Observation: What do I see?

**SO WHAT?**

Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**

Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**

Implementation: What do I do?

If you had been living in Jesus' day, who would you have thought He was? If you had known about the events we read in this chapter, you would have believed He was God. Just think about it for a moment. First, we see that He commanded the wind and the waves, and they obeyed Him. Imagine that you were in the midst of a storm that was about to take your life, and Jesus stood up, spoke, and the sea got quiet. Second, demons were shouting from within two men, calling Jesus the Son of God, and then asking what He was going to do with them. It was obvious Jesus had power over them, and they knew a day was coming when He would torture them forever. They wanted to know if that day was today or if He would wait until the appointed time. If you were there when those two events took place, would you have believed? Doesn't it make you wonder how people missed that Jesus was God. Yet, people are still missing Him today. We see Him work in lives and demonstrate His power, yet we miss who He is. Are you or someone you know like these people? What can you do about it?

## EXTRA READING

### MATTHEW 8

**GOOD TEACHER****MATTHEW 9:1-8**

What does today's reading reveal to us about Jesus Christ? If you ask people you meet today who Jesus Christ is, what answers might they give? A common answer is that He was a good teacher or a prophet. This chapter proves that He could not have been either of those. Today, we read that Jesus healed a paralytic man and also forgave his sins. The teachers of the law heard this and believed that Jesus blasphemed by claiming to be God, who alone can forgive sins. The passage also tells us that Jesus knew they thought He was claiming to be God. A mere teacher or a prophet would've attempted to correct their assumption. Jesus, however, told them that He said what He did to prove that He had the power to forgive sins and was God. He either had to be God or He intentionally deceived people. We must believe Jesus to be God or conclude that He was a liar. Who do you think Jesus is? Is there someone you need to talk to about what you are learning?

**SAY WHAT?**


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Observation: What do I see?

**SO WHAT?**


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Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**


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Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**


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Implementation: What do I do?

## EXTRA READING

MATTHEW 9

**MATTHEW 10:1-15****MOTIVATION****SAY WHAT?**

What are some common motives people have for helping others?

**SO WHAT?**

How can you tell what your motivation is for helping others?

**NOW WHAT?**

How can you guard yourself from using your gifts for personal gain?

**THEN WHAT?**

What personal commitment can you make in light of today's passage?

Why did Jesus give the instructions found in verses 7-10 of today's reading? While there could be several reasons, one may be to demonstrate the proper motivation for ministry. Since the disciples had received amazing power, they could have easily been tempted to use that power for personal gain. They could've charged people a sum of money to heal them. Who, in the midst of a life threatening illness, would not pay great sums of money to be healed? What would you pay to have a your mother, father or sibling raised from the dead? Jesus also told them not to take money or extra clothes. He wanted them to be dependent on Him to provide for their needs and be motivated only by love and a sincere desire to meet the needs of people. We need people to use their gifts freely to help others and not for personal gain. If God is using you in the lives of people, make sure you do it to please Him, not yourself!

## EXTRA READING

MATTHEW 10

The book of Proverbs was designed to help us in “gaining wisdom and instruction; for understanding words of insight; for receiving instruction in prudent behavior, doing what is right and just and fair; for giving prudence to those who are simple, knowledge and discretion to the young.” As you read through this chapter, write down the verses that are most significant to you in your present circumstances.

VERSE | WHAT TRUTH IT COMMUNICATES | HOW IT IMPACTS MY LIFE

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**SAY WHAT?**

What difficult circumstances have you faced that you view as burdens?

What words did Jesus use in today's reading to describe following Him? Would you use those same words? Would you use the word easy? Are the burdens you carry light? How different our perspective can be compared to what Jesus says in this chapter. He admonished us to come to Him if we were weary and burdened. Why? Because His yoke is easy and His burden is light. Much too often, people act as if following Jesus is so hard or difficult. They walk around dejected, wondering if they can make it through another day. They ask for prayer as if their lives are miserable and they might not get through this problem. But Jesus says His yoke is easy and His burden is light. The world should see followers of Jesus as people who view life as a great adventure, who trust God, and see everything from His hand. His yoke is easy and His burden is light! Use today's questions to help you think through your life.

**SO WHAT?**

What has God said in His Word about difficulties like the ones listed above?

**NOW WHAT?**

What is God accomplishing or could He accomplish in your life through those burdens?

**THEN WHAT?**

In light of what this passage teaches, what personal commitment can you make?

## EXTRA READING

MATTHEW 11

**SABBATH****MATTHEW 12:1-14**

Why was it important for Jesus to identify Himself as being the "Lord of the Sabbath?" When you understand what that statement means, you understand why using it was so significant. In this passage, the Pharisees accused Jesus and His disciples of violating what the Old Testament Law said about the Sabbath. Anyone who violated the Sabbath was guilty of breaking the law. Were Jesus and the disciples guilty of breaking the law? If so, then Jesus could not be the Messiah as He claimed. Jesus told the Pharisees that He could do what He chose to on the Sabbath because He was "Lord of the Sabbath." By this statement, He implied that because He is God and the law was created by Him, it can be changed by Him. This statement was a clear claim of deity. He essentially said, "I did what I did and am saying what I am now saying because I am God!" It is another clear example in which Jesus Himself claimed to be God and not just a teacher or a prophet. God's Word is clear about who Jesus said He was. Are you convinced that Jesus is God? If not, who can you talk to about it?

**SAY WHAT?**


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Observation: What do I see?

**SO WHAT?**


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Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**


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Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**


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Implementation: What do I do?

## EXTRA READING

MATTHEW 12



**MATTHEW 13:1-23****FRUIT****SAY WHAT?**

In what areas of your life do you see spiritual fruit?

If you follow Jesus, there needs to be spiritual "fruit" in your life. Spiritual fruit is evidence that you are truly saved and following Jesus. In this parable, Jesus explains the different responses to the Gospel. In the third response, He states that this person is not saved because he has no fruit. In verse 23, He tells us that someone who is truly saved, hears the Word and it produces a crop. How big a crop? According to the passage, it depends on the person. In some cases, it is 100 fold. In others, it is 60 or 30 fold. The point is not the amount of fruit, but that there is some fruit. It is easy to compare the fruit in your life to others and base the evidence of your salvation on that comparison. It will become discouraging if you continue to evaluate your salvation that way. What you need to ask yourself is whether you see any fruit. The amount can vary between people, but we should all see fruit. Use today's questions to help you examine your life. It could encourage you or expose a problem.

**SO WHAT?**

In what areas of your life should you see spiritual fruit, but don't?

**NOW WHAT?**

What steps should you take to begin bearing spiritual fruit in those areas?

**THEN WHAT?**

What should you do now in light of what you wrote?

## EXTRA READING

MATTHEW 13

**GRIEVING LOSS**

MATTHEW 14:1-21

What can we learn from this passage about our response when someone we love dies. Is it okay to cry, grieve, and feel pain? We can learn a lot from the example of Jesus Christ's life in today's reading. In this chapter, we read the details surrounding the death of John the Baptist. Jesus, who was close to John, heard about it and the Bible tells us that "He withdrew privately to a solitary place." He was upset by the news and wanted to be alone. He left his companions to think and pray by Himself. But He didn't stay there. He soon got up and went back to His ministry and fulfilling God's purpose for His life. There are times when we are grieved by the loss of someone we love and care deeply about. We may need to take some time to be alone and work thought things, but we must then pick ourselves up and get back to living our lives. Do you have any pain that you are allowing to keep you from living life? Spending time to grieve and process is necessary and may take longer for some than others. But, maybe it's time to get back to living. Could it be that time for you? What steps do you need to take?

**SAY WHAT?**

Observation: What do I see?

**SO WHAT?**

Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**

Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**

Implementation: What do I do?

**EXTRA READING**  
MATTHEW 14

**MATTHEW 15:21-28****GREAT FAITH****SAY WHAT?**

In what areas of your life is it difficult to have faith?

**SO WHAT?**

Why is it so hard to trust God in those areas?

**NOW WHAT?**

How can you begin to develop great faith?

**THEN WHAT?**

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

What does the story of the Canaanite woman teach us regarding faith? First, we learn that anyone who has true faith can come to God and He will respond to them. Although she was not a Jew, Jesus responded to her need and healed her daughter. Second, we find the characteristics of "great" faith. We learn that it is repentant faith. This faith realizes that God alone can meet your needs. True faith is trusting in Jesus alone. It is persistent, knowing that God is in control and He can be trusted. It doesn't give up even when it appears God is not listening or does not care. Great faith keeps on trusting and seeking Him. It is also humble. This woman knew she was sinful and unworthy. She asked only for the crumbs that might fall from the table. What is God's response to such faith? He met her need and told her she had great faith! What kind of faith do you have? Do you have "weak" faith like Peter in chapter 14 or "great" faith like this woman? Do you seek God in every area of your life? Do you have a humble spirit when you come to Him? Do you trust Him even when it looks bleak?

## EXTRA READING

MATTHEW 15

**THIS ROCK****MATTHEW 16:13-20**

What is the rock that Jesus mentioned in verse 18 of today's reading? Some people believe that the rock was Peter, and that Jesus was stating that He will build His church on Peter. But a close examination of the text reveals something much more exciting. Jesus had just asked His disciples who they think He is. Peter said that he believed Jesus was the Christ. His answer indicated that God had revealed the truth to Peter. Jesus builds His church on truth given to us through the Holy Spirit. Another thrilling truth found here is that the gates of hell can't stop it. Satan cannot prevent the church from being built. What truth is God revealing to you? Do you take time each day to listen?

**SAY WHAT?**


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Observation: What do I see?

**SO WHAT?**


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Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**


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Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**


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Implementation: What do I do?

## EXTRA READING

MATTHEW 16

## PROVERBS 13

The book of Proverbs was designed to help us in “gaining wisdom and instruction; for understanding words of insight; for receiving instruction in prudent behavior, doing what is right and just and fair; for giving prudence to those who are simple, knowledge and discretion to the young.” As you read through this chapter, write down the verses that are most significant to you in your present circumstances.

VERSE | WHAT TRUTH IT COMMUNICATES | HOW IT IMPACTS MY LIFE

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How many times did Jesus tell the disciples in today's reading that He was going to rise from the dead? It is astounding, after reading this section of Scripture, to realize how clearly Jesus had explained to the disciples what was going to happen to Him. How did they miss it? Why is it that when He died on the cross they were so fearful and scattered? Why were they so surprised when He rose again? Well, before we get too critical of them, remember how similar we are. Jesus tells us in His Word that everything that happens is for our good and He will accomplish something through it. Yet, how often do you panic or grow anxious when something bad happens? He clearly promised that He will always meet our needs, yet we worry. We, like the disciples, need to be more trusting of what God has said. In what area of your life do you struggle with doubt? Do you live in confidence of His promises? Have you been surprised by God's provision in your life? What can you do to change and become more trusting?

**SAY WHAT?**


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What situations have you faced that seemed impossible, yet God accomplished something great in your life?

**SO WHAT?**


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When have you been surprised by what God has done for you?

**NOW WHAT?**


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What can you do to be more trusting of God?

**THEN WHAT?**


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In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

## EXTRA READING

MATTHEW 17

**MATTHEW 18:15-20****RESOLVING CONFLICT****SAY WHAT?**

Observation: What do I see?

**SO WHAT?**

Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**

Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**

Implementation: What do I do?

In today's reading, we find the most commonly used passage to help us handle conflict. In verse 15, there is the phrase, "just between the two of you." If we think someone has done something wrong, we are to approach them about it, keeping the matter between the two of us. It should be a private conversation. While we may need to ask for help or advice from someone on how we ought to handle the conversation, we should not gossip. Bringing it up in conversation with others is wrong. Jesus' instruction is clear that we are to go talk to the person involved. We are only to involve others when we are unable to resolve it between the two of us. Are there conflicts or problems between you and someone else that you have discussed with others, but have not gone to the person directly? You need to make it right and go talk directly to the person.

## EXTRA READING

MATTHEW 18

**ADDING CHRIST****MATTHEW 19:16-30**

What point was Jesus trying to make to the young rich man in today's reading? This passage tells us that the rich man asked Jesus what to do in order to be saved. At first, it appears that Jesus told him that he could earn his way to Heaven by obeying the law. Then, it seems as if Jesus told him to sell all he had to be able to gain eternal life. What was Jesus actually saying? Jesus knew this man's heart and was attempting to demonstrate that while he thought he was ready to be saved, he was unwilling to give up all he had to follow Jesus. He was only interested in "adding" Jesus to his life. This passage illustrates that we cannot get to Heaven by simply believing the right truth or by obeying the commandments of Scripture. To be saved, someone must come to God, humbly admitting he's a sinner, seeking His forgiveness, and being willing to sacrifice all to follow Him. The rich man was unwilling to give up his wealth. Is there something you won't give up to follow Jesus? Simply "adding" Jesus to your life is not enough.

**SAY WHAT?**


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Observation: What do I see?

**SO WHAT?**


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Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**


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Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**


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Implementation: What do I do?

## EXTRA READING

MATTHEW 19



**MATTHEW 20:1-16****EQUALLY****SAY WHAT?**

Observation: What do I see?

As you read today's passage, which of the workers in the vineyard did you identify with? Did you rejoice with those that got a day's pay for only working one hour? Or did you think the people who worked all day should get more than those who only worked an hour? Jesus uses this story to illustrate an important principle. People come to Jesus from all different backgrounds. Some are saved as children and have followed Jesus since. Others come to Jesus as adults after years of rebellion and sin. The response? God welcomes them equally and gives to both the same forgiveness. How amazing! God gives His love and forgiveness to all equally. We can rejoice in God's goodness to all people. We have been offered more than we deserve and are not facing the punishment due us. Are you following Jesus? If not, what is stopping you?

**SO WHAT?**

Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**

Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**

Implementation: What do I do?

**EXTRA READING**  
MATTHEW 20

How did the money changers in today's reading make the temple into a den of robbers? Does this passage teach that no one should sell anything at church? The temple was a place where people could come to worship God. When they came, they could feel secure and protected. It was a place in which they did not have to worry about being taken advantage of or used. All they needed to focus on was worshiping God in total freedom. But, the temple had become the opposite of what God intended it to be. People were trying to take advantage of those that came to worship God. They had to fight their way through the merchants to be able to worship. The merchants were using the people and the temple as a place to get rich. Jesus saw this and hated it. He cleared the temple to restore it to its purpose. How would Jesus feel today if He walked into your church? Is it a place where people feel secure, protected, and loved? Are people able to just come and worship? What can you do to help make church a place where people can come and feel safe and loved?

**SAY WHAT?**


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Observation: What do I see?

**SO WHAT?**


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Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**


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Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**


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Implementation: What do I do?

## EXTRA READING

MATTHEW 21

**MATTHEW 22:1-14****INVITED****SAY WHAT?**

Observation: What do I see?

What does the parable about the wedding banquet tell us about the kingdom of heaven? One clear message is that the Gospel is open to everyone, but many do not receive it. Everyone was told that the time for the wedding banquet had come. Everything was ready and in place, but some headed back to their fields or business. They were simply too involved in their own lives to think about God and His invitation. Some even mistreated the very people who had invited them. Jesus wants everyone to have the opportunity to hear God's invitation. It is not only the rich, popular, kind, or friendly who can follow Jesus. In fact, generally these people have no need for God because their lives are going smoothly. Can you think of people in your world you have been unwilling to respond to God's invitation? Is there someone that God has been prompting you about? Maybe you should start talking to them today.

**SO WHAT?**

Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**

Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**

Implementation: What do I do?

**EXTRA READING**  
MATTHEW 22

In today's reading, we find three important principles about leadership. They are found in Jesus' condemnation of the Pharisees in verses 1-12. Jesus used what was wrong with their leadership to demonstrate what He expects of us. First, He said in verses 1-4, that a leader must always practice what he preaches. His words must match his actions. Second, He said that a leader must have the right motives. The Pharisees were motivated by pride. They wanted to be noticed and have the big title. A true leader cannot have a heart of pride. Third, Jesus said that a leader must be a servant. Unlike the Pharisees, they must be willing to serve others. They must not see themselves as some big shot. They must humble themselves and be willing to serve the needs of others. How well do you meet these qualifications? Do you practice what you preach? Do you try to gain attention and seek the praise of others? Are you willing to serve others? What needs to change in your life for you to meet these qualifications and become a leader in your world?

**SAY WHAT?**


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In what areas do you struggle the most to practice what you preach? Why?

**SO WHAT?**


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How can you tell what your motivation is for wanting a position of leadership?

**NOW WHAT?**


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How can you tell if you are truly willing to serve others?

**THEN WHAT?**


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What area do you need to change to be the kind of leader described in this passage?

## EXTRA READING

MATTHEW 23

**MATTHEW 24:1-35****THIS GENERATION****SAY WHAT?**

Observation: What do I see?

Who was Jesus referring to as "this generation" in verse 34? Was he referring to his disciples? A closer look at the context reveals Jesus was not referring to the disciples. He was referring to the generation that would see the signs already mentioned throughout the chapter. Verse 33 says that when you see these things, you will know that the time is near. This generation, the one who sees these things, will not pass away until all of it happens. To give us greater confidence in what he is saying, He told us that heaven and earth will pass away, but His Words will never pass away. How close are we to the end? According to Scripture, very close. Since God has never been wrong, we can be assured He will return just as He said. Are you ready? Are those around you ready?

**SO WHAT?**

Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**

Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**

Implementation: What do I do?

**EXTRA READING**  
MATTHEW 24

**LEAST OF THESE****MATTHEW 25:31-46**

Who are the "least of these" Jesus refers to in verse 45? Who are they in our world today? According to the passage, the least of these are people who are hungry, thirsty, strangers, and those lacking clothing. In other words, it is those people in your world who have great needs. So often, we find it easy to reach out to the popular, rich or important people. We invite those people to our parties and hope they return the favor. We do not reach out to those who are not well liked and are needy. We act as if we do not want to be seen with those who are poor, different from us, or who stand out for some reason. Jesus teaches us that whatever we do for the least of these, we do for Him. How successful are you at loving the least of these in your world? When is the last time you spent time with them? Remember, whatever you do for them, God considers it something you've done for Him. What can you do today or this week for the least of these in your world? Look around and get started today!

**SAY WHAT?**


---

Identify some people in your world who are considered "the least of these."

**SO WHAT?**


---

Why is it so hard for you to reach out to them?

**NOW WHAT?**


---

What can you do this week to begin to reach out to them?

**THEN WHAT?**


---

What personal commitment can you make in light of today's reading?

## EXTRA READING

MATTHEW 25



**MATTHEW 26:6-16****A WASTE****SAY WHAT?**

Observation: What do I see?

Why did those who saw the woman break open the alabaster jar of perfume react negatively to what she did? The answer is in their comments found in verse 8. They asked, "Why this waste?" It is obvious that they thought what she did was a big waste. According to them, she should have used her perfume in a better way. At the very least, she could have sold it and then given the money to the poor. But to waste it on the head of Jesus? While we consider their response to be wrong, it happens all the time today. If a person is talented in obvious ways, he or she is encouraged to aspire to big dreams and goals. Many view using them to serve in church as a waste of talent. If a young couple shared their decision to go to a foreign country to serve Jesus, some might think it was a waste. This woman demonstrated to us that God deserves the very best we have to offer. He gave us specific abilities and talents in order to impact on our world for Jesus. Our abilities will never be wasted by using them to serve Jesus. In fact, the waste may be using them elsewhere.

**SO WHAT?**

Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**

Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**

Implementation: What do I do?

**EXTRA READING**  
MATTHEW 26

**REMORSE OR REPENTANCE?****MATTHEW 27:1-10**

What emotion did Judas have in today's reading? Was it repentance or remorse? The answer to that question and the difference between them is important. In fact, the difference determines how God responds to us. In this passage, we see that Judas realized the consequences of his actions. The Bible tells us that he was seized with remorse. He felt bad about what he had done and tried to undo it. Remorse is feeling guilty or bad about something you have done and the consequences it has caused. Repentance is far more than that. Repentance is not only being sorry that I was caught doing wrong or sorry that my actions caused pain, but it is wanting to turn from them and never repeat them. It is changing my mind about what I have done. I can feel really bad about something, but not forsake it or seek forgiveness. I just feel bad if turned out wrong. While Judas felt remorse, he never repented of his sin and never sought the forgiveness of God. His guilt overwhelmed him, but it never led to repentance. Is there an area of your life in which you have remorse but not repentance? Don't let it destroy you like it did Judas.

**SAY WHAT?**


---

How can we tell if we have remorse or repentance over our sin?

**SO WHAT?**


---

In what areas of your life do you find it hard to have repentance and not just remorse?

**NOW WHAT?**


---

What steps can you take to make sure you have repentance over your sin and not just remorse?

**THEN WHAT?**


---

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

## EXTRA READING

MATTHEW 27



**MATTHEW 28:1-15****AVOIDING THE TRUTH****SAY WHAT?**

Observation: What do I see?

**SO WHAT?**

Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**

Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**

Implementation: What do I do?

Did you ever notice how hard some people work to avoid the truth? They try to ignore it, change it, or distort it, so they do not have to face it. They will do almost anything instead of just admitting something is true. An example of this is found in today's reading. Jesus Christ had risen from the dead. The guards saw it and they ran to tell the chief priests. One would assume that they would want to investigate and find the truth. Surely they would have checked the tomb for themselves. Instead, they came up with a plan to ignore it and make sure the truth never got out. The guards were paid to say that the disciples came to take the body away. Why would the guards accept payment to ignore the truth? After what they had seen, we would assume that nothing could make them deny what they knew to be truth. Often, we are guilty of the same thing. We hear something and know it is the truth, but we deny it and willfully ignore it. We may even get some of our friends to support us in the distortion of the truth. Could you be doing this? In what area of your life do you need to be honest and simply accept what you know to be true?

## EXTRA READING

MATTHEW 28



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THIS HOPE WE HAVE AS AN ANCHOR OF THE SOUL, A HOPE BOTH SURE AND STEADFAST AND ONE WHICH ENTERS WITHIN THE VEIL, WHERE JESUS HAS ENTERED AS A FORERUNNER FOR US...  
HEBREWS 6:19-20

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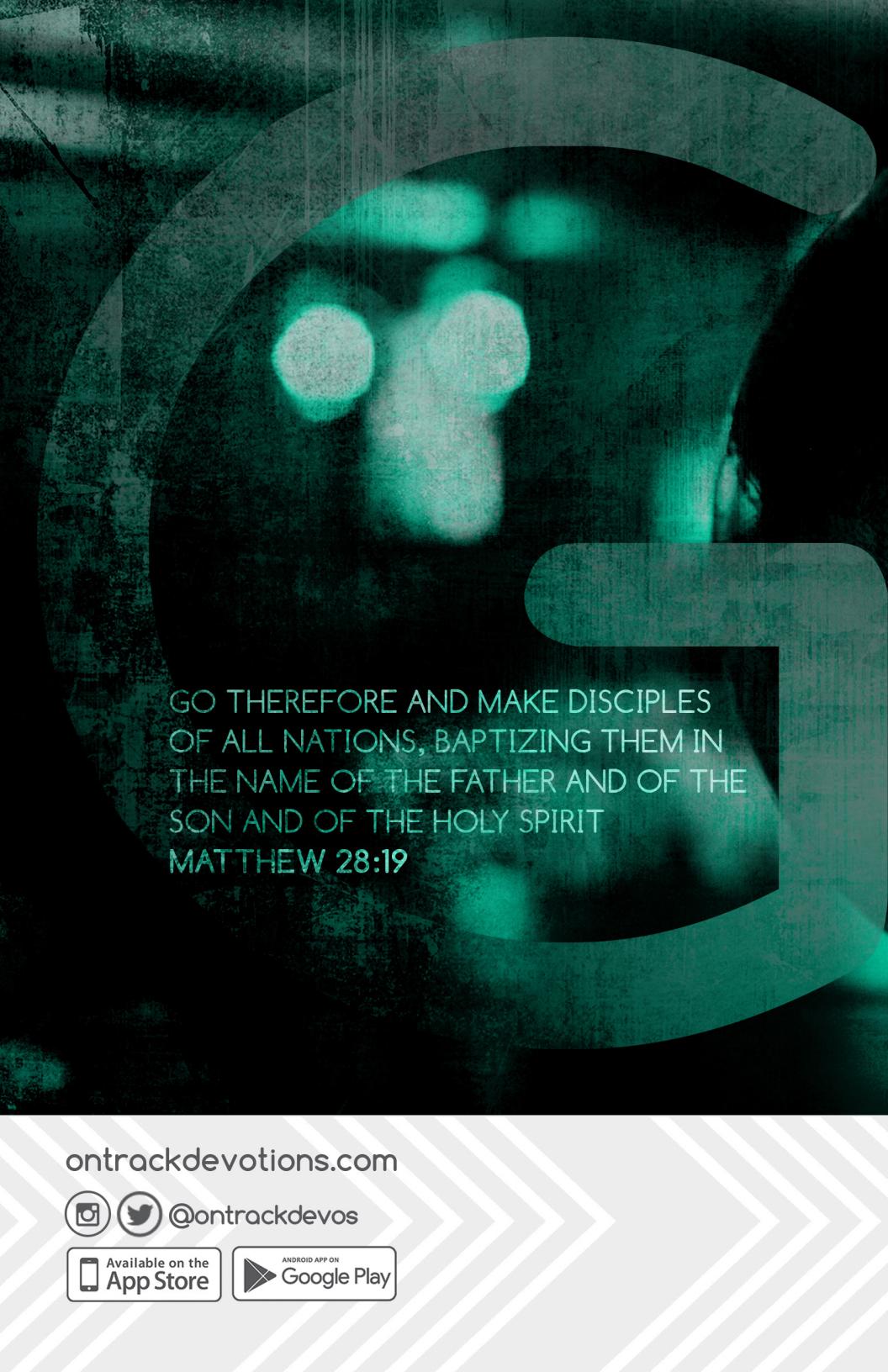


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GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES  
OF ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN  
THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF THE  
SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT  
**MATTHEW 28:19**

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