

The background of the entire image is a photograph of a dirt road with white chevron markings on the pavement. The road leads towards a large, dark bush or small tree in the center. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and dark blue, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The text is overlaid on this image.

The Crossroads

Daily Study Guide: Part One

*Crossroads Community Church
Sept - November*

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Welcome to Crossroads Community Church Study Guide, we are glad you joined us!

We offer this series study guide to be used as a resource for deeper understanding in tandem with weekend messages and it is our hope that you will find this useful in your faith journey and spiritual growth.

We believe The Bible, God’s word, is inspired by Him, through the Holy Spirit and is sufficient for everything you need in life – **guidance, wisdom, strength, encouragement and HOPE**. His word reveals His nature and character and His plan of redemption through His Son Jesus Christ, through whom we can have eternal salvation when we choose to follow Him. We also believe the Bible remains relevant in our world today and its power is experienced when personally and consistently applied and practiced.

Part of your journey may include choosing a Bible translation and there are many. To help you choose, it is important to know that a “translation” is word-for-word while a “paraphrase” is thought- for- thought. If you are new to Bible reading or don’t yet have one, we offer FREE Bibles that are English Standard Version translation – a very easy to read Bible. Other options are Bible Apps you can download to your phone, or sites like: www.Bible.org, www.biblegateway.com or www.blueletterbible.org.

We invite you to join us for weekend services:

Saturday Evening at 5:30pm. Question and Answer period after service.

Morning Social at 10:00am: A time to connect with others over coffee and donuts.

Sunday Morning at 10:30am

Promiseland Kids’ Ministry: Toddler – Sr. High, Sunday at 10:30 am, offers Christian education and worship for children and youth

If you have missed a service, you can view it on our YouTube Channel, “Crossroads Ridgecrest”, or go to www.crossroads-ridgecrest.org.

If you have any questions or would like to make an appointment, please call (760)384-3333 Weds. – Fri. 10am-4pm, text (760)301-4840, or email ccc@ccc-rc.org

Week 1



September 22nd – September 27th

Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!" Psalm 46:10

Monday, September 22nd, 2025

Day 1

Pray: Prayer is communication with God where we can express our needs and thankfulness. It is a time to be still and listen for His voice as He teaches, guides and comforts you through His word. Take a moment to write a short prayer here~

Read: [Psalm 46:1-11](#)

Think: We live in a world that doesn't know how to be still. Americans are among some of the busiest people in the world and among them, households with children active in extracurricular sports and other activities increases the busyness. With increased busyness comes increased stress, worry, and fatigue and if we're not careful these can impact our physical, mental, and spiritual health. However, busyness is not the only factor that can cause these issues for us... what are other situations that challenge people to "be still"?

As you read through this Psalm, what are some things mentioned that would be the source of worry, stress, or anxiety?

This Psalm is attributed to the sons of Korah... a group of men who joined King David in his military exploits but were most noted for their musical contributions and leadership in the tabernacle. Having fought alongside David in battle, these men were well acquainted with the stresses of war and the need for comfort and peace of mind and heart. In this beautiful Psalm, what attributes of God do they write about?

How does God protect and fight for His people?

Why do you think they wrote this Psalm?

In the Hebrew culture, it was common to put poetry, events, and history to music. In fact, did you know that many of our old hymns and worship songs come from scripture? This was, and honestly still is, a great way to help people remember and pass their history on to the next generation. Part of this included putting to music the history of who God is and how He has provided for His people, during good and bad times. When you are in a tough situation or wrestle with fear, doubt, and worry, how do you respond? Do you pray? Read scripture? Sing a song? Or do you become agitated, and busy yourself with finding solutions and ways to fix the problem? For many of us, our first response is to try to handle things ourselves, struggling to find solutions and the busier we get, we may also stop spending time with God. Have you ever done this? What was the result?

As Christians, we need to remain connected to the One who can bring peace to anything we face, and this means reading the very words that remind us He IS our refuge and strength. He IS a very present help, He IS the God who created the heavens and earth and all that are in it, and He WILL give you what you need. BUT!!! How will we remember this if we do not remind ourselves through His word?

Engage: What does your current schedule look like? How is it impacting your physical, mental, and spiritual health?

There may be times or seasons in our lives where increased busyness is unavoidable, but if we are honest with ourselves, busyness is often a self-inflicted problem. Take some time to examine your schedule and note if you are engaged in any activities that are causing stress that can or should be stopped. If you are in a season where busyness is unavoidable, what can you do to carve out time to “be still”?

Stillness is not necessarily a matter of doing nothing, although it can be that, stillness is more a matter of faith that is focused on God's work in our lives – past, present, and future. Stillness is actively reminding ourselves that God is in control, already knows what you need, already knows the outcome of your situation, and IS guiding you. If you are currently in, or the next time you are in a stressful or busy season, practice being still by 1. Praying and thanking God that He will provide, 2. Read and memorize scripture that reminds you of this, and 3. Sing a worship song that focuses your heart and mind on Him.

Memorize: Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!" Psalm 46:10

Tuesday, September 23rd, 2025

Day 2

Pray: Prayer is communication with God where we can express our needs and thankfulness. It is a time to be still and listen for His voice as He teaches, guides and comforts you through His word. Take a moment to write a short prayer here~

Read: [Proverbs 3:1-12](#)

Think: In yesterday's study, we acknowledged the fact that when faced with a trial, our first response may be to handle things ourselves. Before becoming Christian, this is the normal way of doing things and is a **learned** response, so we shouldn't be surprised that we must **unlearn** relying on ourselves and practice relying on God.

In today's reading, King Solomon, son of King David, is writing to his son words of wisdom for a life of peace. In verses 1-4, what are we not to forget or forsake?

These two words are interesting, and we may have a misunderstanding of what they really mean here. In these verses the word "*forget*" is not a matter of absentmindedness – like I forgot my lunch

today, but a matter of **ignoring something or ceasing to care**. The word “*forsake*” in verse 3 gives the idea of **letting something go, to leave or abandon**. How do these definitions impact your understanding of the verses?

When it comes to practicing total reliance on God and living in the peace only He can give, we have a personal responsibility to grab a hold of and maintain the very things that make for peace. Even so, in the process we must continue to work on not trusting in ourselves, but God. How do verses 5-6 explain this?

Once again we find ourselves in a dilemma. The world teaches us to trust our instincts, go with your gut, follow your heart... but the Bible teaches us we are not to trust ourselves this way. Turn to [Jeremiah 17:9-10](#), what do these verses teach about the trustworthiness of our heart?

This doesn't mean we are to ignore every thought or idea we have, or to live in a perpetual state of doubt, but we are to bring them to God first and be willing to do what He says rather than what we want. Even after becoming Christian, it is easy to think that God will always work the same way in all situations, but this is not always the case. Have you experienced this? What has God taught you through it?

The beauty of verses 5-6 is that if our goal is to honor God through **every** decision we make, He WILL make our paths straight! We may not feel this way at the time but looking back you will see His hand in the process. For each trial or decision we face with God, we should keep an account and remember how He responded and met our needs and in this way, we will not forget or forsake His ways.

Engage In the remainder of this passage, what does King Solomon instruct and encourage?

What are the results of obedience to this?

Would the outcomes cited in these verses help you “be still”? Would they lower your stress levels, your anxiety, or worry? The truth is we are faced with making these decisions every day. Each day we choose whether we will trust in God our go with what we are familiar with or have done in the past – we are at a crossroads. What is going on in your life right now that requires this decision?

Will you trust in God for wisdom and direction? Is it your goal to honor Him in the process? How can you take the step of faith to fully trust Him?

Memorize: Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!” Psalm 46:10

Wednesday, September 24th, 2025

Day 3

Pray: Prayer is communication with God where we can express our needs and thankfulness. It is a time to be still and listen for His voice as He teaches, guides and comforts you through His word. Take a moment to write a short prayer here~

Read: [Psalm 121](#)

Think: Several years ago, the popular Christian band, Casting Crowns, wrote a song called “Praise You in This Storm”. It was the #2 song of 2006 and one of the top songs of the 2,000’s decade... the question is “why”? It was a song we could all identify with – it expressed the struggle of the human heart and soul during trials and suffering and reaching out to God for help.

It is hard to be still when there are storms raging all around us – think of Peter, when he stepped out of the boat to walk to Jesus on the water ([Matthew 14:25-32](#)). As soon as Peter saw the waves around him, he became afraid and began to sink, but he called to Jesus for help and immediately Jesus reached out and saved him. We have all been through or are going through storms – some big, some small, some short lived, and others much longer than we want. What storms have you been through?

How have you handled them?

As Christians, we have someone who reaches out to us to walk alongside – the Lord, but do we always see Him? Do we always hear Him? Is it because He isn't there?

Again, we must remind ourselves of the truth, God is ALWAYS present, and it is His desire to protect, guide and provide for us in the storm. However, we must have a response – do we praise Him in spite of the situation, or blame Him for not giving us what we want? Today's psalm is another beautiful example of a song written to remind God's people of His constant goodness. What are the actions and qualities of God listed in these verses?

How does this remind you of His goodness even in the storms of life?

Engage: This song by Casting Crowns uses verses 1-2 in the lyrics. These verses paint a picture of someone looking into the distant hills – what do they see?

It is taught that it was referring to God's people traveling to Jerusalem, seeing it in the distance and God's protection for their journey. However, it is possible that it could apply to the fact that in this culture, as kings would go to battle, they often encamped in opposing hillsides at a distance where they could see each other, so they were literally looking at their enemy in the hills. Whether our

“hill” or storm is something we see from a distance or an “enemy”, as we look at it, where does our help come from?

If God made heaven and earth, do we have any reason to believe He can’t help us in our trials? Learning to be still comes with the choice to praise God in the middle of whatever trial we are in. Not just with words but actions and attitude. Take some time to watch these videos of the song and Mark Hall as he shares the story behind the song and then briefly write how it encourages you.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0YUGwUgBvTU> Praise You in the Storm, Casting Crowns.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bDtHf5J3ZLE&t=8s> ,.

Memorize: Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!” Psalm 46:10

Thursday, September 25th, 2025

Day 4

Pray: Prayer is communication with God where we can express our needs and thankfulness. It is a time to be still and listen for His voice as He teaches, guides and comforts you through His word. Take a moment to write a short prayer here~

Read: [Psalm 100](#)

Think: Today we will read one more psalm, however this one has a very different tone. As you read this, what is the word you would use to describe it?

At the end of the day, no matter what has transpired or what we’ve endured, there is ALWAYS reason to praise and say thank you! What are the reasons listed in this psalm we can praise God and thank Him?

As we are all aware, the mental health of our nation has tragically declined. Over the years, the mental health community has taught people that feelings are to be valued above everything else. People desperately grasp for happiness and anything they think can bring that happiness so it is no surprise when they can't maintain feelings of happiness they plummet into depression and anxiety. Unable to change their feelings, they often turn to medication, which only covers the symptoms, not the source of the problem. The amazing truth about praise and thankfulness is that it is NOT dependent on how we feel. Think of it this way, have you ever received a gift you didn't like? Even though you didn't like it, did you say thank you? Why?

Praise and thankfulness are never an issue of ability – unless we are literally unable to speak for medical reasons, we CAN express in words every reason we can be thankful – even if our life seems like a dumpster fire! Sometimes things can be so difficult all we can do is say thank you we have a dumpster and a fire to keep us warm 😊

In reality, thankfulness and praise are the antidote for a lot of our mental health challenges. Turn to [Philippians 4:6-8](#) and [13](#), here the apostle Paul teaches us how to do this... write each step he mentions. In verses 8-9, what are we to focus on and practice?

Much of the mental health issues people face could be healed by following this passage, but it does take time and practice. If we are faithful to practice this, we may soon discover that our heart and mind have ceased striving and become still and the feelings of happiness we hope for will come through.

Engage: So far this week we have learned that being still is a heart and mind issue. We have learned that what we choose to focus on has a great deal to do with our ability to have peace in trials and that no matter how we feel, we CAN and SHOULD praise and thank God. As you consider the trials, difficulties, or decisions you are facing right now, write your own prayer or psalm of gratitude and praise to God. Be specific about things you can be thankful for and practice this.

Memorize: Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!" Psalm 46:10

Friday, September 26th, 2025

Day 5

Pray: Prayer is communication with God where we can express our needs and thankfulness. It is a time to be still and listen for His voice as He teaches, guides and comforts you through His word. Take a moment to write a short prayer here~

Read: [Matthew 6:19-34](#)

Think: When we were children, we may have had fun playing pirates or adventurers looking for buried treasure. We drew or pretended to have a map guiding us to the “X” that marked the spot where a trunk filled with gold coins, jewels, and the promise of wealth waited for us. As we grow up, we no longer play pirates, but we may still have a hypothetical treasure map, a plan or list of goals to achieve and the path to get there. What treasures or goals have you had throughout your life?

How did you plan to achieve them?

How did they drive you?

Although setting and accomplishing goals in our life is a great thing to do, we must be careful that we don't allow the pursuit to consume us, to the detriment of our spiritual life. Jesus had much to say about this...

In today's passage, verses 19-24, what does Jesus warn us?

What specific challenge does He site in verse 24?

Jesus is not anti-money, He is simply pointing out the temptation and danger to serve and worship money. Turn to [1 Timothy 6:10](#) and [Ecclesiastes 5:10-12](#), what is the warning in both of these passages?

The real issue here is control and satisfaction – those whose aim it is to pursue wealth are often controlled by it and never satisfied with what they have. What should we be satisfied with?

Let's look at the remaining verses in Matthew 6 – what word joins verses 24 and 25?

Many of our Bibles have probably separated these verses making it appear as though we a starting a new subject, but the word “therefore” connects the two statements and means, *as a result or consequently*. Based on this “therefore” and what Jesus says in the following verses, what is often the motive and result?

Trying to serve two masters will always challenge our ability to be still, especially when it comes to following Jesus or our own personal goals. Let's remind ourselves, having goals and achieving them is not the problem, it's the sole focus and worship of them. What does Jesus say God will do for His creation?

Will you be satisfied with what God ordains for you – whether a little or a lot?

Engage: Because of our ever-changing economy, many people in recent years have experienced severe financial changes and worry is a normal reaction. If you are one of these folks, how are you dealing with it?

Are you trusting in God's provision? How does He continue to provide for you?

The hard part for many is the desire to maintain a particular way of life that may no longer be sustainable. Having to cut or stop certain activities or luxuries can be hard, but necessary, and if done with the desire to worship and honor God, can be one of the most rewarding and life changing seasons as we discover a depth of God's goodness we may never have experienced. Take stock of

where your treasures are... are they heaven focused or earthly focused? Is there anything in your life's pursuits that is hindering your pursuit of God?

Memorize: Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!" Psalm 46:10

Saturday, September 27th, 2025

Day 6

Pray: Prayer is communication with God where we can express our needs and thankfulness. It is a time to be still and listen for His voice as He teaches, guides and comforts you through His word. Take a moment to write a short prayer here~

Read: [John 14:1-6](#) and [26-27](#)

Think: Stillness of heart and mind, our ability to maintain stability and endurance, must have a foundation and part of that foundation is knowing where we are going and how to get there. Talking with a friend the other day, we were sharing how going to a new destination we've never been to can be stressful. Even though we have GPS on our phones and car nav systems, it's often the unfamiliarity of the journey, traffic, lane changes, and the worry of missing the correct offramp that causes the anxiety. Navigating life can be similar... we need instructions, a pilot and a navigator.

As the time of Jesus' crucifixion drew near, He began to teach His disciples more specifically what to expect. He also knew they would struggle with fear... more specifically, "troubled". This word in Greek is *tarasso*, meaning to be agitated, take away calmness of mind, or make restless. This is the kind of fear that makes a person tremble and even fear for their life. In verse one today, what does Jesus tell His disciples?

It seems the foundation of our stillness is belief – in God and Jesus. The word, belief in this verse is *pisteuo*, meaning to think to be true, have confidence in, conviction and trust. This is not just a

mental or intellectual nod to the existence of God but to be convinced that all He is, says, and promises is true and will come to pass. What did Jesus promise His disciples (and us) in verses 2-6?

There is a lot of life (hopefully) between now and when Jesus returns or when we go home to Him, and during that time, life will be filled with moments our heart may be troubled. But Jesus promises to give us something to help us navigate these times, in verses 26-27, what does He promise?

What does the Holy Spirit do?

Why is this important?

We can think of the Holy Spirit as our GPS (God Positioning System) okay, that was a little cheesy 😊 but true! We don't always know which direction to go, or what off/on ramps to take in life, so we must rely on Him to give us directions as well as get us back on course if we've missed a turn. This will give us the peace we need – Jesus' peace – peace that is not dependent on people or circumstances but rooted in the source of peace, Jesus Christ!

Engage: What is the difference between the peace Jesus gives and the peace the world gives?

Peace from the world is not peace at all – it is temporary and dependent on others and how they treat us, or how well life is going. The hard part is that people will let us down, even those who love us most can't be our source of peace. Have you ever heard someone say, "so and so robbed me of my peace"? This is a false statement! Of course conflict, relationship challenges, and other issues can certainly impact our feelings of peace, but no one takes it from us, we have to hand it over. How does this challenge or encourage you?

If your peace is solidly rooted in the One who never changes, lies, or lets us down, how will your life change?

In all that we have learned this week, briefly summarize what it means to be still, the purpose for it and how to practice it.

Memorize: Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!" Psalm 46:10

Week 2



September 29th – October 4th

“But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! - Luke 15:17 ESV

Monday, September 29th, 2025

Day 1

As you begin today's study, ask God to show you His truth through His word. As you read, listen for His voice in scripture.

Pray: Prayer is communication with God where we can express our needs and thankfulness. It is a time to be still and listen for His voice as He teaches and comforts you through His word. Take a moment to write a short prayer here~

Read: [Jeremiah 6:16](#)

Think: Have you ever been on a road trip where you were unfamiliar with the area you were going? What did you do to get directions? Did you ever get lost? If so, how did you get back on track and going in the right direction?

We've had the luxury of GPS and navigational systems on our phones and in our cars for some time now, and the great thing about them is all we need to do is plug in the address and away we go! If we miss a turn, it corrects for us, if we get lost, it will get us back on track – we don't even need to think about it. But before GPS, we had maps – actual paper – that we had to look at and write the directions down, and even before then, directions came verbally by those who had been there before, and if we got lost, we pulled over at a gas station and asked for help. The point is, we need directions in life – for everything and if we get lost at some point, we need to stop, assess where we are and determine what to do next.

The book of Jeremiah is the account of his time as prophet of Judah, a nation who had gone astray and were "lost". They were lost by choice though, having rebelled against the Lord, worshipping pagan gods instead. Of course, they still wanted God's help but were unwilling to repent and obey Him. In today's reading, what does God tell His people they need to do to find rest?

What is their response?

Why do you think they rejected God's offer?

Engage: There are those times in life when we seem to make the same mistakes and get the same painful results over and over again, leaving us wondering what we're doing wrong. Have you experienced this? What was the situation?

What was the result?

Whether you are a new Christian, exploring or a mature believer, we will face times where we are at a crossroads. We must decide which direction to take, whether it is obeying God's word, responding to conflict in our old ways, or stopping a bad habit – and often the only way to know which direction we need to go is to stop and look around where we are at the moment. Notice how we got there, look at our options, find the best path (which is not always the easy one), ask for directions if needed. If you are feeling lost and unsure about your faith or a current trial or decision, take a moment to be still, look around and take note of where you are and the choices you've made that got you here. As we study together this week and throughout the series, we will help you plot a course that will lead you in the right direction.

Memorize: *"But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! - Luke 15:17 ESV"*

Tuesday, September 30th, 2025

Day 2

Pray: Prayer is communication with God where we can express our needs and thankfulness. It is a time to be still and listen for His voice as He teaches and comforts you through His word. Take a moment to write a short prayer here~

Read: [Luke 15:11-24](#)

Think: Teenagers often think they know more than their parents or that parents don't understand them. Honestly, things don't change much as adults... we often think we know what's best for us or that God doesn't understand us. Do you believe you know what's best for you? Why/why not?

When we decide what's best for us, what is the motive and standard?

Often, our decisions are based on what makes us feel good in the moment.

In today's passage, we read about a son who thought he knew what was best for him. What did he ask his father for?

What do you think his motive was?

What choices did he make and what was the result?

When and how did he finally come to his senses?

Engage: If you are familiar with this parable, you know this is a story about God, the Father, and His sons – us. This is a beautiful story about how God deals with us, His children. He will never force us to make the right decision but will allow us to go our own way to help us see our need for Him. Do you think God allowed the famine for the purpose getting the son's attention? God does allow pain in our lives, whether self-induced or otherwise, for the purpose of turning us around when we are going down a wrong path. Has this ever happened to you? What did you learn?

It is often when we are face down in the mud (or pig trough) that we come to our senses, stop, and realize we need to make some changes. When the son in today's parable did this, what was his attitude when he came home?

This is another wonderful picture of how God responds to a repentant heart! Did the Father punish his son or celebrate his return?

[1 John 1:9](#) tells us when we confess our sin, God is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness! He restores us and celebrates, so if fear of punishment or retribution has stopped you from coming back to Him, let today's study give you the encouragement to stop, repent, and return to Him – He is waiting for you!

Memorize: *"But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! - Luke 15:17 ESV*

Wednesday, October 2nd, 2025
Day 3

Pray: Prayer is communication with God where we can express our needs and thankfulness. It is a time to be still and listen for His voice as He teaches and comforts you through His word. Take a moment to write a short prayer here~

Read: [Proverbs 14:12-16](#)

Think: Once we have realized that we have been going down the wrong path and need to make some changes, we will need to decide *what* changes and how to know if they're the correct ones. We will dig into this a little more next week, but to begin, let's explore how we decide what to do. Let's go back to yesterday's study... when the son found himself starving, what did he remember about what it was like to be at home?

The son remembered his father's goodness, the abundance of food – even for his servants. The Father's goodness was so incredible he would be satisfied to become a servant as well. This is the key when it comes to learning how to discern what choices to make in life. In today's reading, we are shown two paths, or choices and the results, write the main point of these proverbs.

Notice in verse 16, the word used is "cautious" – how would you define this?

This word means *fear, reverent or afraid*. This is more than approaching something slowly but has with it the idea that potential harm is involved. Knowing this, it seems the idea here is that our ways, thoughts, and plans on how to approach a situation, make a decision or change something in our life can *seem or feel* right, but have the potential for harm, so we must always be willing to slow down and check ourselves against God's word.

Engage: Is there a trial, decision, or other important life choice that requires you to exercise caution and discernment? Who do you go to for wisdom and advice?

If you are praying about it, how do you discern if what you are hearing is from God or your own thoughts?

Discernment is the ability, or spiritual gift, to know the difference between evil and good, truth and error, and while some Christians are given the spiritual gift of discernment, it is something that can be learned. Turn to [Romans 12:2](#), according to this verse, how do we learn this?

When it comes to choices and changes, discernment is something that must be practiced – it comes by testing what is good. It is more than stopping old ways, but renewing our mind and pursuing God’s ways – this is the only way we will know which way to go. List some ways you can practice this.

Memorize: *“But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! - Luke 15:17 ESV*

Thursday, October 1st, 2025
Day 4

Pray: Prayer is communication with God where we can express our needs and thankfulness. It is a time to be still and listen for His voice as He teaches and comforts you through His word. Take a moment to write a short prayer here~

Read: [Psalm 139:23-24](#)

Think: Did you know that in our very own desert, in Cantil or better known as Jawbone Canyon, we have a test facility – Honda Proving Grounds? Established in 1990, it is a test track for Honda and Acura cars, and the purpose is to test new models to see if they live up to their claims and/or the limits of their performance.

In a way, this is what today's passage is pointing to in our own faith. This Psalm of David is a beautiful and courageous prayer to God asking Him to thoroughly examine his heart and thoughts and test His faith. Are you brave enough to ask God to do this? This can be a scary prayer, but a necessary one. We are well aware of our negative and sinful thoughts and motives, but we also tend to hide or ignore some sin out of fear of being found out or what it will take to work on it.

In verse 23, what three things does David ask God to do?

Search, know and try... the picture here is to ask God to examine or investigate our heart, to know or discover anything hidden deep in there and to test or prove our thoughts. What is David's reason for this in verse 24?

In this Psalm, King David expresses his desire to be completely faithful to God and he is willing to have God reveal any sin that needs to be removed. His story is one that many of us can identify with – in principle. David was God's chosen king over Israel and the one who the throne of the Messiah would come. It seems, at one point in his rule, he became proud and complacent and committed adultery and murder, hid it and had to be confronted by the prophet Nathan to recognize and admit what he had done (2 Samuel 11-12).

Pride, complacency, selfishness, lust – these are all things that can contaminate and corrupt our faith. If our hope is to continue growing in Christ and walk with Him faithfully, we must allow Him access to our heart and mind for the purpose of showing any hidden or ignored sins. Although this can be a frightening endeavor, it is important to understand that we have a choice in how this can happen. If we look at David's situation, because he thought he could hide his sin from people, he failed to realize he couldn't hide his sin from God. God will confront us in our sin privately through His word or even a sermon we hear, and we have the opportunity to confess and repent or risk having our sin being revealed in another way that is more public. Which would you choose?

Engage: When we want to live faithfully as a Christian, God will provide and do all He can to help us accomplish this. Part of this is exposing and removing anything in our lives that can hinder our relationship with Him, including people or friendships. This can be difficult and painful, but if we are willing to let go of our pride and let Him guide us in the process, we will experience His faithfulness and goodness in miraculous ways. Take some time to pray these verses and write down what God reveals to you.

Memorize: *“But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! - Luke 15:17 ESV*

Friday, October 3rd, 2025

Day 5

Pray: Prayer is communication with God where we can express our needs and thankfulness. It is a time to be still and listen for His voice as He teaches and comforts you through His word. Take a moment to write a short prayer here~

Think: At the time when Jesus taught this parable, many of His listeners were shepherds and/or owned their own sheep – it was common for the time. Sheep were a valuable possession and required a lot of care to protect them from pests, wolves, and even their own reckless behavior. Sheep would often wander off, putting themselves in danger, which meant the shepherd had to search for them and bring them back to their pasture. In the book, “A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23”, by Phillip Keller, he talks about sheep that he calls “fence crawlers”. These are sheep that make their way to the fence line of their pasture and look over the fence to the other side. They will go up and down the fence trying to get to the other side even if the “other side” is a desolate and dry land, so the shepherd must go get the sheep and bring it back.

When we consider the parable from today’s passage, Jesus teaches about a sheep that was lost. The word “lost” here means to perish or be destroyed (danger of animals that kill). Wolves and other wild animals were a constant threat to sheep, so much that shepherds would sleep at the gate of the sheepfold to protect them during the night. This sheep isn’t lost as in it doesn’t know the way home, but has chosen to wander off and placed itself in danger of being destroyed. This is our lesson... in the Bible we are often referred to as sheep and whether we like it or not, we have many of the same challenges and needs! We require vigilant care from the Shepherd, we need to be protected from pests, wild animals, and most importantly our own bad choices! We can be fence crawlers too – always thinking it’s better in the other pasture!

However, in this parable, what does the shepherd do?

What does he do when he brings his sheep home?

What is the point of His parable in verse 7?

Luke's gospel was written for the Gentiles, non-Jews, to show them that Jesus came to offer them salvation – He came to seek and save the “lost” ([Luke 19:10](#)). Without Christ, we are all lost – in danger of the enemy, the devil. Turn to [1 Peter 5:8](#), how is Satan described?

Once we come to saving faith, we are now Satan's enemy and he will all he can to distract us, tempt us, and pull us away from Jesus. What are some ways he does this?

Have you experienced Satan trying to distract you? How did you handle it?

Engage: You will notice in today's parable that this lost sheep was part of a larger group. Look around you... as a Christian, you are not alone but are part of a larger group – the church. However, it is possible to be very lonely or lost in a crowd and when that happens, Satan will begin his lies, telling you no one cares about you. If you're not careful, he will separate you from the group and isolate you. Many people have left churches because of this – you may have been one of them at one time or another – or you know someone who has. How would you encourage that person to return to church?

If you were that person, what would you need to have the courage to go back?

Jesus has already “found” you – He knows exactly where you are and will rescue you, but you must learn to not wander off to the fence line. It is true what they say – there is safety in numbers, and our church family is there to help. If you are struggling in any way, please let us know how we can help. Counseling is always FREE, and you can make an appointment by calling the office Weds – Fri 10am-4pm, 760-384-3333.

Memorize: *“But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! - Luke 15:17 ESV*

Saturday, October 4th, 2025

Day 6

Pray: Prayer is communication with God where we can express our needs and thankfulness. It is a time to be still and listen for His voice as He teaches and comforts you through His word. Take a moment to write a short prayer here~

Read: [1 Peter 2:1-3](#)

Think: Knowing how to slow down, stop, and look around comes with time and practice. As a new Christian, we must learn an entirely new way of life, learn what’s right and wrong, how to change, and so on. In the same way infants don’t yet know how to feed themselves or walk, so it is with new Christians. In Peter’s letter, what does he tell us to long for?

What is the example?

What does he say we need to put away or stop doing?

In verse 3, what is it that keeps us going back to this pure spiritual milk?

It is interesting that Peter uses this example in that we likely all understand that a newborn infant instinctively cries when it is hungry and the baby already knows how to suckle. However, babies don't eat just once and then are satisfied forever – as they grow, they want and need more, they long for more because they have “tasted and seen”.

The word “long” in this verse is, *epipothéo*, and means to yearn, pursue or intensely crave and even lust for. We get this... what is your favorite food?

Do you ever have intense cravings for it? Why?

What do you do when you want it?

Let's look at this from a scientific perspective for a minute. When we introduce a substance, whether food or other substances/activities, the brain releases a neurotransmitter called dopamine which is our rewards system – this is why when we are stressed, tired, sad, or bored we might find ourselves craving something to stimulate that area – usually sugar but it can be other things too, like shopping, gambling, etc. Many things can impact this, but you may notice over time, cravings become stronger as the body and mind develop a habit or addiction. Here's another fun fact... studies have also shown that reading our Bible and participating in other spiritual disciplines can also cause a dopamine effect and when practiced over time, we can also become addicted!

Peter knew that if we truly tasted God's goodness, we would crave it and come back for more – God designed us this way.

Engage: Do you crave God and His word? Why/why not?

Some of the lure of food and other substances or activities to make us feel better is the instant satisfaction we get from it. In our faith, we may not always receive that same kind of quick response as we are learning to navigate life, and if we're not careful we tend to give up too easily. There is

another issue though... maybe our expectations were off. Let's put it this way... if you craved chocolate would you expect a piece of cheese to satisfy you? Why not?

Many times, this is what happens with our desire for God – we expect Him to do all the work of making us happy and taking care of all our problems; or we don't have a direction and reading Bible is more like Bible roulette; or we are trying to live in both worlds – our old life and the new one. If you are feeling unsatisfied in your relationship with God, take some time to examine what you are doing... the shortage is never on God's part.

Memorize: *"But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! - Luke 15:17 ESV"*

Week 3



October 6th – October 11th

Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. Matthew 7:24

Monday, October 6th, 2025

Day 1

Pray: Prayer is communication with God where we can express our needs and thankfulness. It is a time to be still and listen for His voice as He teaches and comforts you through His word. Take a moment to write a short prayer here~

Read: [Matthew 5:1-16](#)

Think: When we started this study, it was mentioned that part of our faith journey comes with making choices, deciding which way to go. As believers living in a fallen world, we will be faced with choosing the world's way of doing things and God's way of doing things. This is known as a worldview and there are only two... a secular worldview and a biblical worldview and they do not cross over or agree with one another. However, it is becoming increasingly popular for Christians to try to adopt certain secular views and add them to their faith. We will learn more about this in this week's study, but for now, list some ideas, beliefs or opinions that the world teaches about life in general, that are bleeding into the church.

One of the greatest desires we have as humans is the desire to be happy, in fact it's built into our Declaration of Independence: *"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."* Our founding fathers stated we have the right to be happy! Oh... wait, is that what it says? Well, it is what people think. Humanity has gone from having the right to *pursue* happiness and the *opportunity* to achieve it to being told they have the right to BE happy. But therein lies the dilemma... WHAT makes us happy? More to the point is the question, WHY is this included and WHO defines happiness? Some offer that Thomas Jefferson, followed others example, George Mason's *Virginia Declaration of Rights*, or philosopher John Locke,

who listed "life, liberty, and estate (property)" as natural rights. So rather than pursuing material possessions, pursuing the right to happiness and how to define it was added.

How do YOU define happiness?

What makes you happy?

There may be many things, but true happiness, the kind that can't be stolen, broken, or lost, can only come from one source – God and a biblical worldview. As you read through verses 3-11 in today's scripture, what word begins each sentence?

The word, "blessed" in Greek is *makarios*, meaning "happy" or supremely blessed, fortunate or well off. Looking at what Jesus teaches in each verse, do these sound like things that would make a person happy? How would the world change these verses to fit the secular worldview?

Why do you think Jesus says we will be blessed/happy when we mourn, are poor in spirit, are meek and persecuted?

Part of the plan is that the life of a Christ follower is radically different in a way that draws others to it – in fact, it almost makes no sense! How does He describe this life in verses 13-16?

This kind life is like a light shining in the darkness or a city on a hill – it is noticeable.

Engage: In the Jewish culture, people traveled long distances by foot, so it would be a comfort to see a city or a light in the distance which offered comfort and peace. Living the kind of life Jesus teaches in His Sermon on the Mount is not only meant to be different, but provide hope and comfort the same way a city or light on a dark night does a weary traveler. Is this your goal? Does

your life show God's blessing? Do you demonstrate joy and peace in the midst of trials? Today's world is the product of generations of secular humanism being the preferred religion. There is much we need to learn about what it takes to reach people as well as how to combat this false religion in our public schools. If you are a parent, grandparent, or teacher, this podcast, <https://podcast.gotquestions.org/episode-70.html> by Natasha Crain, author of "Faithfully Different" is a great resource. Natasha also has additional books, recommendations and resources that are also helpful <https://natashacrain.com/apologetics-reading-plan-for-parents/>

Memorize: *Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. Matthew 7:24*

Tuesday, October 7th, 2025

Day 2

Pray: Prayer is communication with God where we can express our needs and thankfulness. It is a time to be still and listen for His voice as He teaches and comforts you through His word. Take a moment to write a short prayer here~

Read: [Matthew 5:17-30](#)

Think: Some people believe that when Jesus came, He taught people a new law to live by and that the Old Testament law of Moses was no longer valid. Even many of the religious leaders of His time accused Him of this. Much of the confusion came in the way He taught the true meaning of the Law of Moses, by saying "you have heard..." and then saying, "but I say to you". Does this sound like He's changing things?

As you read verses 21-22 and 27-28, what did Jesus say they had "heard"? What appears to be His new teaching? Jesus is not giving them a new law or teaching, He is exposing the fact they never understood the law as God intended. Does Jesus say it's ok to murder or commit adultery? Maybe when it's justified? No! Here's the reality He shows us...

All sin starts with temptation and temptation starts in the heart and mind (See [James 1:13-15](#)). Murder is the intentional taking of a life, which suggests there was thought and planning involved. Adultery is the intentional act of sexual relations with someone who isn't a spouse, which suggests there was thought and planning involved. When God gave Moses the commands, "you shall not murder" and "you shall not commit adultery", He didn't forget or miss the mental portion of this, the people did – it was always about what is happening in our thoughts. How does this challenge you?

Engage: Why do you think Jesus emphasized the problem with lust and anger?

These continue to be two of the biggest temptations and sins today as well. Do you wrestle with either one? What do you do to control your thoughts?

Focusing on God's word and His truth is the best way to overcome this. Especially in a world that condones outbursts of anger (at the writing of this, Charlie Kirk had just been assassinated for his strong views on God and family and sadly, many people celebrated) and sexual sin – even in the church! Jesus gave us the answers to these problems in verses 24-25 and 29-30, what are they?

Of course, we aren't meant to literally cut off our hand or pluck out an eyeball, the idea here in both cases is quick and thorough action, removing ourselves from the situation or person for the sake of our relationship with Christ. These are not always easy choices to make, but the consequences of taking no action are very clear.

Memorize: *Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. Matthew 7:24*

Wednesday, October 8th, 2025

Day 3

Pray: Prayer is communication with God where we can express our needs and thankfulness. It is a time to be still and listen for His voice as He teaches and comforts you through His word. Take a moment to write a short prayer here~

Read: [Matthew 5:38-48](#)

Think: Today we read of two more, “you have heard, but I say to you” situations where Jesus seems to be teaching opposite the Law of Moses. What is your understanding of “an eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth”?

What is your understanding of “love your neighbor and hate your enemy”?

The Old Testament law Jesus is referring to comes from [Leviticus 24:19-20](#), [Leviticus 19:18](#), [Deuteronomy 7:2](#) and [Psalm 139:21-22](#), read these verses and note what they are teaching. Do they seem to contradict each other in any way? At this point, we must understand that Jesus, as the Son of God, cannot contradict the Father in any way, so what is happening here? Jesus continues to point out the misinterpretation of the law.

Misinterpretation is very noticeable in the verse out of Leviticus 19 – God clearly states we are to love our neighbor and not take vengeance, so what does “eye for an eye”, etc. really mean? By this time in history, God had rescued His people from the oppressive rule of the Pharaoh in Egypt and was bringing them into the promised land. However, the Hebrew people continued in sin and rebellion so the Law of Moses, which includes the Ten Commandments as well as all other laws

for righteous living, was given by God to govern His people and keep them safe. It is no different than the laws we have today that are intended for our safety as well as a peaceful society. BUT just like today, people break the law, misinterpret the law, bend the law, and change it to fit their desires, and when that happens there are consequences.

What the people misunderstood was that the law of “an eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth” was not meant to be taken literally, but the value of the part and basically how it was going to impact the person. This is probably not the greatest example, but you can think of it like workmen’s comp – If a person needed their eye, hand, foot, etc. for work and now their work is hindered, the process of restitution was to be equal to the loss. It wasn’t a command to retaliate equal to the loss, but to set limits for restitution.

The same with loving our neighbor and hating our enemies... the question is WHO is our neighbor? Just the people we like? What if your neighbor is your enemy? Do you not speak to them when you see them in their front yard? Again, this had to do with creating a peaceful society and safe boundaries for God’s people. The problem was they misunderstood this as we are to hate people we don’t like, but that’s not at all what God meant. Even in Psalm 139, it may seem confusing at first, but who does David say he hates?

He’s not talking about people who hate him, but those who hate God – the motive is different. Is David going against God’s law? What we can say for sure is if it is our heart’s desire to love people the way God does, we *will* hate sin and evil and how it damages people, but our prayer is not that they should pay for what they’ve done, but repent and turn to God.

Engage: In this nation, hate and retaliation have become the normal reaction to people who disagree with us and have different opinions. Jesus is clear... in today’s passage how are Christians to respond to those who hurt us, steal from us, or persecute us?

Write how we are to respond to these situations. How does this challenge you?

Does this go against what you’ve been taught or experienced? Why is it so difficult to respond in a Christlike way?

Our primary challenge is that we are focused on what we want rather than what God wants, and we fear justice will not happen. But God's justice will come when He says it's time. In your life, if you have someone who has hurt you, list some ways you can practice Jesus' teaching.

Memorize: *Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. Matthew 7:24*

Thursday, October 9th, 2025

Day 4

Pray: Prayer is communication with God where we can express our needs and thankfulness. It is a time to be still and listen for His voice as He teaches and comforts you through His word. Take a moment to write a short prayer here~

Read: [Matthew 6:19-34](#)

Think: What do you treasure in life? Is it your children? Your spouse? Your home? Your money? Your car? How much time do you spend thinking about them or working on them? Does the fear of losing them cause you anxiety? Why/why not?

All of these are important and if we have them or an abundance, we should consider ourselves blessed! We should also remember that they are from God and belong to God and as such, it is our duty to be good stewards or caretakers of them. However, there is a line we can cross from taking good care of what we've been given to making our things master in our life. Once again, we are challenged by the way our bible and bible website separates Jesus' teaching, making it appear as if they are completely separate. Read today's passage through as a single lesson... does it change your

understanding at all? The lure of wealth and material possessions has always been a problem and Satan has used it to destroy many people. Turn to [1 Timothy 6:9-10](#), what do these verses say about this?

Nowhere in Jesus' teaching, or other places of the Bible that addresses money, does God say money is the problem... it is always the motive. In Matthew 6:22-23, Jesus talks about the "eye" as the lamp of the body. Why do you think He says this?

Let's ask this question... how much does what you choose to look at impact what you want?

If you scroll through your social media constantly looking at fancy cars, big houses, attractive people, jewelry, etc. what will be the result?

Turn to [Exodus 20:17](#), this is the 10th Commandment God gave Moses – what does it say we are not to do?

The word "covet" means to desire or intensely desire. This can be either good or bad, but what we are warned of is the mental exercise/practice of wanting what others have or wanting more than what God has given and ordained for us. There is an "eye" or focus element that impacts our thoughts and motives that can result in worry and anxiety. Based on verses 25-33, what are we to focus on instead?

Engage: Today's lesson isn't a scolding if we have nice things, nor is it telling us to stop preparing for the future. We should be doing both – take care of what we have *and* prepare for our future. It is wise to save money, invest in our retirement and plan for our death, but it shouldn't control us. The danger and warning comes in verse 24 - what can we NOT do at the same time?

Whether we realize it or not, our stuff can become our master, controlling every decision we make. What controls you? We are also challenged by worldly teaching that "the one with the most toys

wins” and that everyone is entitled have what they want. This goes against what Jesus teaches us, so we must choose our path and trust in His wisdom and not our own or the world.

Memorize: *Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. Matthew 7:24*

Friday, October 10th, 2025

Day 5

Pray: Prayer is communication with God where we can express our needs and thankfulness. It is a time to be still and listen for His voice as He teaches and comforts you through His word. Take a moment to write a short prayer here~

Read: [Matthew 7:21-29](#)

Think: Today’s passage is what we might call the “closing remarks” in Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. He finishes with a sobering warning in verses 21-23. How is it possible for people to prophesy and cast out demons in Jesus’ name but not truly know Him? There are a couple of thoughts here... first, God is God and He can and has performed miracles and given prophecies through people who were not faithful to Him AND second, Satan can also perform miracles (www.gotquestions.org/demonic-satanic-miracles.html). Turn to [2 Corinthians 11:14-15](#) and [Revelation 13:11-13](#), how is Satan described and what can he do in these verses?

What we are taught in these passages is learning to discern the difference between the true work of God versus Satan in a person. It is very hard to believe that there could be people inside the church who teach, lead, and serve but will not make it into heaven. It doesn’t mean they are

possessed by the devil, although it could, it simply means we must be sure where WE are and that we have REAL salvation! How can we know?

Remember, in the crowd Jesus was speaking to there were many Jewish religious leaders, Pharisees and scribes, men who devoted their lives to the study and teaching of God's word – so how is it possible they were in danger of hearing "depart from Me"? Take a minute to think of the fallen pastors and worship leaders over the years who *seemed* solid. Why do you think they fell into temptation?

This is not a matter of judging or condemning anyone, but a warning... we must **never** become so proud that we think Satan can't touch us!

Engage: To answer our earlier question, how would it be possible that the religious leaders were in danger of hearing Jesus say, "depart from Me", go back and read verse 24. What does Jesus say we need to do?

What does it make us?

Part of the challenge for the religious leaders was that they refused to believe Jesus was the promised Messiah. However, they of all people, should have known. If they were wise, they would have gone back and studied what Jesus said alongside God's word, and they would have seen the truth – some of them did - and this is what we need to do to be certain we are not being influenced by false teachings. When you read a Christian book or listen to a pastor or message, do you have your Bible open? Why/why not?

If you don't, how do you discern whether they are biblically solid? The other point in verse 24 is a matter of obedience... not just listening to His words but doing them and not just some of them but ALL of them. How are you doing in this?

We won't get it perfectly, but God considers us faithful for the genuine effort we make.

Memorize: *Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. Matthew 7:2*

Saturday, October 11th, 2025
Day 6

Pray: Prayer is communication with God where we can express our needs and thankfulness. It is a time to be still and listen for His voice as He teaches and comforts you through His word. Take a moment to write a short prayer here~

Read: [Psalm 1:1-6](#)

Think: As we finish this week, learning what it means to build our faith on the Rock of Christ, we will end with King David’s instruction as to HOW we can do this. In this psalm, how can we be blessed?

What do we need to do and how often?

How does it benefit us?

If you have been to the Kern River or one of the lakes above Bishop/Mammoth, you will see trees growing by the shoreline. They are big and beautiful and green... why? They are next to water, and their roots are deep. Here in Ridgecrest, well that’s a different story! Without water, roots become shallow, and the tree will die, and so do we if we are not reading, listening, abiding, following, and devouring God’s word as often as possible. We will not grow, we won’t be able to discern truth

from error, we won't have the endurance to resist temptation, we won't know what choices to make – you get the idea. King David teaches that it is the wise person who meditates on God's word, day and night. What does this mean?

Should we read our Bible for hours? Maybe... but the word "meditate" means to mutter, muse, or murmur. This goes beyond reading our Bible in the morning then setting it down and forgetting it. What David is saying is that we are to memorize, think about, recite and repeat, to ourselves throughout the day what we have read. What would be the benefit of this?

If you do this consistently, how will it change the way you respond to people and situations?

Engage: There was a Facebook reel today where a man mentioned that the mistake people make about Christianity is that it is seen as though they've joined a political group. Now they are part of a group that has certain opinions. The reality is that Christianity is a way of living – not just A way of living but THE way of living (loosely paraphrased). As Christians, we will frequently find ourselves on opposite sides of popular opinion, worldview, and even certain teachings inside the church and the only way we can stand strong is to stand in Christ and His word. Taking what you've learned so far, how are you doing? Are there any changes that need to be made? Have you already made some changes? What has been the result?

Memorize: *Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. Matthew 7:24*

