



Discipleship Study Questions

Sunday, June 5th-Saturday, August 6th

Jesus often taught deep spiritual truths to his disciples and followers through simple sounding stories called parables. A parable can be described as an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. Let's take a look at some of the parables Jesus told, and see how they can apply to our lives, even today.

Hide God's Word in Your Heart:

Individual: Take a few days and do your best to memorize, or deeply familiarize yourself with, the scripture passage for the week.

Group: Choose one person from the group to commit the week's scripture passage to memory, or thoroughly summarize it in their own words, in order to present it to the group the following week.

Read the story:

Individual: After you've committed the passage, or the essence of the passage, to memory, read two different translations of the scripture for the week.

Group: At your next group meeting, have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations.

Tell the story:

Individual: Recite the story aloud from memory, or tell it to a friend or family member.

Group: Introduce the person who has learned the story for this week. Be ready to assist them if they get stuck at any point.

Rebuild the story:

Individual: Re-read the story to fact check yourself.

Group: Use questions to help the group highlight the main points of the story and correct any omissions or misrepresentations of the story. The point is not to point out the story teller's mistakes, but rather to point people to the Word to ensure everyone understands it accurately.

Dig into the Word:

Individual: Work through the questions and pray about what God reveals to you through His word. Discuss with a Christian friend or family member, if you choose.

Group: Work through the questions as a group, celebrating the work God is already doing in each person's life, and encouraging each other to trust Him in the places that need growth.

Small Group Guidelines

This is a Safe Group

Confidentiality is key—what is said in the group stays in the group. Be aware of how you are affecting the environment with your words, actions, and non-verbal communication. This needs to be a place where people feel comfortable opening up and sharing.

No Crosstalk

Be considerate of others as they are sharing. No side conversations, phone time, texting etc.

Listen

Let's value one another by listening to what is being shared. Allow a pause after someone shares to allow them to finish and others to consider what was said. Eye contact and body posture play key roles in creating a positive or negative group environment.

No Rescuing or Fixing

We are not here to fix each other; Jesus does that part. Avoid the tendency to rescue when someone is struggling to get the words out or shares a struggle or conviction.

Use "I" Statements

It's easy to talk about the issues of others, or respond with "we," "us," or "the church," but for us to grow as disciples and build relationships, we want to use "I" statements.

Don't Over-talk

We want to create time for all members of the group to participate in the discussion. Be careful not to always be the first responder or regularly give long responses.

Fight for Relationship

It's not if conflict or hurt feelings will happen, but when. We commit to fight for relationship with each other. Go to the person and share your struggle or seek wise advice if you are not sure how to handle the conflict.

The Parable of the Sower

Read Matthew 13: 1-23

Discovery Questions:

What do we learn about God in this passage?

What is Jesus teaching through this story?

What are you learning personally?

What might God be calling you to do with what you've learned this week?

Life Application:

What is the symbolism behind these items: the farmer/sower, the seed, the soil, the path, the birds, the rocks, the sun, the thorns/weeds? What examples might Jesus have used today?

What can we learn about how we are to share the gospel from the farmer/sower? What can we learn about where responsibility lies after the seed has been sown?

What kind of soil are you currently? What kind of farmer/sower are you currently? Do you see any correlation between the two in your own life?

How has God been tilling your soil recently, or in the past? How has the gospel hit differently as he has prepared and tended the ground of your heart?

What do you sense God wanting to grow in your life right now, and what weeds/rocks do you need to allow Him to remove?

Prayer:

Father, thank you for your goodness, and for being the best gardener. Give us hearts like yours that desire to throw the seed of your good news to the people in our world, and may it take root deeply in their hearts. Lord, thank you for tending the soil in our own hearts, and may we fight to remain soft, tillable, and receptive to whatever you plant or pull, knowing it's for our own good and your glory. In the name of Jesus, amen.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

Read Luke 10: 25-37

Discovery Questions:

What do we learn about God in this passage?

What is Jesus teaching through this story?

What are you learning personally?

What might God be calling you to do with what you've learned this week?

Life Application:

Why do you think Jesus made the hero of the story a Samaritan, who in Jewish company, would have been the most despised person they could imagine?

How are Jesus and the Samaritan in the story similar?

Ultimately, who do we learn is a neighbor? Why does being a neighbor require sacrifice?

Has there ever been a 'neighbor' in your life like the Samaritan? Someone who came to your aid that you never would have expected?

Is there anyone in your life that you feel called to be a neighbor to, and serve like the Samaritan did?

Prayer:

Father, thank you for your example of selflessness and service. Give us eyes that are open to the needs to those around us, and may we be willing to sacrificially serve, no matter who it might be, and no matter the extent of their needs. May we generously show love to others out of the same spirit in which you have shown love to us. In the name of Jesus, amen.

The Parable of the Rich Fool

Read Luke 12: 13-21

Discovery Questions:

What do we learn about God in this passage?

What is Jesus teaching through this story?

What are you learning personally?

What might God be calling you to do with what you've learned this week?

Life Application:

Read: Luke 12: 22-34

The rich man in v16-21 sounds like someone who would be highly admired in current times. Why does Jesus call him a fool?

In light of v22-34, what might the rich man have done differently with his abundance? What would it have looked like for him to have been rich toward God?

In v34, we're told that "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." What do you think this means?

What do you treasure most in this life, and where is your heart oriented, with regard to what you treasure? Ask God to help you grow in your trust in Him, and to help you steward your wealth and possessions according to your trust in Him.

What encouragement can you take to follow v21 by trusting v22-34? What would it look like for you personally to be rich toward God with what He's given you?

Prayer:

Father, thank you for providing all we truly need in life. Lord, help us to submit all we have to you, to keep or distribute as you call us to, and as we see need. Help us to trust that if we seek you and your kingdom first, we will have all we need. May we look more like you in the way that we give generously to those around us, and may our richest treasure always be found in you.

In the name of Jesus, amen.

The Parable of the Friend at Midnight

Read Luke 11:5-13

Discovery Questions:

What do we learn about God in this passage?

What is Jesus teaching through this story?

What are you learning personally?

What might God be calling you to do with what you've learned this week?

Life Application:

What differences do you see between God and the friend who is already in bed, being disturbed in the middle of the night?

What does this parable teach us about boldness in what we ask God for, when we should ask, and how quickly we give up?

The idea behind v9 is continuous: keep asking, keep seeking, keep knocking. In previous lessons, we've called this kind of constant communication 'abiding.' Does this describe your prayer life? Why or why not?

What do you need to shift in order to match this in your prayers?

In v13, what is shown to be the ultimate gift given to us as God's children? What does this gift entail, and what are the different things we receive through this one gift?

Prayer:

Father, thank you for being a good God, who is always accessible to us in prayer. Thank you for the good gifts you have for us, always at the ready, sometimes just waiting for us to ask. Lord, help us to always be mindful of you, always prayerful, and always persistent in what we ask. Thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit, who teaches us, guides us, gives us power, and helps us look more like you. As the Spirit works in us, may our prayers continually grow more and more in alignment with your heart and your will. In the name of Jesus, amen.

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

Read Matthew 18: 21-35

Discovery Questions:

What do we learn about God in this passage?

What is Jesus teaching through this story?

What are you learning personally?

What might God be calling you to do with what you've learned this week?

Life Application:

What is the main point of this parable? Summarize it in a single sentence, in your own words.

In v14, we see the unforgiving servant handed over to the jailers to be tortured. Has there been a time where unforgiveness within you has tortured you, and been like a prison?

Does forgiveness also require reconciliation? Why or why not?

Is there someone in your life that you are struggling to forgive? In light of all that God has forgiven you of, how does that grievance compare? Pray this week that God would give you the strength and the humility to forgive from the heart.

Prayer:

Father, thank you for the gift of forgiveness. Thank you for forgiving our sins, and thank you for teaching us to forgive others. Lord, we know it's in our best interest to let go of unforgiveness, and we pray for the strength and the humility to truly forgive others from the heart, even if it has been repeated daily. Thank you for showing us the way. In the name of Jesus, amen.

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector

Read Luke 18: 9-14

Discovery Questions:

What do we learn about God in this passage?

What is Jesus teaching through this story?

What are you learning personally?

What might God be calling you to do with what you've learned this week?

Life Application:

What differences do you see between the prayer of the Pharisee and the prayer of the tax collector? What was the underlying heart behind each of their prayers?

What approach do you more often take in your prayers: one like that of the Pharisee, or one like that of the tax collector? Which is more like how you think of or treat others?

Compare Luke 18:14 and James 4:6

What do we see is the result of taking a humble stance within ourselves in relation to God?

Can you think of a time when you've tried to elevate yourself and were ultimately humbled?

How should these verses change the way we function before God? With our friends? Within the church? On social media? At home?

Prayer:

Father, thank you that you are overflowing with grace for those who humble themselves before you. Lord, cleanse us of our pride, and help us to see ourselves properly, in light of your holiness. Help us to live our lives out of a place of humility and love, filled with gratitude for your grace that covers us. In your kindness and mercy, help us to extend that same grace to others. In the name of Jesus, amen.

The Parable of the Talents

Read Matthew 25: 14-30

Discovery Questions:

What do we learn about God in this passage?

What is Jesus teaching through this story?

What are you learning personally?

What might God be calling you to do with what you've learned this week?

Life Application:

What is the difference between stewardship and ownership? How does one behave in each scenario?

We see that the master did not praise the servants for the end amount, however, for what two qualities were they praised (v.21, 23)?

The servants were not evaluated as a group, even though they all served one master. Applying this concept to a church who, as a body might be doing amazing things, vs. each individual member, how is this both an encouragement and a warning?

What resources, either tangible or intangible, have you been given that God is calling you to invest in and grow? Are there any that you have been hiding?

What might it mean to share in the master's happiness? How could that hope have factored into how the servants behaved in the master's absence? How should that hope factor into how we behave until our Savior returns?

Prayer:

Father, thank you for entrusting us with incredible gifts that only you could have given. May we see those gifts for what they truly are, things on loan from you that we are meant to steward, not

hoard or hide. May we use what you have given us to build up your kingdom, knowing that down the road, we will joyfully share in your glory for all eternity. In the name of Jesus, amen.

The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard

Read Matthew 20: 1-16

Discovery Questions:

What do we learn about God in this passage?

What is Jesus teaching through this story?

What are you learning personally?

What might God be calling you to do with what you've learned this week?

Life Application:

What is the symbolism behind these items: landowner, workers, vineyard, denarius?

Where do you see yourself in this story? Why?

Have you ever felt like the grumblers in v10? Do you view the landowner's actions as being unfair, or do you see them as overly generous? Why?

Why do you think the landowner asks the question in v6?

Have you been guilty of standing around doing nothing, instead of taking initiative, when it comes to serving within the church or making disciples?

What causes you to hesitate?

Where might there be a known need that you could step up and volunteer to do, instead of waiting to be asked?

Prayer:

Father, thank you for being good. Thank you for your generosity toward us, when we don't deserve your love, your grace, your mercy, or your kindness. Help us to welcome new workers into your kingdom, regardless of what has come before, knowing that it is only by your grace

that any of us can be in your presence. Help us each to function out of a spirit of gratitude for what you've done for us, that results in showing kindness and love to those around us. In the name of Jesus, amen.

The Parable of the Prodigal Son

Read Luke 15: 11–32

Discovery Questions:

What do we learn about God in this passage?

What is Jesus teaching through this story?

What are you learning personally?

What might God be calling you to do with what you've learned this week?

Life Application:

Read: Romans 2:4

When the younger son came to his senses and decided to return home, what was his focus on (v17-20)? Why do you think this was?

Can you think of a time when God used foolish decisions or misery, even of your own doing, to refocus your attention and draw you back to Himself?

How was the father's response disproportionate to the son's behavior and condition upon his return?

Which son do you identify with more: the older brother or the younger? What needs to shift in your heart to align more with the heart and character of the father?

Prayer:

Father, thank you for the forgiveness and grace that you offer so freely, regardless of what we have done. Lord, help us to remain close to you, but keep us from bitterness toward our

brothers and sisters who have wandered. Help us rejoice upon their return, like you do. And Lord keep the temptations of the world from drawing us away from you. But if we do wander, give us the humility and the confidence to come back to you in true repentance, knowing that you will lovingly restore us into your family. In the name of Jesus, amen.