



OBEY

FOLLOWING JESUS

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Published: One16 Publishing 2018, Version 1

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INTRODUCTION

Jesus said, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments” ([John 14:15](#)). When He told His followers to make disciples, He said they should teach them to observe all that He had commanded them ([Matthew 28:20](#)). Salvation is a gift, given freely by God’s grace. We cannot earn it. But, that does not mean God expects nothing from those He saves.

Obedience is something God values most ([1 Samuel 15:22](#)). In saving us from our own way of living, which leads to death, God has shown us a new way to live.

This plan is designed to introduce the two great commands of Jesus, and the commands He gave us during His Sermon on the Mount. Each step has a Bible passage to read, a short teaching to make you think, some points to discuss with a friend, a Bible verse to memorise, and a guide on how to pray.

With the Holy Spirit’s help, we can obey the commands of Jesus, and so live lives that please God our Father.

Grace, mercy and peace.

#1 LOVE GOD

READ

Matthew 22:15-40

THINK

When asked what the greatest command was, Jesus replied, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind”. Loving God is the most important command of Jesus. The reason why is simple; our attitude towards God has eternal consequences. The Pharisees were asking whether they should pay tax, only concerned with their wealth in this life. The Sadducees were asking questions that mocked the resurrection, because their view also only included this life-time. But Jesus focused them back onto the eternal God.

Paul tells us, prophecy, tongues and knowledge will all pass away. But, love never ends. Jesus said, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments” ([John 14:15](#)). We must love Him with all our heart, soul and mind. That is, with our emotions, with our actions, and even in the way we think. It is not enough just to say we love God. If we love Him, it will show in how we live.

God described this love as having no other gods before the true God ([Exodus 20:3](#)). This is a helpful picture of our love for God. Do we love Him more than our work, more than our families, more than our own wealth and comfort? That is what God is looking for.

DISCUSS

- How can you know you love God more than anything else?
- What about your actions confirms you love God?
- Where could your thinking change for you to better love God?

MEMORISE

“And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.”

Mark 12:30

PRAY

Father, I love You. I love You because of Your mercy and grace. I love You because, while I was still Your enemy, You sent Jesus to die for me. Help me to love You with all my heart, soul, mind and strength.

#2

LOVE PEOPLE

READ

Mark 12:28-34; 1 John 4:7-21

THINK

Jesus commanded us to love one another. He didn't only want us loving our neighbours, His command included loving our enemies too (**Matthew 5:44**). As He said, if you love those who love you, what does that prove? Even sinners do that (**Luke 6:32**). The love Jesus describes means forgiving one another beyond what is reasonable. Providing for one another when there is need. Mourning with one another and rejoicing with one another. This, Jesus said, was how people would know that we are His disciples, because of the unnatural, next level love we show each other.

This love means doing to others whatever we would want them to do to us. Some have called this 'The Golden Rule' (**Matthew 7:12**). We cannot set one standard for how we expect to be treated, then use a lower standard for how we treat others. The Bible says, God is not mocked, whatever a man sows, that he will also reap (**Galatians 6:7**).

Our love for others is the evidence we love God; it is one measure the Bible gives us. If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar. Anyone who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen (**1 John 4:20**).

DISCUSS

- How have you loved others?
- How easy do you find it to forgive others?
- What experience do you have of believers providing for one another's needs?

MEMORISE

“Beloved, let us love one another, because love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.” 1 John 4:7

PRAY

Father, thank you for the example of love we have in Jesus, who laid down His life for us. Help me to treat others to the same standard I expect to be treated. Help me to love my enemies, as well as those who are easy to love.

#3

REJOICE AND BE GLAD

READ

Matthew 5:1-12; John 15:18-25

THINK

Reading through Matthew, Jesus' first command is "repent". His second, "follow me". The third is, when others revile you on account of Jesus, "rejoice and be glad". This might seem rather bleak to mention so early in His disciple's training. But Jesus never pretended that following Him would be a walk in the park.

Jesus used the illustration of a person building a house, or a king going to war. Before such endeavours, you need to know you have what it takes ([Luke 14:28](#)). He described following Him as carrying a cross, the way Jesus did on the day He died. He said, "if the world hates you, know that it hated me before it hated you".

So why would anyone follow Jesus? Because, Jesus promised, although there will be trouble, He has overcome the world (John 16:33). Because He leads us in victory (2 Corinthians 2:14). Because, Jesus said, "your reward is great in heaven". The promise of eternal reward and overco-ming in this life, far outweighs what Paul describes as "our light and momentary troubles" ([2 Corinthians 4:17](#)). To some we are the fragrance of life, to others the stench of death ([2 Corinthians 2:16](#)). But, the purpose of our life is not to please people, it is to please God.

DISCUSS

- What resistance have you encountered to your following Jesus?
- What is your experience of overcoming in this life?
- How does the reality of eternal reward impact on your heart and mind?

MEMORISE

“If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.” Galatians 1:10

PRAY

Father, thank You that You have overcome the world for me and promise an eternal reward. Thank You, my light and momentary trouble are nothing compared to the prize waiting for me. Please help me to stay faithful to You.

#4

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

READ

Matthew 4:12-17; Matthew 5:13-16

THINK

You may have heard Jesus described as the Light of the World. John writes, *“In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it”* (John 1:4,5). But Jesus turned everything on its head when He said to us, *“you are the light of the world”*.

As disciples of Jesus, we are called to be visible. There are no secret followers; a city on a hill cannot be hidden. This does not mean we need to wear Jesus t-shirts or constantly quote scriptures. But it does mean we are God’s handiwork, and it was God who prepared good works for us to do (Ephesians 2:10). Rather than just talk about Jesus, we can demonstrate God’s goodness by shining His light in this dark world.

We must shine, by doing the good works He has prepared for us. Jesus said if we acknowledge Him before men, He will acknowledge us before His Father. But whoever denies Jesus before men, Jesus will deny before His Father (Matthew 10:32,33). For some of us, that might cause some embarrassment. For others, it may cost us our lives. But Jesus said, let your light shine, and so that is what we must do.

DISCUSS

- How do you think you do, letting your light shine?
- What good works does God have for you to do?
- How have people around you notice your light?

MEMORISE

“... let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” **Matthew 5:16**

PRAY

Father, help me shine my light for You in this dark world. Thank You, that You have given Your spirit to lead me and guide me in how I can obey You. Help me live in a way that brings glory to You.

#5

BE RECONCILED

READ

Matthew 5:21-26; Mark 11:25; Ephesians 4:25-32

THINK

Everyone gets angry from time to time. Being angry might start as an emotional response to something we see as unjust, unkind or frustrating. How we handle that emotion is very important to Jesus. Being angry with a situation can lead to being angry with a person. That is dangerous. Jesus says we mustn't insult one another; we mustn't commit murder in our hearts. If we have something against our brother, or we know they have something against us, we need to make it right.

We need, as the light of the world, to let go of all bitterness, anger and malice. If we cast shade on others, it is because we are blocking their view of the Light. Part of loving is forgiving. Not just forgiving others and never talking to them again, but being properly reconciled, so we can walk forward together. God is not pleased when we hold grudges. Jesus said, if you forgive others, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive you ([Matthew 6:14,15](#)).

Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry. Be careful how you speak, especially when we are angry. Forgive easily and speak words of life. Be reconciled to God and one another.

DISCUSS

- How do you handle situations that make you angry?
- What is your experience of reconciliation?
- Is there anyone you need to forgive?

MEMORISE

“Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.” Ephesians 4:26,27

PRAY

Father, forgive me when I have been angry with others, or used harsh words against them. Thank You, that because of Jesus, You are no longer angry towards me. Help me to be someone who always forgives, just as You have forgiven me.

#6

FLEE FROM LUST

READ

Matthew 5:27-32; Exodus 20:1-21

THINK

The Ten Commandments include the command, “Do not commit adultery”. Jesus took this command and raised the bar. Rather than a command about physical sex, Jesus said, *“everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”* Those who approach God need clean hands and a pure heart (**Psalm 24:3,4**). It is good to be able to say, ‘I haven’t committed adultery’; but Jesus wants us to not even wish for it.

In God, marriage is a picture of His faithfulness towards us, He is the bridegroom, with eyes only for us, His bride. Other sins, we are told to resist. Sexual sin, we are told to flee (**1 Corinthians 6:18**). Jesus says, if your right hand causes you to sin like this, cut it off. He wasn’t messing around. He says, “What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate”, not even in our minds (**Mark 10:9**).

This sin tempts both men and women, thank God, He gives us the grace to overcome such lust. God’s grace has been given to us, which trains us to renounce sin and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives right now (**Titus 2:11-13**). If we submit our lives to the Holy Spirit, His grace can keep us from sinning.

DISCUSS

- How have you dealt with lust in your own life?
- How has God's grace trained your heart to flee from sexual sin?
- How have you grown in this, and what does God still need to do?

MEMORISE

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age”. Titus 2:11,12

PRAY

Thank You Father, you are a faithful God. Help me to be faithful like You. Faithful with my body and faithful with my mind. Thank You that You forgive me when I fall, but help me in Your grace not to fall.

#7

DON'T SWEAR

READ

Matthew 5:33-37; Deuteronomy 5:1-21;
Proverbs 22:22-29; Proverbs 26:18,19

THINK

The Ten Commandments told people not to swear falsely. Jesus said they should not swear at all. Swearing in the Bible isn't saying rude words, it is when we guarantee our truthfulness by naming something precious. People swear "By God", or on their grandmother's grave. But people should be able to trust us, without us needing to swear. If people often ask you, "Do you swear that's true?", what does that say about you?

Sometimes we lie for fun, even swearing to convince someone of something, only to then say, "Only joking!". The Bible says this is like throwing firebrands, arrows and death! This behaviour does not demonstrate a Christ-like character. Sometimes we swear because we want to assure someone of our determination to do a certain thing. But we need to be restrained when making promises, and realise that only God knows what we will get done.

Jesus called Himself the Truth. If His truth lives in us, we will speak truth. This command of Jesus is not about whether we should swear in court, it is about our hearts always growing towards always speaking the truth. What a wonderful testimony it would be, if when you say "yes", no one questions it, and when you say "no", everyone can trust that is exactly what you mean.

DISCUSS

- How is your relationship with telling the truth?
- When have you most struggled to tell the truth to others?
- How well can people trust your “Yes” and “No”?

MEMORISE

“... do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your “yes” be yes and your “no” be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.” James 5:12

PRAY

Father God, Your Word is Truth. Help me to be like You, always speaking the truth. Help me to build a reputation for truthfulness, as a testimony to Your awesome truthfulness.

#8

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

READ

Matthew 5:38-48; Luke 6:27-36; Romans 12:9-21

THINK

“An eye for an eye”, was a phrase that God used to show how people should repay for causing harm. But Jesus gives a new command. Rather than getting what we are owed, Jesus commands us to practically live out our forgiveness by not resisting or demanding repayment from those who are evil. Jesus modelled this when, while the soldiers were still causing Him the pain that would lead to His unjust death, He said, “*Father forgive them*”.

Jesus’ teaching places the emphasis, not on what others do to us, but on how we respond to them. Someone else’s bad behaviour is never an excuse for our bad reaction. God allows the rain and sun to benefit those who love Him and those who hate Him. In the same way, Jesus commands us to radiate love to everyone, whether they are kind to us or not.

Even evil people are kind when they think they will get something out of it. Jesus sets a higher standard for us. He says, give to those who cannot repay, love those who hate us. If we do, instead of getting an eye for an eye, we will receive a reward from God Himself. More importantly, we’ll be a step closer to being perfect, as our heavenly Father is perfect.

DISCUSS

- How easy do you find it to forgive others?
- What is your experience of loving your enemies?
- How comfortable are you giving, without expecting any return?

MEMORISE

“Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.”

Matthew 5:44,45

PRAY

Father, I want to forgive the way that You forgive. I want to love the way that You love. I want to give the way that You give. Help me to be more like You, by Your grace and for Your glory.

#9

STAY HUMBLE

READ

Matthew 6:1-18; Luke 14:7-11; Luke 18:9-14

THINK

It is important, when doing good, to do it for the right reason. Giving to the poor shows generosity towards God; He rewards that ([Matthew 25:40](#)). But, if we give to the poor so others will applaud us, that is the only reward we will get. When we pray, if we believe God hears us, He will give us whatever we ask ([1 John 5:15](#)). But, if we pray in ways so that others think we are spiritual, that is the only result our prayers will have. Fasting tells God we hunger for Him more than food or life itself. He loves that. But, if we only fast so others notice, that is the only result our fasting will have. It will not bring us closer to God, it will only result in praise from people.

So, we should give to the poor discreetly, pray to God privately, and fast in a way that draws no attention to ourselves. If we do this, humbly allowing God to be the real focus of all we do, then God, who can see what we do in private, will be pleased to reward us.

Jesus also warned us, we will not be heard for our many words. Let our prayers simply be sincere. And let God be the one to reward us.

DISCUSS

- What is your experience of giving to the needy?
- What is your experience of fasting and prayer?
- How would you describe your relationship with prayer?

MEMORISE

“For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” Luke 14:11

PRAY

Father, never let me be someone who seeks the approval of others in what I do. Help me keep my heart turned towards pleasing only You. Help me stay humble, focused on You.

#10

WHEN YOU PRAY

READ

Matthew 6:5-18; Luke 11:1-13; Luke 18:9-14

THINK

Prayer is talking to God. It is not a performance to show others we are spiritual, or a contest to show how much of the Bible we know. Jesus spoke of two men praying, a self-righteous man and a sinner. The sinner knew he was a sinner and mumbled his prayer with his face to the floor. The self-righteous man prayed in a loud voice so everyone could admire his spirituality. It was the sinner whom Jesus commended.

It is not wrong to pray in public, but each of us should also have times we spend alone with God. There is no format of words we must use, but Jesus does outline some of the things we can pray. We can praise God and ask for His will to be done. We can ask for provision and forgiveness. We can ask His help when facing temptation or trouble.

The Bible also teaches us to pray for our leaders and those in government ([1 Timothy 2:1-3](#)), and to pray for the city in which we live ([Jeremiah 29:7](#)). There are times when we don't know what to pray. Then the Holy Spirit will help us with what to pray ([Romans 8:26](#)). The important thing is that we pray to God, believing He will hear us.

DISCUSS

- What kind of praying are you most familiar with?
- How has the Holy Spirit helped with your times of prayer?
- When do you find it easiest to pray?

MEMORISE

“... this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.” 1 John 5:14-15

PRAY

Father God, help me to pray according to Your will. Help me want the things you want, love the things You love, and hate the things You hate. Thank You that You do hear me.

#11

TREASURE IN HEAVEN

READ

Matthew 6:19-24; Luke 12:13-21; 1 Timothy 6:3-10

THINK

Following Jesus is not about becoming rich in this life. The reward we seek is not the kind that comes from people. Rather, followers of Jesus want to hear the Father say, *“Well done, good and faithful servant”*.

Like everyone else on earth, we need money, food and clothing, and somewhere to live. But we know we cannot take that stuff with us when we die. Therefore, we are not ruled by the desire to get rich.

Jesus describes money as a master who rivals God for our attention. Jesus warns, we cannot serve two masters. Paul agrees. He says, *“the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs”*.

This does not mean followers of Jesus will not have or want money. But, if you are gifted with making money, be generous towards God rather than building your personal fortune. God warns that it is hard for rich people to enter the Kingdom of God, one reason is, they have more to give up.

Paul had learned to be content whether he had a lot or a little ([Ephesians 4:10-13](#)). He said, “if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content”.

DISCUSS

- How content are you with your financial situation?
- Do you feel that God or money is your master?
- In what ways have you been generous towards God?

MEMORISE

“I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.” Ephesians 4:12,13

PRAY

Thank You, Father, that You provide for my every need. I do not need to chase after wealth; rather, I can serve You. Whether I have much or little, whether I am hungry or well fed, help me keep my eyes on You.

#12

DO NOT BE ANXIOUS

READ

Matthew 6:25-34

THINK

Twice in **Matthew 6**, Jesus says, “*do not be anxious*”. He who watches over and feeds the sparrows, watches over us. He who dresses the lilies of the fields, provides for our needs.

When the Israelites were walking in the desert, they cried out to God for food. Each morning God caused food to appear for them on the ground. It was always enough for that day, but only lasted one day (Exodus 16). In the prayer Jesus taught, He encourages us to ask God for daily bread. God does not need us to be rich or always able to provide for ourselves. He wants us to trust Him, and believe that He will provide whatever we need.

The prophet Isaiah asked, “Why do you spend your money on that which is not bread, and your labour for things that do not satisfy?” (**Isaiah 55:2**). In our consumer driven society, there are many things you will be told you need. But, our greatest satisfaction will come from serving Him. Jesus said, where your heart is, that’s where you’ll put your money (**Luke 12:34**). You can know if you really follow Jesus, by how you use your money. God says, seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. When you do that, His promise is, He will provide what you need.

DISCUSS

- How do you feel when Jesus says, “Do not be anxious?”
- What is your experience of asking God for provision?
- What does it mean to seek first the Kingdom of God?

MEMORISE

“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” Matthew 6:33

PRAY

Father, thank You for all Your goodness. Thank You that You know what I need before I ask. Help me to trust You with what I have and what I need, and to seek Your Kingdom first.

#13

DON'T JUDGE

READ

Matthew 7:1-6; Romans 14:1-12

THINK

Jesus commanded us not to judge, not because judging is wrong, but because we will find ourselves judged with the same judgement we use on others! He says, why point the finger at each other, when there is still so much wrong in your own life?

It is tempting, when we have been following Jesus for a while, to imagine we have somehow “arrived”, or are better than the others. But this is not true, and Jesus says it is like trying to take a splinter out our friend’s eye, while there is still a log in our own.

Paul describes Christians who judged each other over trivial things, like what they ate, or which holidays they celebrated. These are not sin issues; these are matters of conscience, and like Jesus, Paul says to leave each other alone regarding such things. While Jesus gave certain commands to everyone, there are other areas where following Him is different from person to person. As fellow believers, we need to make room for others’ walk with God, and not judge where God is not judging them. Paul says, we should rather work out our own salvation, with fear and trembling. Because it is God who is working in us, to affect His will, for His good pleasure ([Philippians 2:12,13](#)).

DISCUSS

- When have you caught yourself judging another Christian?
- How do you understand “working out” your salvation?
- Where is an area you still need to remove the log from your own eye?

MEMORISE

“Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you.” Matthew 7:1,2

PRAY

Father help me be gracious to others, just as I would like them to be gracious to me. Give me patience. Let me only speak from a desire to love, never from a desire to judge.

#14

ASK TO RECEIVE

READ

Matthew 7:7-11; Psalm 37:1-7;
Mark 11:12-14, 20-25

THINK

God promised to look after us, but we can still ask Him for things. Jesus encouraged His disciples to pray to the Father, for daily bread, for forgiveness, for His Kingdom to come. Jesus even said, we receive the Holy Spirit by asking.

Jesus said the Father Himself loves us (John 16:27), which is why we pray. God is not distant and unfeeling. He knows us, and wants to hear the things that are important to us.

Jesus assured us, if we ask for something good, God will give us something good. If we ask for a fish, we won't get a snake! God is not a mean uncle, out to prank us! He is a loving Father, who wants the best for us.

The reason God will hear us, is because Jesus died for us. That is why we pray in Jesus' Name (John 16:23,24). When we pray in His Name, we are reminding God with whose authority we are asking.

Of course, to legitimately ask in Jesus Name, we need to know what we are asking is something Jesus would approve of. John says, *"this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us"* (1 John 5:14). Jesus said, "ask ... that your joy may be full" (John 16:24).

DISCUSS

- How much time do you spend in prayer?
- What are some of the things you have asked for?
- What answers have you seen, when you pray?

MEMORISE

“Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.” John 16:24

PRAY

Father, help me to be someone who regularly speaks to You. I believe You love me, and trust that if I pray according to Your will, I will receive whatever I ask for. Thank You, for listening to my prayers.

#15

THE GOLDEN RULE

READ

Matthew 7:12-14; Luke 6:27-36;
Matthew 25:31-46

THINK

Jesus taught, “Do to others as you would have them do to you.” This is not a natural way to live. Naturally, we are selfish; we have one standard for ourselves, and another for how we treat others. Jesus says, this is not ok.

Following Jesus is about laying down our lives, not taking them up. Ironically, salvation through Jesus, is about losing our life, not trying to save it ([Mark 8:34-38](#)). Because the way we love God is by loving the people of His Church, laying down our lives is not just a spiritual principle, but a practical way that we should live.

Jesus tells how, at the final judgement, people will be judged for their behaviour towards each other. Jesus takes such behaviour very personally. He says, “as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me”. How we treat others is how we treat God. If we don’t treat others at least as well as ourselves, then we are treating ourselves better than God!

Paul raises the bar even higher. He writes, “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves” ([Philippians 2:3](#)).

Jesus’ rule is simple: imagine how you want to be treated, then treat others the same.

DISCUSS

- How well do you treat others?
- What difference do you see between how you treat yourself and others?
- What changes can you make to treat others better?

MEMORISE

“Do to others as you would have them do to you.” Luke 6:31

PRAY

Father God, I know the way I treat others matters hugely to You. Help me to honour others and count them more significant than myself. Help me remember that how I treat them, is how I treat You.

#16

BEWARE OF FALSE PROPHETS

READ

Matthew 7:15-23; Galatians 5:16-25

THINK

As we follow Jesus, we may notice that not everyone who calls themselves a Christian, lives a Christ-like life. Noticing this doesn't make you judgmental, it just means you have learned to tell who people are by their fruit.

Jesus said a good tree can't bear bad fruit. If someone's fruit is consistently bad, there is probably something bad inside. Remember, fruit is not the same as gifts. The gifts of the spirit are tongues, prophecy, healing, etc., but the fruit is love, joy, peace. You can prophesy, even accurately, but if you don't have love, that is bad fruit (1 Corinthians 13:2). Jesus said, many will come on the last day and proudly announce all they did for Him, but He will tell them He didn't know them.

A prophet is someone who tells us what God is saying. But a false prophet is someone who, though they may be gifted, has fruit inconsistent with the life of God. We don't want to be those people or be influenced by them. Like wolves in sheep's clothing, they pretend to be like us, but are actually predators. We can guard ourselves against their influence by filling ourselves with the Bible and walking with the Holy Spirit. That way, we will recognize good fruit when we see it.

DISCUSS

- What in your life is inconsistent with the life of God?
- What is your experience of prophecy?
- What has been your experience of false prophets?

MEMORISE

“So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit.” **Matthew 7:17**

PRAY

Father God, thank You for Your Holy Spirit. Teach me to know what fruit is good or bad, in my own life, and in those around me. Help me to always bear good fruit.

#17

DO THESE WORDS

READ

Matthew 7:24-29; James 1:19-27;
1 Corinthians 3:10-15

THINK

When you are building any kind of structure, the foundation is the most important part. A strong building on a poor foundation will still fall, while even a weak structure on a solid foundation has a good chance of standing firm.

The foundation we need is putting into practice the words of Jesus. Many people know the words of Jesus, but for them to make a difference in our lives we need to do them.

He says, *“let your light shine”*, so we shine brightly. He says, *“don’t judge...”*, so we turn our gaze from others back to ourselves. Jesus says, *“don’t be anxious”*, so we place our trust in Him, and don’t worry about the future. We do this when we feel like it. We do this when we don’t feel like it. We do this until we feel like it. This is what it really means to follow Jesus. This is how we know He has saved us. He doesn’t save us because we change, but we will change because He has saved us.

John, Jesus’ cousin, preached, “bear fruit in keeping with repentance” (**Matthew 3:8**). True repentance is not only saying sorry, it is changing how we live. Study Jesus’ teaching and put it into practice. Then you know you are following Jesus.

DISCUSS

- What are some of Jesus' teaching that you already do?
- What are some of Jesus' teaching you still need to adopt?
- What are you doing about it?

MEMORISE

“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.” James 1:22

PRAY

Jesus, thank You that when I follow Your teaching I have a firm foundation to build on. Help me, by Your Holy Spirit, to always be a wise builder who builds on Your words.

#18

BE CLEAN

READ

Matthew 8:1-4; Luke 18:18-30; Titus 2:11-14

THINK

When we hear the teaching of Jesus, our response is often the same as His first disciples, “Who then can be saved?”

Jesus sets an impossibly high standard, and if we think we’ve done well, He just raises the bar! This could leave us feeling defeated, but the story of the leper gives us hope. Leprosy is an infectious skin disease often resulting in injuries due to an inability to feel pain. In Bible times, there were many lepers. Jesus meets one after finishing the sermon on the mount, the teaching we have been looking at.

In many ways, the leper is a picture of us. We are full of a disease called sin. It corrupts our character and deadens us to the pain our conscience should feel. While leprosy shows on the outside, sin causes decay on the inside. The leper came to Jesus because he knew, that, like us, on his own he cannot get well. He said, “if you will, you can make me clean.” Jesus says, “I will, be clean”.

We want to build our lives on Jesus’ teaching; for that we need Jesus’ power. The good news is, He has already given it. His grace trains and empowers us to obey His commands. By His grace, you can be clean.

DISCUSS

- How has the grace of God made a difference in your life?
- What has God's grace done with your ungodliness?
- How has God's grace impacted your godliness?

MEMORISE

“But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” 2 Corinthians 12:9

PRAY

Thank You, God, for Your grace. Thank you I can give up ungodly behaviour and attitudes, and live a self-controlled and godly life, because of Your grace.

That completes this study of Jesus' commands from His sermon on the mount. As we follow Jesus we will encounter situations where we need to defend our faith against arguments and ideas that come against Christ. Peter tells us, *“in your hearts honour Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15).*

The journey continues in ...



