

21
DAYS OF PRAYER

GLORY BAPTIST CHURCH
2024

Introduction

Each day of this plan, we read a passage of Scripture and then apply the SOAP Method to a few verses. We believe that using this method allows us to glean a greater understanding of Scripture, which allows us to apply it effectively to our lives.

The SOAP Method includes four steps:

Scripture. Write out the verses at least one time. Slow down and copy the passage from the text, focusing on what you are writing. Writing it more than one time is always helpful.

Observation. Take time to carefully observe the passage. What do you see in the verses you're reading? Who is the intended audience? To whom is the writer speaking? What cultural factors are at play? Are any words or themes repeated? What literary devices are being used?

Application. After carefully observing what is happening in the passage, determine the main message or truth of the passage. How can you apply this truth to your life?

Prayer. Pray God's Word back to Him. If He has revealed something to you during this time, pray about it. Confess any sin God has revealed. Pray through the truth of the passage.

The most important ingredients in the SOAP Method are your interaction with God's Word and your application of it to your life. God's Word is powerful and effective. You will never waste time in God's Word. Take time to study it carefully, discovering the truth of God's character and heart for the world.

Prayer

Father, lead me on this journey of learning and applying. Reveal truth to me each day. Help me see what I can't see that is wrong in my thinking. I acknowledge your ways are higher than my ways. Your thoughts are higher than mine. I begin these weeks by acknowledging the power of your Kingdom and my desire to experience you and your Kingdom more deeply than I ever have before. I want to experience you not just when I stand face-to-face with you, but in the here and now. Lead me. My desire is to follow you. Amen.

Week 1 - Matthew 6:1-6 - A Right Heart

Day 1

Matthew 6:1 - acts of righteousness

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Jesus first addresses the arena of public religion, because this is the place where a person's spirituality is developed and tested. Righteousness indicates God's inner transformation of the heart, which brings a person into the kingdom of heaven. Our public religious life is crucial for the development of our spirituality because it is here that we gather for worship, gain instruction in the Scriptures, and encourage one another in personal piety. But this arena is also hazardous, because public religious practices can be carried out primarily to be seen by people. What Jesus wants from us and for us is that we would be eager to love and please God that we will do everything we should do for His eyes alone.

Jesus doesn't say what kind of reward we should expect. That, too, is part of the point. Simply knowing God better is reward enough; but there may be other things as well. You never know till you try. What is clear is that He is inviting His followers to a life in which inside and outside match perfectly, because both are focused on the God who sees in secret.

Day 2
Matthew 6:2-4 - giving to the poor without hypocrisy

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The truly spiritual person recognizes the plight of the needy and attended responsibly to their care without needing to toot their own horn according to Jesus. If your motivation to serve others is for your own gain, you're doing it for the wrong reasons. Unless prompted by the right motives, religious activities, including doing good deeds to others, are of no real spiritual value and receive no commendation from God. It does matter greatly why we do what we do.

Day 3
Matthew 6:5-6 - praying without hypocrisy

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As with giving to the needy, prayer can be perverted from a true act of piety into an act of hypocrisy when the external act masks an inner corrupt motive. The idea of praying in your "room" is to place the focus of praying on the intimacy of communion with God in one's heart, which is at the center of all prayer. What matters is learning to do these things simply to and for God Himself.

Day 4
Matthew 6:16-18 - fasting without hypocrisy

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Giving to the needy, praying, and fasting were all assumed parts of regular spiritual devotion. Any of them done with improper motives are a waste of time however. We don't do these things for show, for public acclaim. We are to do these things to connect our hearts more deeply with God.

Day 5
Matthew 6:19-21 - storing up treasure in Heaven

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Material wealth was important to the people of Israel since it was often seen as a sign of God's blessing and the reward for obedience to Him. But Jewish writers also regularly warned the people that wealth is not the final determination of one's spiritual standing before God. Wealth could be acquired illegitimately, and all too often the wicked are the ones who prosper.

The accumulation of wealth for its own sake is deceptive, because one can find in material treasure a false sense of security or an inaccurate assessment of one's spirituality. Treasures are important, but the greatest treasure in heaven is the Father. If Jesus' disciples keep their hearts fully focused on the Father in heaven, then all other treasures of this world will pale in comparison. This will set a trajectory for healthy discipleship, including one's priorities, motives, righteous deeds, ambitions, security, personal self-worth, and relationships.

Day 6
Matthew 6:22-24 - freedom from materialism

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Since the heart is the true repository of treasure, Jesus now indicates that when the eye focuses on something of value, it becomes the conduit that fills the heart with what has been focused upon. If the eye is good, it is the conduit that allows the heart to be filled with the light of God's treasure.

Day 7
Matthew 6:25-34 - freedom from daily anxiety

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Jesus directs the attention to the issue of “worry.” He’s pointing us to the idea that God will take care of the basic needs of Jesus’ disciples so that they can give attention to more important issues of life, especially summed up in the expression, “seek first His kingdom and His righteousness” (6:33). Worry is inappropriate or wrong when it is misdirected, is in wrong proportion, or indicates a lack of trust in God. It is this latter sense that Jesus addresses here.

The first reason Jesus gives as to why His disciples should not worry is the Father’s care for His creatures. The point is that when Jesus’ disciples are responsible to carry out the proper ways of life as ordained by God, God is faithful to carry out His end of the order. Jesus then gives the second reason why His disciples are not to worry pointing to how God sustains and cares for even the small things (grass) then how much more will He care for you and me. Jesus gives a third reason why we should not worry. Worry is the pattern of unbelievers who do not understand the Father’s care.

Jesus shares these examples to bring us back to our need and God’s desire for us to seek first the kingdom of God. He wants this to be the center of our daily priorities. We rely upon God, seek His kingdom, and He provides for us as we trust Him for our needs. All the worry in the world today can do nothing about the cares and problems of tomorrow. As we learn to let God care for our daily needs we will become increasingly certain that He also cares for our tomorrow.

