

21
DAYS OF PRAYER

GLORY BAPTIST CHURCH
2024

Week 3

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.

As you work through these readings and prayer times, you will likely find it beneficial to read more than just the day's verses. You may want to read all of Matthew chapter 6 each day. Or chapters 5-7. Feel free to do more/add more in – including cross references.

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 3 - Day 1
Exodus 16:2-8 (Prep for Matthew 6:11 tomorrow!)

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This passage is a vivid reminder that there are some things we cannot store up for tomorrow. Yesterday's mana cannot be used as food for today. We can't save it, we can't hoard it.

Our faith as Christians reflects this as well. Every day we must return to God. Every day we have to find His mercies new again. God will provide for us, but we need to learn along with that a steadfast and habitual dependence on God. This holds true for both our material needs and even more so for our spiritual needs. Jesus is the bread of life, and He assures us that with Him we will never hunger nor thirst. We have to keep going to get that mana – we have to keep on daily pursuing Jesus.

Week 3 – Day 2
Matthew 6:11 – Daily needs

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Prayer is for our needs, not our greeds. We are guided here that our prayer is primarily for one day at a time reliance upon God. Praying for one day at a time reflects the life experience of many first-century workers, and many in our world today who have just enough to make it to tomorrow, and nothing more.

The idea of God “giving” the food in no way diminishes responsibility to work but presupposes not only that Jesus’ disciples live one day at a time but that all good things, even our ability to work and earn our food, come from God’s hand (Deut 8:18; 1 Cor 4:7; James 1:17). It is a lesson easily forgotten when wealth multiplies and absolute self-sufficiency is portrayed as a virtue in our culture.

Week 3 – Day 3
Matthew 6:12 - Evidence

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As we have been forgiven our debts (sins), we should be so possessed with gratitude toward God that we then in turn eagerly forgive those who are debtors to us. This does not teach that we must forgive others before they can receive forgiveness themselves; rather, forgiveness of others is proof that that our sins are forgiven and we possess salvation (cf. 18:21–35). Christ followers are to forgive those who have wronged us to maintain a joyful experience of our salvation (cf. 6:14–15). Doing so serves as evidence that a person has truly been forgiven his or her debt of sin. If we don't forgive, it is evidence that we haven't experienced forgiveness ourselves.

John Stott says it this way – “Once our eyes have been opened to see the enormity of our offense against God, the injuries which others have done to us appear by comparison extremely trifling. If, on the other hand, we have an exaggerated view of the offenses of others, it proves that we have minimized our own.”

One sign of our personal relationship with God through Christ is that we begin to emulate His actions.

Week 3 – Day 4
Matthew 6:13 – The spiritual battle

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Since God is not one who tempts his people to do evil (James 1:13), and the word rendered “temptation” (*peirasmos*) can be used for either temptation or testing (cf. Matt. 4:1–11; James 1:12–13), this petition indicates that the disciples should pray either for relief from testing (1 Peter 1:7) or for their testing not to become an occasion for temptation.

The second portion of this petition, “but deliver us from evil” indicates that disciples must be conscious that life is a spiritual battle. Satan’s influence is behind every attempt to turn a testing into a temptation to evil, so Jesus teaches His disciples that they must rely on God not only for physical sustenance and forgiveness of sins, but also for moral triumph and spiritual victory in all of the spiritual battles of life.

Week 3 – Day 5
Matthew 6:14-15 – Forgiveness matters

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When an author or person repeats something, it is so that we catch it, so that we understand the point being made is important. Here in verses 14-15 Jesus reiterates with emphasis what He already said in verse 12. Once disciples have received forgiveness and salvation, they are to forgive with the same forgiveness with which they have been forgiven.

Forgiveness is not the way of our world. Yet Jesus insists upon it, knowing it is possible, and through God's love it can become actual. Jesus assumes that we will need to ask for forgiveness not on one or two rare occasions but very regularly. This is a sobering thought, but it is matched by the comforting news that forgiveness is freely available as often as we need it.

As that has been granted to us, so too must we be extending grace and forgiveness to others. As you pray, pray that you would not be the stopping point of anything God has given you. Grace, forgiveness, peace, joy and so much more! May we extend all of those blessings and gifts into the world around us.

Week 3 – Day 6
Psalm 51:1-13 – Seek forgiveness

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Reading David’s words here, what does this make you think of in terms of forgiveness? When we come to God for forgiveness we must come as did David, calling upon the fullness of God’s grace. Then when our sin is intersected by the love of God we are renewed. Sin cannot stand before God’s grace.

Like David, we must realize that all sin is against God. Yes, it has an impact on others, but the greatest peril that sin presents is the fracturing of our relationship with God. Until and unless we understand that, we will not fully understand our need for forgiveness and will not value forgiveness as we should.

When understand and experience forgiveness, we are then empowered through joy to share that with the lost world around us (12-13). Spend a few extra minutes today thinking through your salvation, what you have been forgiven, and then where you might need to forgive.

Week 3 – Day 7
Matthew 6:9-13

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Today is a chance to re-read and set more deeply in our memory the things we have been reading and praying over for the past 20 days. Not new, but rather review. Was there a segment that spoke particularly strongly to you? Dig in a little deeper there. Was there part you still don't understand? Spend some time learning about that and see how God can speak to you through your study and prayer.

21 days - you've made it! Well...kinda. Now you have to keep on going with it. Don't break the habit.

