

What Does a Mature Christian Look Like? — January 21-22, 2017
Follow-up Bible Studies

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Day One: Psalm 139

- Describe David's awareness of God's deep familiarity with him (1-5). How does David react to it (6)? Describe the Lord's expansive presence (7-12). Meditate on verses 1-12. What is your response to how the Lord is always with you and watching you? Write down your thoughts and feelings. Remain silent, allowing the Holy Spirit to further testify to you about his presence in your life. How do you think God wants you to live out of this truth?
- What is God's role in our beginnings (13-16)? Why does David praise him (14)? What does he write about God's thoughts (17-18)? Summarize David's proclamations about the wicked (19-22).
- What is David's concluding prayer of petition (23-24)? This is an invitation for God to bring his loving conviction. Pray this prayer for yourself. What response do you sense from the Lord?

Day Two: Matthew 7:13-27

- How does Jesus contrast the narrow gate with the wide (13-14)? Why do you think he presents the road to life as narrow, small and less traveled? How does this make you feel?
- Describe false prophets (15-18). What happens to these trees that bear bad fruit (19)? What are some examples of the respective fruit of true and false prophets? Meanwhile, what distinguishes true disciples from false ones (21-23)? Ask the Lord to examine your heart and life to reveal what sort of fruit you bear and whether you do his will. What is he showing to you? What one change does this inspire you to make?
- What analogy does Jesus use to sum up what it means to truly follow him and pursue spiritual maturity (24-27)? Think about where you see yourself and your life's experiences in this description. What do you want to say to the Lord about this?

Day Three: Matthew 23:1-12

- Whom is Jesus addressing (1)? How does he describe the role of the religious leaders of his day (2)? Why should people do only what they say, not what they do (3-4)? How do you think God feels about this oppression at the hands of religious hypocrites?
- What audience do the religious leaders have in mind when they conduct their affairs (5)? Describe these affairs (5-7). What reward do the religious leaders seek (7)? When you engage in spiritual practices, what sort of audience do you have in mind? What sort of reward do you seek? Ask God to draw you near and transform you so that you consider him alone your audience and greater communion with him to be the desired reward for your efforts.
- Why does Jesus speak out against assigning titles of superiority to people (8-10)? How does this then inform what posture we should take as we relate to one another (11-12)? Pray for grace to heed these words and to embody them in both heart and action. Ask that your reward would be more of God's presence.

Day Four: Luke 5:1-11

- Set the scene of this text (1-3). After speaking, what did Jesus tell Simon (Peter) to do (4)? How did Simon respond (5)? What do his words reveal about his spirituality and thoughts about God? How is he unlike the irreligious babblers described in Matthew 6:7-

8? Pray that you'd be like Peter, expressing comprehensive trust in the Lord, not just for matters that are explicitly religious.

- What happened after Peter and the other fishermen let down the nets (6-7)? Describe Peter and the others' reactions (8-10). What comfort did Jesus then offer, and what did he tell the group their lives would look like now (10)? How did they respond (11)?
- What do you make of these events? Peter does something because "Jesus says so." He's pleasantly astonished, but then convicted. Jesus reminds him not to fear and then calls him to completely change his life, and Peter immediately complies. Which part is most surprising to you? Which of Peter's actions feel hardest for you to emulate? Lift these thoughts up to the Lord, asking him again for your faith to be comprehensive.

Day Five: Colossians 3:23-24

- Describe the way we should work, no matter what the work entails (23). Make a list of tasks in your life that you consider to be work: jobs, schoolwork, housework, yard work, cooking, errands, administrative tasks, childrearing, eldercare, etc. Envision doing each task "with all your heart, as working for the Lord." Compare this to how you usually complete each task. What differences do you notice? Lift up any observations and thoughts to the Lord. Ask for grace and power to obey Paul's command in this verse.
- Why should we work "with all our heart, as working for the Lord" (24)? What do you think Paul means by "an inheritance from the Lord"? Is this the sort of reward you are inclined to desire? Ask God to identify and then refine the rewards you seek. What work do you sense he wants to do in this regard? Finally, Paul tells us again that in all we do, it's Jesus we serve. Pray the Holy Spirit would remind you of this often, at just the right times.