

SUMMER 2022

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 25 | JUNE 19TH

P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S



Matthew 5:13-16; 6:1-4; 7:19-24

main point >> Following Jesus involves being salt and light to those around us.

devotional questions >> Taken from daily devos

essential doctrine >> **Mission of the Church** | The church is a sign and instrument of the kingdom of God, a people united by faith in the gospel announcement of the crucified and risen King Jesus. The mission of the church is to go into the world in the power of the Spirit and make disciples by proclaiming this gospel, calling people to respond in ongoing repentance and faith, and demonstrating the truth and power of the gospel by living under the lordship of Christ for the glory of God and the good of the world.

Christ Connection >> In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught His followers what it meant to be His disciple—someone who has been transformed by faith in Jesus and who lives for Him. Just as Jesus came into the world to be light, we too are to live in the world as salt and light for Him.

discussion
questions



- Which of the world's problems can followers of Jesus take part in improving? How can you be involved in that process?
- What are some ways the light of Jesus can be seen by those around us?
- What are some ways people display their righteousness in front of others today?
- What are some ways we can guard our hearts from seeking to glorify ourselves instead of our Savior?
- Why is it more rewarding for us in the end to seek glory for Jesus and not ourselves?
- What are some ways we can help be protected from deceiving ourselves that we are right with Jesus when in reality we truly don't know Him?
- How do these passages warn us of the dangers of trusting in one's goodness rather than trusting in the goodness of Jesus?
- What does it look like to make Christ's righteousness and not our own the foundation of our faith?
- What is the connection between the heart and behavior according to these passages?
- What is the danger of focusing on behavior without considering the heart behind that behavior?
- What does it look like for you to radically live for Jesus from the inside out this week?
- How can your group specifically live as salt and light to those in your community?

SUMMER 2022

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 26 | JUNE 26TH

P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S



Luke 9:57-62; 14:25-35

main point >> Discipleship involves a total and costly commitment to following Jesus.

devotional questions >> Taken from daily devos

essential doctrine >> **Discipleship** | Discipleship is a process that takes place both formally and informally to effect spiritual maturity as people follow Jesus. Informal discipleship, as passages like Deuteronomy 6:4-9 suggest, happens everywhere, in every arena of life. Growing in our faith and deepening our walk with Christ is something that requires our whole life, not just the mind. Formal discipleship refers to periods of instruction. We make disciples through our words and actions, providing verbal instruction from God's Word and non-verbal examples through our lives (Acts 20:17-24).

Christ Connection >> Jesus taught that being His disciple comes at a cost. To be His disciple requires a clear and total commitment and will involve sacrifice. When we commit our entire lives to Jesus as His disciples, we emulate the One who laid down His life on our behalf for our salvation.

discussion
questions



- How should our verbal commitment to follow Jesus lead to action?
- How has following Jesus altered your priorities?
- How does your love for Jesus affect and surpass your love for your earthly relationships?
- What might giving Jesus our total commitment look like at this point in your life?
- Why should we reflect on the level of our commitment to Jesus throughout our Christian life? How might doing so encourage us to make our commitment to Him stronger?
- What can we learn from Jesus' example when it comes to giving our all to God?
- How is the reward we gain from knowing Jesus greater than any earthly reward we give up in order to follow Him
- How does a commitment to follow Jesus begin with the heart?
- What can we do if we find our hearts more in love with the things of this world than with following after Jesus?
- What are some areas in your life that are holding you back from a whole-hearted commitment to following Jesus?
- How can our full commitment to following Jesus help us serve others in their need of knowing Him?

SUMMER 2022

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 27 | JULY 3RD

P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S



Luke 11:1-4, 9-13; 18:1-8

main point



Jesus taught His disciples to pray with faith, persistence, and dependence on God.

devotional
questions



Taken from daily devos

essential
doctrine



Prayer and Providence | If God is in control and already knows the future, why pray? The Bible teaches that although God has a plan for this world that He promises to fulfill, prayer is often the means God uses to accomplish His divine purpose. Even though God knows the end result, the means that lead to that end result will be accomplished through prayer. In this sense, it is true that “prayer changes things,” and it is also true that God uses prayer to change our hearts so that our will comes into conformity with His.

Christ
Connection



Jesus taught us to pray with dependence on God, recognizing our physical and spiritual needs which only He can supply; faith in God, knowing He is our good and loving Father; and with persistence to God, remembering He is just. It is through the death and resurrection of Jesus that we have access to the Father so that we can pray in faith.

in defense



Prayer is the act of our going to God in worship, confession of sin, thanksgiving, and in expressing dependence upon Him. However, Scripture teaches that God is so holy, He cannot even look upon sin (Hab. 1:13). Further, if we accept sin in our lives instead of continually turning away, the Lord doesn't even hear our prayers (Ps. 66:18). In fact, in order to approach God, He requires that we are perfect—and none of us are. But Jesus is!

As Jesus celebrated the experiences of His disciples, He recognized that God's purposes were being realized, and His natural response was to offer praise and thanks to God. Jesus has a relationship with the Father the way God intended for all people. For those who trust in Jesus, we have the privilege of approaching God, not just once a year like the earthly high priests, but any time we choose. Jesus did everything necessary for us to come to God. Let's never neglect this privilege.

discussion
questions



- How can you remind yourself of God's glory when you pray?
- When have you seen God uniquely meet your physical and/or spiritual needs?
- Have you ever found yourself hesitating to ask God for something?
- What are some additional reminders in Scripture that teach us that God is good and cares for His people?
- How would you assess the persistence of your own prayer life?
- How can prayer help prepare our hearts to respond when God answers our requests with a "no?"
- Why might God's response of a "no" be an incredible act of His mercy and grace?
- What are some important things that should be on our prayer list each day?
- How encouraging is it to know that the Holy Spirit intercedes on behalf of believers?
- How has your prayer life been challenged by this session?
- What are some things you can do this week to have a more disciplined and vibrant prayer life?

SUMMER 2022

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 28 | JULY 10TH



Luke 12:15-28, 31-34

main point

Jesus teaches on what it means to live generously.

devotional questions

Taken from daily devos

essential doctrine

Stewardship | God's intention for mankind is that we serve Him as faithful stewards of His creation (Gen. 1:28; 1 Cor. 4:1-2). We are to invest the time, talents, and material possessions God has given us for His kingdom work (Matt. 25:14-29), knowing that God is the true owner of all we have, and that our true treasure is found not on earth but in heaven (Matt. 6:19,21; Luke 12:16-21). Motivated by God's generosity to us made most clear in the gospel, we are to give God the best of what we have (Prov. 3:9), regularly (1 Cor. 16:2), sacrificially (Matt. 12:41-44), humbly (Matt. 6:1-4), and cheerfully (2 Cor. 9:6-7), praying that God may be glorified in our stewardship of His provisions.

Christ Connection

When Jesus taught His disciples about money and possessions, He warned about hoarding treasure instead of living with generosity. Jesus left His place of splendor with the Father and lived on earth without wealth so that He could complete the work the Father had given Him to do: establish the kingdom.

in defense



“But one of the greatest things about Jesus is that he does not want his people to be anxious. The main point of today’s text is that God does not secure his kingship by cultivating anxiety. On the contrary, the aim of God’s kingship is to free us from anxiety. God doesn’t need to keep us anxious in order to establish his power and superiority. Instead, he exalts his power and superiority by working to take away our anxiety. If you are born again, if you have turned away from sin and are following Jesus as Lord in the obedience of faith, his will for you this morning is that you not be anxious about anything, but that you enjoy deep serenity and peace and security. Jesus spoke these words in Matthew 6:24–34 precisely for you — to help you overcome whatever is making you anxious this morning.”— John Piper. “Do Not Be Anxious About Your Life,” *Desiring God*, December 13, 2019, <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/do-not-be-anxious-about-your-life>.

discussion questions



- Why do you think Jesus would take the time to warn His listeners about loving wealth and possessions? What are the dangers of doing so?
- How can we be sure that we are using our treasures for God’s glory and not our own?
- What do you typically worry about? What are the circumstances that usually accompany your anxiety and worry?
- How should the truth of God’s goodness and fatherhood help control and redirect the worry in our lives?
- Why is it important that we treasure God above all earthly treasures?
- What is Jesus’ purpose in mentioning the ravens in verse 24? What is He teaching us about worry here?
- How can we balance the idea of trusting in God to meet all of our needs (not worrying) with our calling by God to work hard in everything we do?
- Is it true that the more money you have the less worry you have? Explain.
- How do these verses challenge you when it comes to worrying about things in your life?
- What insight can we gain in our understanding of treasure based on these passages?
- How does our heavenly treasure influence the way we see and handle our earthly treasures?

SUMMER 2022

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 29 | JULY 17TH



John 10:7-18

main point

Jesus' love and compassion leads to a fulfilled life.

devotional questions

Taken from daily devos

essential doctrine

Christ as Propitiation | Because of God's righteousness and holiness, humanity's sins must be atoned for in order for people to be reconciled to God. As the propitiation for sins, Christ's death is the appeasement or satisfaction of God's wrath against sin. Christ's propitiation for our sins demonstrates both God's great love toward sinners (1 John 4:10) as well as the necessary payment that results from the penalty of sins (Rom. 3:26).

Christ Connection

Jesus is the Good Shepherd, sent by the Father, to lay down His life for the sheep so that they might have life. Because of Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection from the grave, we have abundant life in Him and through Him.

discussion
questions



- What are some characteristics of those “thieves and robbers” that threaten the church today?
 - What are some good things that have the potential to make you stray from following Jesus?
 - How should the fact that believers are loved by a faithful and protective Shepherd influence the way we think about our relationship with God?
 - How should it influence the way we think about and treat others?
 - As the Good Shepherd, what is Jesus calling you away from during this time? What is He calling you to?
 - Why does Jesus stress that He is “the” gate, and not just “a” gate?
 - What does it mean that Jesus offers abundant life?
 - How does the love of the Good Shepherd lead to faithful and
 - obedient sheep?
 - Why is it important that we rightly emphasize God's gracious and fatherly love for us in that, while we were still sinners, Jesus died for us?
 - How can we, as sheep, join the Good Shepherd in His mission of taking care of His sheep?
 - Who are some wayward sheep in your life who need to draw closer to the Good Shepherd? How can you help with that in the weeks ahead?
-


SUMMER 2022


DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 30 | JULY 24TH




Psalm 99:9; Isaiah 6:3; Psalm 71:22; Leviticus 19:2; Hebrews 12:10

main point  God is worthy to be praised because of His holiness.

devotional questions 

- What do you think of when you hear the word *holy*?
- What do you think of when you hear about the holiness of God?
- In what ways is God refining you?
- What are some ways you can remember to thank God regularly for His holiness?
- What are some ways Christians should be different from the world?
- When in your life has God disciplined you? How did it turn out?

essential doctrine  **Holiness** | Holiness is a very important part of who God is. The word holiness means “to be set apart,” and when talking about God’s holiness, it speaks of how He is distinct, or set apart, from everything in creation and is pure in His heart, meaning He has no sinful motivation.

God is so worthy to be praised because of His holiness. It doesn’t make us feel good all the time as when thinking about His love or faithfulness, but we can worship Him for it because He refines and leads us in a holy lifestyle along with Him. God disciplines us in our lives so we can share in His holiness. God calls us to be holy, and that doesn’t mean we are better than those who don’t know the Lord, but it does mean we live differently.

Christ
Connection



Holiness is intimidating. In fact, in the Old Testament, we see several times when people who interacted with God's holiness died because of how intense it is. God told the Israelites to make a temple and a room that was blocked off from all people by a veil, and it was known as the Holy of Holies, where God's holiness dwelt. Once a year, the high priest would go in to offer a sacrifice for sins, but to keep from dying because of how intense God's holiness was He had to clean himself and prepare himself for it. So God, loving us and not wanting our sin to keep us from Him, sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the Cross. This was symbolic of the sacrifice the priests offered, but Jesus was perfect and made a way for all people to enter into a relationship with God by accepting the forgiveness He bought for us.

discussion
questions

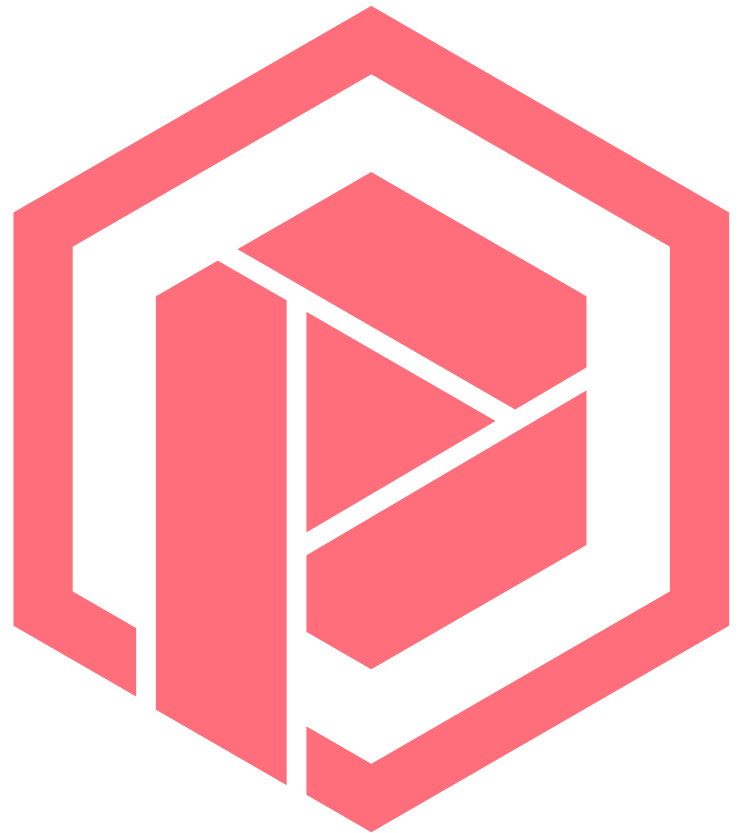


- How would you define holiness?
 - What are some other examples of God's holiness in the Bible?
 - Do you think of anyone in particular when you think of a holy person?
 - Would you consider yourself holy? Why or why not?
 - How does understanding God's holiness change the way you live?
 - How does understanding God's holiness change the way you think about Him?
-

SUMMER 2022

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 31 | JULY 31ST



Revelation 21:6; Romans 13:1; John 19:11; Proverbs 21:1; Daniel 4:35; Ephesians 1:11; Isaiah 46:9-10; Romans 8:28-32; Mark 5:35-36, 21-24a; James 5:13-15

main point



God is sovereign over the universe and creation, rulers and authorities, our plans, suffering, and ultimately, life and death.

devotional questions



- Every day of your life, from the womb to the tomb, was ordained by God. Accepting this truth, how will you choose to spend today in honor of the Alpha and Omega?
 - In God's sovereignty, He chose before time began who would have leadership in the United States. How does that change the way you view our current government?
 - God's sovereign energy is pushing you along at this very moment. Today, this unique day, you get to live *once*; how will you submit to His will in your life?
 - We all suffer and struggle. If not now, then soon. What can you do to remind yourself of the goodness of God when suffering blankets your heart?
 - With such limited time on earth, will you give God control over your life? In what area of life do you need to "maintain the faith you began with when you accepted Jesus as Lord?"
-

essential doctrine



God's Sovereignty | The sovereignty of God is the fact that He is Lord over creation; as sovereign, God exercises His rule. This rule is exercised through God's authority as king, His control over all things, and His presence with His covenantal people and His creation.

Christ
Connection



Francis Schaeffer, a theologian and pastor, explains Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning **God created** the heavens and the earth.” This verse is the answer for modern man, overwhelmed by the problem of why – by knowing that something else is there and yet not being able to understand it. Everything which has life, except God Himself, rests upon the fact that God willed it into creation.

Now, couple this with John 1:1-4, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. **All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made.** In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.” The New Testament declares Jesus as Messiah, the Son of God, the Alpha and Omega. Jesus is sovereign.

in defense



To declare God sovereign is to declare Him God. If God were not sovereign, He would be finite and someone else would be master. The Bible declares God to be supreme (1 Chronicles 29:12; Psalm 47:2) and therefore sovereign (Psalm 115:3; Isaiah 14:24).

discussion
questions



- What does *sovereign* mean?
 - What is another word for sovereign?
 - How do we know that God is sovereign?
 - Does God tell us He is in control?
 - Is there a story in the Bible that illustrates God’s sovereignty?
 - If God is sovereign, does that mean Jesus is as well?
 - What is a good verse for us to memorize to remind us of God’s sovereignty?
 - Knowing that God is in control of everything, what can we do when life overwhelms us?
-

SUMMER 2022

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 32 | AUGUST 7TH



Romans 8:1; Isaiah 61:10; Ephesians 2:8–9; Titus 3:7; Romans 5:19; 3:23–24

main point



Forgiveness is God's gift in the darkness, an inheritance of life for the sons and daughters of the grace found in Jesus.

devotional questions



- If Jesus does not condemn you, will you continue to condemn yourself?
 - What are you wearing? Will you let Jesus buy you a whole new look? Or are you going to keep trying to dress yourself in brokenness and religious rituals?
 - Who will you be? A child or an employee?
 - Whom will you follow?
-

essential doctrine



“It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.” Jesus’ entire mission is summed up beautifully in this short statement. At the heart of the Gospel is the uncomfortable truth that humanity is sick with sin. Our collective story begins in goodness and devolves into chaos as we choose disobedience and idolatry over love of God and neighbor. But though the story starts there, God doesn’t end it there. He could have, and He would have been perfectly just in doing so. But love and mercy drove Him to another way, a story in which brokenness meets restoration, despair meets hope, and hurt meets healing. The idea that God can and does forgive our sins through the life and work of Jesus Christ is the central truth of our faith. It holds together everything else, showing God to be holy, righteous and wholly good. He doesn’t look the other way from sin, but instead places our own judgment on Jesus at the Cross, making a path so that anyone who believes in Him would find redemption from sin and rest from striving. We were sick, but Jesus died to heal us. We were alone in the dark, but Jesus came to bring light again. We were lost, but in Jesus, we find ourselves again to be who He made us to be. Forgiveness cleanses our guilt, restores our relationship, frees us from shame, and makes us a new creation. Although we will continue to wrestle with sin for the remainder of our lives on earth, we can run to Jesus, knowing that we are His and He is ours. In Jesus, we are forgiven.

**Christ
Connection**



The idea that God can and does forgive our sins through the life and work of Jesus Christ is the central truth of our faith. It holds together everything else, showing God to be holy, righteous and entirely good. He doesn't look the other way from sin, but instead places our own judgment on Jesus at the Cross, making a path so that anyone who believes in Him would find redemption from sin and rest from striving. We were sick, but Jesus died to heal us. We were alone in the dark, but Jesus came to bring light again. We were lost, but in Jesus, we find ourselves again to be who He made us to be. Forgiveness cleanses our guilt, restores our relationship, frees us from shame, and makes us a new creation. Although we will continue to wrestle with sin for the remainder of our lives on earth, we can run to Jesus, knowing that we are His and He is ours. In Jesus, we are forgiven.

**discussion
questions**



- Is God dishonest if He forgives our sins after promising to judge us for them?
 - How do you receive forgiveness?
 - For you, what is the hardest part about asking for forgiveness?
 - How have you experienced forgiveness in your life from others? Do you think it is different from the way God forgives you?
 - Does forgiveness only happen when you first come to Jesus? What does it look like to live in forgiveness?
 - Do you think you are forgivable? How does forgiveness interact with shame in your life?
 - If Jesus has forgiven you, how can you work to forgive others?
-

SUMMER 2022

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 33 | AUGUST 14TH



Luke 15:1-7; Jude 1:17-23; Hebrews 10:23-25; Ephesians 4:11-16; Luke 23:32-39, 40-43

main point



REACH - As Jesus reaches for the Lost, we should do the same. LEARN - The more we learn about Christ, the more we will look like Christ. LOVE - Christians are called to love everyone because Christ died for everyone.

devotional questions



- What did your life look like before you accepted Christ as your Savior?
- If you are a Christian, are you reaching others as Jesus did? If so, how are you reaching them?
- When a sinner comes to know Jesus, do you act like the brother who stayed? Or the father? Leaders, begin by giving this statement; then give your story in one sentence; then have your students take turns telling their story.
- What does suffering and pain look like in your school?
- How are you reaching people who do not believe in Jesus?
- Would you consider yourself a young Christian or a mature Christian according to Ephesians 4:13?
- This week, what is one way you can learn and imitate Christ?
- Have you ever faced someone who was mocking Jesus? How did you react to his or her statement?
- Would you choose to die for someone who hated you?
- Are your daily actions mocking who Jesus is?
- Which criminal represents you? Are you denying Jesus or serving Jesus?
- Why would Jesus see the Cross as an act of love?
- Do you love the body of Christ?

essential doctrine



Evangelism tells the Gospel, and it's the first part of our mission statement: Reach. The body of Christ cannot be a whole body of Christ without people. We must reflect on the actions of Jesus and reach others with the Gospel.

In order to know who Jesus is and what His mission is, we must learn about Him through prayer and reading the Bible.

We are commanded to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Christ
Connection



The first thing we have to do is pursue Christ. He wants us to go after Him by carrying our cross daily and by putting Him above everything else in our lives. Once we put Him at the center, then He wants us to pursue others. Jesus came to seek and save the lost, and we should do the same thing.

We are unable to share the Gospel with our own understanding of this world. We must lean on the Lord and His teachings to reach others. Christ tells us to come to Him with all our questions, wonders and concerns.

Jesus did not come to die for any certain people. He came for all, including those who have stayed, departed, and returned.

discussion
questions



- Why is it necessary to make sure people see Christ in us in order for our ministry to be effective?
 - Do you see evangelism as an optional – or necessary – part of being a Christian?
 - Do you have any fears in evangelizing?
 - How do you start a Gospel conversation?
 - Do you see growth as an important part of being a Christian? Why or why not?
 - Personally, how can you look more like Christ every day?
 - What are some things that stop you from looking more like Jesus? How can you eliminate those things/sin from your life?
 - If you are growing spiritually every day, what will be the results? What fruit will be produced?
 - How easy do you think it is to live out the greatest commandment to love your neighbor as you love yourself?
 - What does it mean and look like to love in this way?
 - Based on God's love for us, how should we treat others?
-