







PUTTING YOUR FAITH INTO ACTION

MATTHEW 13-18



Getting more out of your Quiet Times

If you want to know who God is and what he wants you to do with your life, you need to spend time reading his Book, the Bible. Make a regular time that will suit you every day (tick the boxes as you go to help you keep up to date). Find a good spot free from distractions. Start by talking to God, asking him to help you to concentrate and understand what you read. Read the Bible passage, maybe a couple of times. As you read through the passage, use these points to guide your reading:

-  **Get the Points:**
The main idea of the passage summarised in a short sentence.
-  **Something I've never thought of before:**
An idea or verse that you have never noticed before in the passage. It may give you new understanding of what the passage is saying.
-  **A question I have about the passage, & who I'm going to ask:**
Write any verses, word or ideas that you don't understand or have a question about. Write down who you are going to ask about your question so that you will follow it up, and get answers.
-  **What example is given for how God wants me to live?**
Look out for a command that is given for what God wants us to do, or an example of how Jesus lived that we should follow.
-  **One thing I need to change to live the way God wants:**
Because of the example or command given, write down a specific and practical thing you are going to do to change - and then do it!
-  **To Ponder . . . and Pray:**
A few points to think about that may help you know what to pray about. It is important that prayer and bible reading go hand in hand, as we learn more about God and talk to him as well.

A Verse to Remember: Write down a verse that stuck out to you, and see if you can memorise it.

These points are a really helpful guide to lead you through your quiet times. You can use these points with any passage from the Bible that you are reading. You might like to work out the main point yourself, and pray through what God has shown you.

Get the Point and To Ponder...and Pray were first published in "Australian Presbyterian" and are reproduced with permission.

DATE: ___ / ___ / ___

DAY 24

Matthew 18: 21-35: Why we must forgive

Get the points: Jesus had just spoken about discipline in the Church. This led Peter to a related question about forgiveness. Like all of us, Peter had a real struggle with forgiveness. Jesus helped him to see his 'little' problem in context! And we say, "Forgive us our sins *as we forgive others*" so easily!

Something I've never thought of before:

A question I have about the passage, and who I am going to ask:

What example is given for how God wants me to live?

One thing I need to change to live the way God wants:

To Ponder... And Pray:

The parable is self-explanatory. How do you respond to v.35?



A Verse to Remember:

DATE: ___ / ___ / ___

DAY 1

Matthew 13: 1-9, 18-23 :The Dirt on Unbelief

Get the Point: Of all the parables of Jesus, this one is probably the most well-known! Here, Jesus explains why he uses parables and why there are so many different responses to the Gospel. It encourages us as followers of Jesus, and as people called to tell others about him. Jesus actually gives us the "low-down" in this parable.

Something I've never thought of before:

A question I have about the passage, and who I am going to ask:

What example is given for how God wants me to live?

One thing I need to change to live the way God wants:

To Ponder... And Pray:

- Has God's Word taken root in your life? What kind of soil are you?
- Will you tell your friends at school who don't know Jesus?



A Verse to Remember:

DATE: ___ / ___ / ___

DAY 2

Matthew 13:10-17: Unseeing Eyes, Unhearing Ears:

Get the points: These are some pretty strong words from Jesus, and often we don't want to hear them. They take away our control or reasoning and give it all back to the sovereign God. .

Something I've never thought of before:

A question I have about the passage, and who I am going to ask:

What example is given for how God wants me to live?

One thing I need to change to live the way God wants:

To Ponder... And Pray:

- How does Jesus' use of parables help us to see why we need to explain the Gospel as simply and clearly as possible to our non-Christian friends and family?
- How does it teach us that we can never lead someone to Jesus by logic alone? Who can you pray for right now?



A Verse to Remember:

DATE: ___ / ___ / ___

DAY 23

Matthew 18:15-20: Disciplined discipline

Get the point: These 6 verses need to be taken all together as a unit. Jesus is concerned about the health of his Church, and about how we treat each other.

Something I've never thought of before:

A question I have about the passage, and who I am going to ask:

What example is given for how God wants me to live?

One thing I need to change to live the way God wants:

To Ponder... And Pray:

When someone wrongs you, do you talk about them or to them?



A Verse to Remember:

DATE: ___ / ___ / ___

DAY 22

Matthew 18:10-14: Little ones to him belong

Get the point: The Bible makes it clear that God has a soft spot for the vulnerable and children. Jesus speaks tenderly and passionately about God's ongoing concern for all who belong to him.



Something I've never thought of before:



A question I have about the passage, and who I am going to ask:



What example is given for how God wants me to live?



One thing I need to change to live the way God wants:



To Ponder... And Pray:



What new things does this passage teach you about God's love for you?

A Verse to Remember:

DATE: ___ / ___ / ___

DAY 3

Matthew 13: 24-30, 36-43: Weed better be careful!

Get the point: There is a tendency today, even among Christians, to ignore what the Bible – and especially Jesus – says about hell. This parable, and its explanation, leaves us in no doubt as to the eternal fate of those who reject God's saving gospel. It also warns us against assuming who they are!



Something I've never thought of before:



A question I have about the passage, and who I am going to ask:



What example is given for how God wants me to live?



One thing I need to change to live the way God wants:



To Ponder... And Pray:



- How can we make sure we are ready for God's harvest (judgement)?

A Verse to Remember:

DATE: ___ / ___ / ___

DAY 4

Matthew 13:31-35 : Despise not the day of small things

Get the point: Because the world measures success by growth in quantity, it's easy for the Church to think the same. It gets worse... "success" also has to be immediately seen. The Church's drive for popularity is causing us to do things that do not glorify God or last, but that make us impatient instead of learning to wait on God.



Something I've never thought of before:



A question I have about the passage, and who I am going to ask:



What example is given for how God wants me to live?



One thing I need to change to live the way God wants:



To Ponder... And Pray:



- Does the Church today truly reflect the kingdom of heaven? Or do we run the risk in our churches of trying to attract people to Christ but avoiding what happened to Jesus on the cross?

A Verse to Remember:

DATE: ___ / ___ / ___

DAY 21

Matthew 18:1-9: Be very careful how you live

Get the point: The "rules" for how citizens of God's kingdom are to live and think cut right across our natural way of looking at things. We need to pay careful attention to this hard teaching from Jesus—we can't afford to ignore it.



Something I've never thought of before:



A question I have about the passage, and who I am going to ask:



What example is given for how God wants me to live?



One thing I need to change to live the way God wants:



To Ponder... And Pray:



What "hands" or 'feet' or 'eyes' in your life need amputation?

A Verse to Remember:

DATE: ___ / ___ / ___

DAY 20

Matthew 17:22-27: About his Father's business

Get the point: Jesus' one passion was to save humans from sin and death, through his death as our substitute, in obedience to his Father's will. As people who are saved by God, we belong to two worlds: the Kingdom of Heaven, and this world. But our loyalty is always to our King – Jesus.

Something I've never thought of before:

A question I have about the passage, and who I am going to ask:

What example is given for how God wants me to live?

One thing I need to change to live the way God wants:

To Ponder... And Pray:

How Read Romans 13:1-7. How does this part of Matthew help us to live as Romans challenges us?

Are you being a good ambassador for Jesus ... in your house? ...in your school? ... in your church? ...amongst your friends?



A Verse to Remember:

DATE: ___ / ___ / ___

DAY 5

Matthew 13:44-52: Old truths, new insights

Get the point: Nothing has ever been more important than the kingdom of God!

Something I've never thought of before:

A question I have about the passage, and who I am going to ask:

What example is given for how God wants me to live?

One thing I need to change to live the way God wants:

To Ponder... And Pray:

- Where does God's kingdom sit in your life? How do you spend your time at home? ...at church? ...with friends? How do you use your money and your God-given abilities?



A Verse to Remember:

DATE: ___ / ___ / ___

DAY 6

Matthew 13: 53-58 : More than a carpenter?

Get the point: Some people argue that miracles work depending on someone's faith. When we look at the Bible, it shows that miracles are to prove Jesus' true identity as God (John 10:25, 38; 14:11; 20:30-31), and therefore do not become powerless simply by unfaith on our part. And they're a way to show God's grace to helpless, undeserving sinners who are not able, or not willing to turn to Jesus.

Something I've never thought of before:

A question I have about the passage, and who I am going to ask:

What example is given for how God wants me to live?

One thing I need to change to live the way God wants:

To Ponder... And Pray:

Jesus' decision not to do many miracles in his hometown was in line with the principles he taught in Matthew 7:6 and 10:14, rather than their lack of faith limiting his power. How does your faith measure up? What things stop you from recognising the spiritual gifts God has given each of us to share?



A Verse to Remember:

DATE: ___ / ___ / ___

DAY 19

Matthew 17:14-20(21): Our only hope:

Get the point: We seem lost and doomed – just like the disciples who couldn't even heal and do anything in their own strength to help the desperate man and boy – but Jesus, the Son of God steps in saves us all.

Something I've never thought of before:

A question I have about the passage, and who I am going to ask:

What example is given for how God wants me to live?

One thing I need to change to live the way God wants:

To Ponder... And Pray:

Are we truly serious enough about Jesus working through us today?

If we feel weak or powerless as Christians, we should look at our faith. Are we trusting in our own abilities to produce results, or are we trusting God's?



A Verse to Remember:

DATE: ___ / ___ / ___

DAY 18

Matthew 17:1-13: Two way; to go

Get the point: Jesus, the Son of God was born without sin, and had lived a life of absolute obedience to the Father's will. Now two ways lay before him: to return to his former glory, the result of a sinless life; or freely to choose death, to take the place of all sinners as their substitute.



Something I've never thought of before:



A question I have about the passage, and who I am going to ask:



What example is given for how God wants me to live?



One thing I need to change to live the way God wants:



To Ponder... And Pray:

Moses and Elijah represented the Law and the prophets—and this awesome situation was not lost on Peter.

What does it mean to you that Jesus deliberately chose death? What are you going to do about it?



A Verse to Remember:

DATE: ___ / ___ / ___

DAY 7

Matthew 14:1-12 : Her odious sins

Get the point: Herod and Herodias' relationship was pretty complex and particularly wicked. Because John the Baptist had enough godly guts to point their sin out, Herod put him in the dungeon. But Herod was also in awe of him, seeing God's power in John the Baptist. Herodias and her daughter (Salome) didn't agree with this, and wanted to get rid of John, no matter how humiliating and twisted it was. Herod gave in to the killing of John so that he wouldn't be embarrassed in front of his guests. The Son of God had come to a very evil world.



Something I've never thought of before:



A question I have about the passage, and who I am going to ask:



What example is given for how God wants me to live?



One thing I need to change to live the way God wants:



To Ponder... And Pray:

What is it costing you to remain faithful to Jesus and his truth ("godly guts")?

How easy is it for you to give in to your friends and be pressured into doing something wrong? Decide to do what is right, no matter how embarrassing or painful it may be – and don't forget to pray about it!



A Verse to Remember:

DATE: ___ / ___ / ___

DAY 8

Matthew 14: 13-21 : "Bring them here to me"

Get the point: The fact that all four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) record two instances of feeding miracles show how important it is in understanding who Jesus is.



Something I've never thought of before:



A question I have about the passage, and who I am going to ask:



What example is given for how God wants me to live?



One thing I need to change to live the way God wants:



To Ponder... And Pray:

In spite of his pain at John's death, Jesus still cared about the needs of other. What new or amazing things do you learn about Jesus from this event? We often feel that our contribution to Jesus is small, but he can use and multiply whatever we give him, whether it is talent, time, or treasure. It is when we give them to Jesus that our resources are multiplied!



A Verse to Remember:

DATE: ___ / ___ / ___

DAY 17

Matthew 16:21-28: Two way; to think

Get the points: Jesus is making his final journey to Jerusalem. After Peter's bold statement, it was time for Jesus to explain to his disciples just what it was all about, what it would cost (both him and them), and what the outcome would be.



Something I've never thought of before:



A question I have about the passage, and who I am going to ask:



What example is given for how God wants me to live?



One thing I need to change to live the way God wants:



To Ponder... And Pray:

What helps you make the choices in your life? Read Colossians 3:1-4. How do you respond to this challenge from Paul?



A Verse to Remember:

DATE: ___ / ___ / ___

DAY 16

Matthew 16:13-20: The Church's one foundation

Get the point: Peter's God-inspired declaration is the foundation for Christ's Church.



Something I've never thought of before:



A question I have about the passage, and who I am going to ask:



What example is given for how God wants me to live?



One thing I need to change to live the way God wants:



To Ponder... And Pray:



Who do *you* say Jesus is? Is he your Lord and Messiah?

Is the Church today truly fulfilling all Jesus called it to be?

A Verse to Remember:

DATE: ___ / ___ / ___

DAY 9

Matthew 14:22-36: God's World—He Rules

Get the point: Whoever heard of the ability to walk on water? The disciples were surprised when Jesus, the Son of God, could walk on water, showing that the sky's the limit for God in the world he created!



Something I've never thought of before:



A question I have about the passage, and who I am going to ask:



What example is given for how God wants me to live?



One thing I need to change to live the way God wants:



To Ponder... And Pray:



After a 9-hour, strenuous, life-and-death struggle, the disciples were in no fit state for a calm assessment of what they saw (vs. 26). How many proofs that Jesus is truly God can you identify here?

A Verse to Remember:

DATE: ___ / ___ / ___

DAY 10

Matthew 15:1-9 : Man looks on the outside...

Get the point: It can sometimes be difficult to tell the difference between doing things well, and getting caught up in traditions. Bad tradition occurs when good order has the final say in making all decisions and the original purpose becomes lost. You can recognise bad traditions by their inconsistency, hypocrisy or self-service.



Something I've never thought of before:



A question I have about the passage, and who I am going to ask:



What example is given for how God wants me to live?



One thing I need to change to live the way God wants:



To Ponder... And Pray:



We are all capable of being hypocrites. It's easy to do things for God out of habit and not really think about what you're doing and why. What can you do to stop this from happening? Who can you ask to keep you on track?

A Verse to Remember:

DATE: ___ / ___ / ___

DAY 15

Matthew 16:5-12: Not by bread alone

Get the point: We so easily think about the physical rather than the spiritual. So when Jesus mentioned the yeast of the Pharisees, the disciples automatically thought about bread. It was all too confusing for these poor disciples – but it gave Jesus the opportunity to make two important points concerning Kingdom thinking.



Something I've never thought of before:



A question I have about the passage, and who I am going to ask:



What example is given for how God wants me to live?



One thing I need to change to live the way God wants:



To Ponder... And Pray:



Yeast is put into bread to make it rise, and it only takes a little to affect a whole batch of dough. How is this related to the wrong teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees? In what areas of your life do you think that a little wrong thing won't hurt anyone?

A Verse to Remember:

DATE: ___ / ___ / ___

DAY 14

Matthew 16:1-4: Duh!



Get the point: Jesus had performed many miraculous signs – of which Matthew has recorded more than 17 public instances up to this point – and the Jewish leaders ask him for proof that he really was the Messiah! There was no excuse for such unbelief (see 11:1-6). There is none so blind as those who just don't want to see!



Something I've never thought of before:



A question I have about the passage, and who I am going to ask:



What example is given for how God wants me to live?



One thing I need to change to live the way God wants:



To Ponder... And Pray:

How does this passage help us to answer people who say that they would believe in God if only he would give some real proof that he exists? What do you think they would accept as real proof?

A Verse to Remember:

DATE: ___ / ___ / ___

DAY 11

Matthew 15: 10-20: ...but God looks on the heart



Get the point: It's not about being outwardly clean that is the most important—spiritual uncleanness comes from the heart (look up Jeremiah 17:9). Unless the heart problem is sorted out, all the hand washing in the world is useless. This is why the Old Testament is looking forward to Jesus' cleansing blood. Thinking the outward symbols and the inner spiritual work is missing the point of what God is doing!



Something I've never thought of before:



A question I have about the passage, and who I am going to ask:



What example is given for how God wants me to live?



One thing I need to change to live the way God wants:



To Ponder... And Pray:

To be friends with a holy God, you need more than a hand wash! What do you need and how are you going to do it? (Check out Ezekiel 36:26 and Matthew 15:15-20). Is there anything in your life (habits, thoughts, actions, words etc) that need to be changed to help you draw closer to God? Pray about it!

A Verse to Remember:

DATE: ___ / ___ / ___

DAY 12

Matthew 15:21-28: Dogged Faith



Get the point: This beautiful story leaves us in no doubt as to the true nature of God's grace and how it invites everyone without discrimination.



Something I've never thought of before:



A question I have about the passage, and who I am going to ask:



What example is given for how God wants me to live?



One thing I need to change to live the way God wants:



To Ponder... And Pray:

What is grace?
Do you keep on praying even when you feel God is not listening?

A Verse to Remember:

DATE: ___ / ___ / ___

DAY 13

Matthew 15:29-39: Slow Learners



Get the point: Mark tells us (Mark 7:31) that these miraculous works of Jesus were done in Decapolis, the region SE of Lake Galilee which had completely come under non-Christian influence. What Jesus had done under among the Jews (14:13 onwards) he is now prepared to repeat among the Gentiles, showing himself to be the promised Messiah for all people.



Something I've never thought of before:



A question I have about the passage, and who I am going to ask:



What example is given for how God wants me to live?



One thing I need to change to live the way God wants:



To Ponder... And Pray:

When we think of our own repeated failures to keep trusting in Jesus in spite of many experiences of his power to meet all our needs, we ought not to be amazed at the disciples' failure to have learned from the previous feeding of the 5,000 (32-33). Are you able to trust all that you are and have to Jesus' power to use? If not, what's stopping you from doing this?

A Verse to Remember: