

Week Three: *God's Intentions*

Matthew 5:43-48

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. As we begin our journey for today, start by reading Matthew 5:43-48.
2. Take some time to think about who your neighbor is and how you have shown love to them. If you need focus, recall the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37. List those who come to mind.
3. Take some time to think about your enemies, those who oppose you or those who oppose God. Take some time to identify people or groups that are not “for us.” Note those who come to mind.
4. Describe a time when you have been tempted to label people who think differently than you or those who have opposed you.
5. Jesus says that when we love our enemies we are like the Father. How are we like the Father in that way?
6. Think about a time when you showed love to a person who could not reciprocate or who you may not see ever again. How did it make you feel? Have you ever been surprised by love from an unexpected source? How did it make you feel?
7. End your FIFTEEN praying for people who are distant from God, for God to place them on your heart to identify those who are in need of God's mercy and grace.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

8. Let's start our day by reading James 3:13-18. Then describe what you think is perfect love.
9. Recall a time when bitter envy and selfish ambition were driving factors. Where does this wisdom come from?
10. Consider the wisdom that comes from heaven. Paint a picture in your mind of a person driven by that wisdom. What does that person look like? Do you know one?
11. Read John 14:15-17. From where do we receive God's wisdom and guidance?
12. Read further in John 14:25-27. What can God grant to those who follow him?

13. Take this moment as you finish your FIFTEEN to identify what in your life stems from his Spirit and what stems from the world. Ask for his Spirit to lead you closer to mindfulness of his perfect love.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three

14. As we journey into Day Three, try to recall a time when you have felt God's provision in your life.

15. Read Matthew 6:25-34. How is God speaking to you right now about his role in your future?

16. According to Matthew 6, how does God feel about you?

17. According to Matthew, what does Jesus say should be our priority in life?

18. What does it mean to seek God's Kingdom and righteousness?

19. Jesus says that each day has enough trouble of its own. By keeping our focus on the Spirit's work within us, we can continue to strive toward knowing and trusting our Heavenly Father's heart. Conclude your FIFTEEN today by praying for the Spirit's wisdom in your pursuit of extending God's Kingdom in your heart.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four

20. When have you been tempted to doubt or lay aside your trust in God and follow other counsel?

21. At times we choose to find answers to our questions or fulfillment for our longings in places that lead us to question God. Read Genesis 18:16-33 as Abraham pleads for Sodom. Does Abraham question God in this exchange? Why or why not?

22. What do Abraham's words and tone in this exchange reveal about his relationship with God?

23. Read Psalm 1:1-6. What do you perceive as the difference between sinners, mockers, and the wicked? What is the delight of the righteous?

24. Are you more inclined to read Psalm 1 as an invitation or a warning? Why?

25. Finish your FIFTEEN by asking God to help you identify opportunities to trust his goodness and to be drawn to his

righteousness. Ask that he may grant a willing spirit in this pursuit of holiness.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five

26. This week started with God's all-encompassing love. As we journey today, we take a look at what God has in store for us. Read 1 Corinthians 2:6-11.

27. As we spend time in Corinthians, from where do we receive wisdom? How is your hope for God's plan in your life revealed in this section of Scripture?

28. Read this quote from Tim Keller. "The Christian hope is not just a consolation for the life you never had, nor a restoration of the life you had, nor even the creation of the life you wished you had, but the recreation of a life so good, you are unable at present to even wish you could ever have it." How does this quote compare with what your preconceptions of heaven might be?

29. How does knowing God's great plan for your future have an effect on how you read the Bible?

30. If we read 1 Peter 1:17-21, where do we begin with our understanding of God?

31. As you finish your FIFTEEN in prayer, keep the words of this old hymn by Helen Lemmel in mind:
Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,
In the light of His glory and grace.