



## **Week Four Devotion**

## Day 1

Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.” And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

Matthew 7:24-29 ESV

They just don't make them like they used to. How many times have you heard that? It was one of my Dad's favorite things to say. Poor quality and shoddy construction drove him to shake his head in disbelief. He understood that if you don't take the time to plot your course and do things right, you will be sorry when it all falls apart.

Jesus's instructions in the book of Matthew are a warning to take your time, plot your course, and put His words into action. He has just spent the last couple chapters giving the best possible instruction on a wide range of subjects. Now he gives the key to turning this instruction into something that will change your life; you have to do it! Not all at once and not perfectly, but the more you apply the Word of God to your life, the more solid your foundation will be.

Having built this foundation on not only hearing but on applying the Word, you will be ready to stand any difficulty with the peace and strength that make up the solid foundation.

Consider this: Sometimes we read the Bible too quickly. We speed through the text without ever stopping to consider and apply the word. Look at Matthew chapter 5 and apply the SOAP method that Trevor mentioned in his sermon last week.

## Day 2

If God doesn't discipline you as he does all of his children, it means that you are illegitimate and are not really his children at all. Since we respected our earthly fathers who disciplined us, shouldn't we submit even more to the discipline of the Father of our spirits, and live forever? For our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. But God's discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in his holiness. No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.

Hebrews 12:8-11 NLT

How many times have you walked into a store and witnessed a child having a meltdown, screaming at his or her parent, thrashing around on the floor and the first thought in your mind is something like this; 'If they would simply give that child a good whooping...' or 'That's what happens when you don't discipline your kids.'

My guess is, we've all done it. No empathy or understanding of the situation, just quick judgement. But why? Because even though our thoughts might be misplaced in this situation, we do understand that as parents, one of the ways we show love to our kids is by making sure they learn that there are consequences for their actions.

It should come to no surprise that if we willfully sin, trouble will follow. That's our doing. But God lets us know that because He loves us, He will use events in our life to train us. Sometimes tough times come, and we wonder, "Why?" Our Father reminds us that while painful, the outcome of how we react, what we learn, what we do in the middle of the storm, is what God is teaching us to prepare us for the next time.

Consider this: As you study God's word, think of it as mental exercise. Make sure as you read the Bible, it doesn't become a brainless moment of just going through the motion. Ask God to show you something new that you can meditate on and put to practice so the next time a storm comes into your life, your training will help you get through to the other side.

## Day 3

Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Colossians 3:16

Shortly after moving in with us in 1992, my dear Grandma suffered a major stroke that left her completely paralyzed on her left side. This hard-working woman who once ran a farm single-handedly was now dependent on us for everything- to be fed, bathed, and changed. But in actuality, her dependence was on Christ.

Sitting by her side, she would often request that I sing How great Thou art, Great is Thy Faithfulness, or read from the Bible. As her needs grew beyond our capabilities we were forced to place her in a nursing home and the Bible on tape became a lifeline to her in between our daily visits. She could confidently declare, "But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have made the Lord God my refuge, that I may tell of all Your works." Psalm 73:28

When all was stripped away, her autonomy and her abilities, she wasn't left wanting; she still had God's Word and a song in her heart to remind her of what she was thankful for. Despite the tough circumstances, she didn't enable them to become her excuses for why she couldn't seek Christ and His comfort. Having anchored herself in the Word and in praise, she not only influenced the trajectory of my life, but today she is an encouragement for you.

To this day, I cannot sing either of those hymns without becoming teary-eyed in remembrance of the woman who modeled the greatest faith I've ever seen. May this refrain remind us of the faithfulness of our Lord as we entrust ourselves daily to Him.

Great is Thy faithfulness!

Great is Thy faithfulness!

Morning by morning new mercies I see:

All I have needed Thy hand hath provided—

Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

Consider this: If your health, comfort, and circumstances turned into hardship, would God's Word and songs of praise be where you would naturally turn?

## Day 4

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

2 Timothy 2: 15 ESV

Have you ever worked hard to acquire a skill? Maybe it was a skill for a hobby like golf. Or maybe it was a skill to make a living, like carpentry or accounting. Either way, acquiring these skills all require one common thing: commitment to a process. One does not simply become a good golfer overnight. For most people it takes years of intense focus on the specifics of the game before they can meet their full potential.

In this passage, Paul is writing to his apprentice Timothy in order to encourage him to commit to the process of being a person of the Word. Just like carpentry, golf, or accounting, it takes time and dedication to learn how to rightly read and apply the Bible. Early on you don't have many tools in your toolbox, but over time you will develop skills and acquire tools that will help you go deeper and deeper into what God has written in His book.

Consider this: It has been said that for most skills it is better to practice just ten minutes a day rather than an hour once a week. There is something about the daily revisiting of developing skills that moves the process along more efficiently. How much could you benefit from establishing a daily habit of just ten minutes a day to meet God in His word?

## Day 5

### I Waw

May your unfailing love come to me, Lord,  
your salvation, according to your promise;  
then I can answer anyone who taunts me,  
for I trust in your word.  
Never take your word of truth from my mouth,  
for I have put my hope in your laws.  
I will always obey your law,  
for ever and ever.  
I will walk about in freedom,  
for I have sought out your precepts.  
I will speak of your statutes before kings  
and will not be put to shame,  
for I delight in your commands  
because I love them.  
I reach out for your commands, which I love,  
that I may meditate on your decrees.

Psalm 119:41-48 (NIV)

What makes sports fun? Is it the exercise? Sure. Is it spending time with friends? Of course. Is it the competition? Maybe. But what do sports require to be fun? They need guidelines, and certain sports, like football, need equipment to be played safely at a high level. In much the same way we need guidance to be able to thrive and security in order to go all out and live life to the fullest. The amazing thing is that God provides those things for us in his word. When we trust and invest in his word, we gain strength and confidence in the truth. We are able to find joy as we are able to get into the game that God has prepared for us in spreading the good news and expanding the Kingdom of God here on earth and in heaven. Waw is a Psalm dedicated to centering in on this principle and like the other Psalms in Psalm 119 is a great tool to help draw us into this truth about his word.

Consider this: When was the last time you focused in on God's word as something which can free us to experience the amazing life he has planned for you? Take 15 minutes and pray for new excitement and perspective on his word.