

WHAT IS GOD TRYING TO TELL US? A STUDY OF THE PARABLES OF JESUS

STUDY COMPANION FOR SESSION I—INTRODUCTION TO
PARABLES

KEY SCRIPTURES

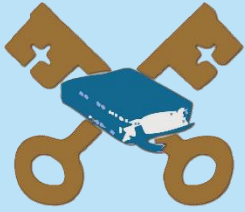
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Luke 15:1-3 | <input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 13:36 | <input type="checkbox"/> Romans 1:16-17 |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 6:9-10 | <input type="checkbox"/> Romans 1:18-19 | <input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 13:20-23 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Luke 8:9-11a | | |

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ☐ Parables are not allegories. What are parables?
- ☐ What is the only way that you will be able to understand the message of Jesus' parables?
- ☐ What are the three main purposes behind God's use of parables?
- ☐ How does God choose who He reveals Himself to and who receives understanding?

APPLICATION

- ☐ Parables are simple stories through which God reveals profound truth. Humble yourself when you don't understand, when you don't really like what you hear, and ask God to give you insight and understanding.
- ☐ When you have doubts and questions, don't turn away from God. Turn to Him.



WHAT IS GOD TRYING TO TELL US? A STUDY OF THE PARABLES OF JESUS

STUDY COMPANION FOR SESSION 2—THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN & THE KINGDOM OF GOD

"The kingdom of God is the reign of God through Christ in the lives of persons as evidenced by His activity in, through, and around them. The kingdom was prophesied in the Old Testament, pictured in Israel, proclaimed by John the Baptist, inaugurated by Christ during His public ministry on earth, extended in the lives of believers through the church in the present age, and will be consummated by Christ when He returns to earth to rule with His saints." –Gene Mims

KEY SCRIPTURES

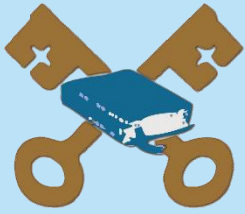
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 23:22 | <input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 4:12-17 | <input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 13:31-33 |
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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ☐ Is there a difference between the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God?
- ☐ Is God's Kingdom still to come on the earth or is it already here?
- ☐ What is the central point of the Parables of the Mustard Seed and the Yeast (Matthew 13:31-33)?
- ☐ What is the central point of the Parable of the Weeds and the Parable of the Net (Matthew 13:24-30, 47-50)?

APPLICATION

- ☐ In order to enter the Kingdom of God, we must allow Him to be King over us. Let God be God! Stop telling God how to run His world. Praise Him whether He does things the way you want or not.
- ☐ God is a powerful King and He WILL make His power known in this world. Approach Him with the reverence He deserves as King over all.
- ☐ The Kingdom has always been, the Kingdom is now, and yet the Kingdom is still yet to come! Ask God to help you understand it, and in the meantime, believe it!



WHAT IS GOD TRYING TO TELL US? A STUDY OF THE PARABLES OF JESUS

STUDY COMPANION FOR SESSION 3—THE KINGDOM IS AVAILABLE TO ALL

KEY SCRIPTURES

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Luke 14:1-6, 7-14 | <input type="checkbox"/> Romans 1:16-17 | <input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 20:1-16 |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Luke 17:20-25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Deuteronomy 32:21 | <input type="checkbox"/> Luke 23:39-43 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> John 2:23 | <input type="checkbox"/> Romans 11:1-6, 25-26a | <input type="checkbox"/> Luke 13:6-9 |
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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

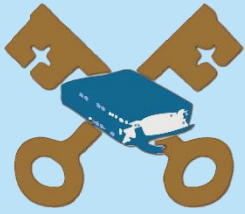
- ☐ How does Jim paraphrase what Jesus says in response to the man who speaks in Luke 14:15, via the Parable of the Great Banquet (Luke 14:15-24)? What was the central lesson that Jesus was teaching through this parable?

- ☐ What is the central point of the Parables of the Workers in the Vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16)?

- ☐ Since God is able to save people at the last moment, does that mean that you can or should take your whole life to decide whether to follow Him?

APPLICATION

- ☐ Don't get good at tuning the Spirit of God out! The Jews knew that Jesus was talking about them in His parables, and still, they didn't repent (Matthew 21:33-46). Don't be like them. Instead, when you are pricked in your conscience, when the Spirit of God speaks to you, respond immediately!
- ☐ If you are in the Kingdom of God, it's not because you earned it. It's because of Jesus. I KNOW I'm going to heaven. That confidence has nothing to do with what I've done on earth, but everything to do with what Christ has done on my behalf and the fact that I have placed my faith in Him alone. Can you say the same?



WHAT IS GOD TRYING TO TELL US? A STUDY OF THE PARABLES OF JESUS

STUDY COMPANION FOR SESSION 4—THE HEART OF GOD TOWARDS THE WORLD

KEY SCRIPTURES

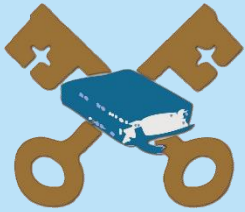
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Ezekiel 18:23, 32 | <input type="checkbox"/> Luke 18:9-14 | <input type="checkbox"/> Luke 15:11-32 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ezekiel 33:11 | <input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 23:13, 15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 9:9-13 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 23:37-39 | <input type="checkbox"/> Luke 15:1-7 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 51:16-17 |

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ☐ What is God's heart towards the world?
- ☐ The Bible describes serious consequences for those who cause others, especially little children, to sin (Matthew 18:10-14, 1-9). What is a sin that you might not realize you are modeling to the children around you?
- ☐ What does Jesus mean in the Parable of the Lost Sheep when He says that the ninety-nine 'didn't go astray' or 'don't need repentance' (Matthew 18:10-14, Luke 15:1-7)?
- ☐ In the Parable of the Prodigal Son/the Loving Father (Luke 15:11-32), Jesus goes more in depth on the lesson of God's concern for the lost that He taught through the Parables of the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin (Luke 15:1-10). What is the deeper point that was made in this story?

APPLICATION

- ☐ As you learn more about God's heart towards the world, remember that you need Jesus just as much as the lost! Pray that He would give you His same heart, that you would desire strongly for all to come to know Him. Then live in a way that points people to Him!
- ☐ God is a God of mercy and compassion, but He is also holy, and therefore He cannot excuse sin. That's why He provided Jesus as a sacrifice sufficient for all our sins. Don't soften the Gospel to make it palatable. Be honest with people about their need for salvation, then leave it to the Holy Spirit to lead people to repentance.



WHAT IS GOD TRYING TO TELL US? A STUDY OF THE PARABLES OF JESUS

STUDY COMPANION FOR SESSION 5—CLOSE TO THE KINGDOM IS NOT ENOUGH

KEY SCRIPTURES

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|---|---|--|
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 22:34-40 | <input type="checkbox"/> Colossians 1:23 | <input type="checkbox"/> Hebrews 3:1-19 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mark 12:18-34 | <input type="checkbox"/> Romans 3:9-10, 19-26 | <input type="checkbox"/> Hebrews 6:1-9 |

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ☐ The lawyer who asked Jesus how to inherit eternal life understood the basics of the Gospel, but his next question revealed his true heart. What did he mean when he asked “Who is my neighbor?” and why did Jesus answer his question with the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)?

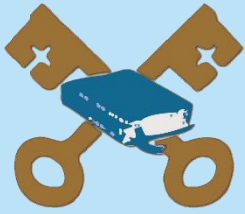
- ☐ Jesus told the scribe who spoke to Him about the Greatest Commandment that he was not far from the kingdom of God (Mark 12:18-34). What was he missing that kept him out of the Kingdom of God?

- ☐ The way that salvation is accomplished has been the same throughout all of history, the method has not changed! How has God decreed that salvation must be received? What has remained the same, no matter the time in history?

- ☐ It’s important that we both listen to good teaching and know the Scriptures and check them for ourselves. The Bible says that when Jesus gives you His Spirit, you are sealed and eternally secure. What are some Scriptures that back this up?
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APPLICATION

- ☐ Do not miss out on an eternity with God because you are trusting in anything other than Jesus, like your church membership or your baptism, to save you. There is a difference between wondering if you’re saved and knowing that you’re lost. Is the Holy Spirit revealing to you today that you are lost and prompting you to give your life to Jesus? Don’t delay. Close to salvation is not enough. Surrender your life to God today by placing your faith in Jesus alone, in His life, death, and resurrection, to save you and cleanse you of your sin. Enter the Kingdom today!



WHAT IS GOD TRYING TO TELL US? A STUDY OF THE PARABLES OF JESUS

STUDY COMPANION FOR SESSION 6—DOES YOUR LIFE REFLECT SALVATION?

KEY SCRIPTURES

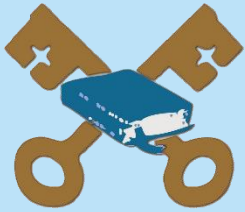
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|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 18:21-35 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Corinthians 11:18-19 | <input type="checkbox"/> Luke 12:13-21 |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 John 4:7-21 | <input type="checkbox"/> Luke 12:35-46 | <input type="checkbox"/> Luke 16:1-13 |

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ☐ The parables we will study in these last two sessions have an overarching point in common. What is that main point?
- ☐ What are some ways that we as believers should look different from the rest of the world, according to the parables we studied today?
- ☐ The Bible says that where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. If you really want to have a heart for God, what can you do to grow that in yourself?
- ☐ The Parable of the Dishonest Manager is a confusing one (Luke 16:1-13). We know Jesus wasn't commending a man for cheating his master, so what was Jesus actually saying when He commended the man in this story?

APPLICATION

- ☐ Consider how much you have been forgiven by God, and be willing to give your fellow man the same grace and forgiveness! Those who realize that they have been forgiven much, love much! If you can't forgive the people around you, you don't have Christ's love in you.
- ☐ There will be reward for those who have been faithful to do as God commands, both in this life and in the life to come (Luke 12:35-46). Live in such a way that no matter when your Master returns, you will be ready, excited, and assured of your reward!



WHAT IS GOD TRYING TO TELL US? A STUDY OF THE PARABLES OF JESUS

STUDY COMPANION FOR SESSION 7—OUR HEARTS TOWARDS GOD

KEY SCRIPTURES

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|---|---|---|
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 13:44 | <input type="checkbox"/> Romans 8:31-39 | <input type="checkbox"/> Luke 17:7-10 |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Luke 14:25-33 | <input type="checkbox"/> Luke 18:1-8 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Corinthians 11:25-26 |

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ☐ This entire series has been intended to encourage you to continue in a life of full surrender to Christ. What specifically in your life is God calling you to surrender to Him today? What does it mean to you to live a life of surrender and following Jesus (Luke 14:25-33)?
 - Personal reflection:

- ☐ Just before Jesus taught the parable of the bold neighbor, his disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray (Luke 11:1-13). What did the way they asked reveal about the disciples' attitude towards God, and what does the parable teach us about God?

- ☐ The Parable of the Persistent Widow might seem somewhat similar to the parable of the bold neighbor (Luke 18:1-8). But God is not an unjust judge! What does this contrast parable teach us about God and how we should approach Him?

- ☐ The last two parables that we will cover seem to contradict one another. Why does one parable describe servants being served by the Master (Luke 12:35-37), while the other says that servants should not expect to be served (Luke 17:7-10)?

APPLICATION

- ☐ In order to endure the trials of this life, and to learn to fully surrender to God, we must understand the depth of His love for us, and how emphatically He is for us!
- ☐ Pray boldly, but don't take shameless prayer to the unbiblical realm where you think that if you believe it enough, God has to do it. Instead, follow Jesus' example, and make your request, but say "Yet not my will, but yours be done" (Luke 22:42).
- ☐ Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but let yourself be transformed by God so that you trust Him no matter how He decides to direct your life!