

Study Guide

March 2- 7

DAILEY PRAYER: *Dear God, thank You for your forgiveness. Now I am ready and willing to submit to any and all changes You want to make in my life. By Your grace, I am ready to face it and deal with the defects one by one. I have defects that have hurt me and defects that have hurt others. I've lived with some of these defects for so long that they have become a part of who I am. I have tried by my own power to fight against my defects and have failed over and over. I now ask by Your power and the power of Your Holy Spirit that you transform my mind, my heart, and my actions. I need Your help in knowing where to start. I cannot handle all my defects at once. I can only face them one at a time. Show me, Lord, where should I begin? Help me as I look over my inventory list. Which character defect is the most damaging to my life? Where do I need to start? I am ready to follow Your lead. Amen.*

Monday, March 2 –“Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires.” (Matthew 5:6) Matthew emphasizes yearning for God's righteousness more than for food and drink, perhaps also implying that those who hunger physically are in a better position to begin to value God more than food. Take time to read a different translation of this passage. In this context hungering for *righteousness* probably includes yearning for God's justice, for his vindication of the oppressed. The context also implies that it includes yearning to do God's will. This passage reflects biblical images of passion for God, longing for him more than for daily food or drink. God and his Word should be the ultimate object of our longing.

Tuesday, March 3 – Read John 8: 44-45. Jesus was addressing the Jewish leaders in this chapter. The attitudes and actions of these leaders clearly identified them as followers of Satan. They may not have been conscious of this, but their hatred of truth, their lies, and their murderous intentions indicated how much control the Devil had over them. They were his tools in carrying out his plans; they spoke the very same language of lies. Satan still uses people to obstruct God's work (Genesis 4:8; Romans 5:12; 1 John 3:12). And he will use people to discourage one and try to keep you from submitting to the change God wants to make in your life.

Wednesday, March 4 – As we voluntarily submit to every change God wants to make in our lives, we need to realize He will reveal to us his will. Read Romans 12:2. How do we know his will? By honoring and obeying him, and by refusing to be influenced by societal pressures. As we replace our old way of thinking and adopt an entirely new

perspective – from God’s point of view – we’ll begin to recognize God’s will more and more. We’ll find it easier to hear his voice in a variety of situations. God may not dictate the details of our lives (such as what color of clothes to wear), but he will give us spiritual principles for everyday decisions. Knowing God’s will results from doing his will as revealed in Scripture.

Thursday, March 5 – Read Proverbs 17:24. While there is something to be said for having big dreams, this proverb points out the folly of chasing fantasies (having eyes that “wander to the end of the earth,” see Proverbs 12:11). How much better to align your goals with God’s, being the kind of person he wants you to be! Such goals (wisdom, honesty, patience and love) may not seem exciting, but they will determine your eternal future. Take time to think about your dreams and goals, and make sure they cover the really important areas of life. Then think of submitting to God, one defect at a time.

Friday, March 6 – Read Matthew 6:34. Planning for tomorrow is time well spent, worrying about tomorrow is time wasted. Sometimes it’s difficult to tell the difference. Careful planning is thinking ahead about goals, steps and schedules, and trusting in God’s guidance. When done well, planning can help alleviate worry. Worriers, by contrast, are consumed by fear and find it difficult to trust God. They let their plans interfere with their relationship with God. Don’t let worries about tomorrow affect your relationship with God today - celebrate today.

Saturday, March 7 – Read Philippians 1:6. Do you sometimes feel as though you aren’t making progress in your spiritual life? When God starts a project, he completes it! As with the Philippians, God will help you grow in grace until he has completed his work in your life. When you are discouraged, remember that God won’t give up on you. He promises to finish the work he has begun. When you feel incomplete, unfinished, or distressed by your shortcomings, remember God’s promise and provision. Don’t let your present condition rob you of the joy of knowing Christ or keep you from growing closer to him. Remember; focus on progress, not perfection.