

# Mission

Week 6

**This week in summary**

<u>Mission</u>		<u>WEEK 6</u>
Reversing values	<i>Matt 19-20</i>	<i>Day 1</i>
The Image of God	<i>Matt 21-22</i>	<i>Day 2</i>
Knowing my neighbors	<i>Matt 23</i>	<i>Day 3</i>
While Jesus is away	<i>Matt 24</i>	<i>Day 4</i>
My Gifts	<i>Matt 25</i>	<i>Day 5</i>

**Day 1**

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**Reversing the World's Values****A summary of Matthew 19-23**

Jesus turns everything upside down. Values, Wealth, Right, Advancement, Success, Power, all the things we strive for in life, all of it upside down. The First will be last and the Last will be first. Jesus turns attention from the powerful people to the powerless people. Jesus looks at the ones that we overlook.

He turned money upside down and said it is hard to enter the Kingdom of heaven if you are wealthy.

He turned religion upside down declaring that prostitutes and traitors will enter the kingdom before the religious leaders.

In his day every leader understood the privilege of their position was to be served. Jesus said he came to serve, not to be served.

Jesus stood against those who use power to oppress people. Perhaps when Jesus looked into the faces of the oppressed he recognized the image of the God who made them and loves them.

Jesus takes action that he knew would lead to his death. He throws out the powerful and gives to the destitute.

The temple was built to be a place where people could come to be close to God. Unfortunately the administrators of the temple saw an opportunity for profiteering and had long ago turned it into an extortion racket. Jesus threw them out, enough is enough! How dare they use God as a way to extort people. This move quickly leads to his assassination. But it seems that Jesus intended to provoke their deadly response. If I'm going to get killed might as well go out lifting up the people that God loves so much.

**Reading Today:** Matthew 19-20

10-15 minutes

Day 2

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## The Image of God

The Stradivarius Violins are 300 year old Italian violins and considered the greatest violins ever created. No one since the days of Antonio Stradivari has been able to reproduce the craftsmanship and sound quality of these violins. They have sold at auctions for 1-3 million dollars. They can only be found in museums, private collections of the wealthy and in the hands of the greatest musicians of our day. What a tragedy it would be to find a Stradivarius Violin being used to prop up the leg of a kitchen table!

There is a dignity and respect that goes with being human. We are creatures of immense worth and value far beyond any masterpiece violin. It is tragic to find humanity treated below our value. Worse is to find a human being embrace the lie and behave as though they have so little value.

You are the object of desire in the eyes of the High King of Creation. God loves you. This is the source of your worth, not accomplishment or entitlement. It isn't the quality of being human that makes you worthy. Your value comes from God's estimation of your worth. Your worth is beyond measure. His desire for you is uncontainable. Unbelief does not see this value because it comes from God.

Behavior follows belief. When we believe we must accomplish to be valuable then we will measure ourselves and others by that destructive scale. But if our worth comes from God and there is nothing we can do to diminish his love for us. Not just me but everyone I see family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, acquaintances, store clerks, and laborers. Even the smallest least substantial or most crippled life is a person of immense worth.

Seeing God’s love for us compels us to live as a child of the King. Seeing God’s love for others compels us to treat others with the same immense dignity.

Through Christ we claim our value, recognizing that all of humanity is created in his image. We become adopted children of God through Jesus the “firstborn” child of God.

We bear his image and his love.

List three examples of humanity behaving below its God ascribed value:

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**Reading Today:** Matthew 21-22

10-15 minutes

Day 3

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## Knowing my Neighbors

There's a story Jesus tells about a son who rejects his family and leaves home. The father neglects his other duties and social obligations because nothing is more important to him than reconciling with his son. As with most of his stories Jesus is making a point to help us better understand God. In his story the father who represents God spends his days personally watching the road, anticipating the moment his child returns.

This week get to know your neighbors. Remember God loves them as his children. As children of the King of the universe they are VIPs, but then again so are you.

You can be a bridge between your neighbor and God. They may be indifferent to God, hostile towards Him or they may be living in step with God. No matter where they are on life's journey, there is room for growth and greater trust in God. There is a reason God put them in your life and they may be a source of growth for your faith.

### Action step:

Time to get better acquainted. At a minimum get to know their name. Try learning about their family history. If you need some ice breaker suggestions try the following:

- Prepare an interesting story
- Tell a joke or two
- Ask a mix of casual and interested questions
- Remember It's ok to be a little odd
- Don't bet the farm on a single meeting
- Use your best judgment as you get to know your neighbor.

**Reading Today:** Matthew 23

10-15 minutes

Day 4

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## What to do while I'm away...

### A summary of Matthew 24-25

This section is one of the most confusing sections in the Bible. On the surface Jesus is talking about a coming cataclysm and some all-around scary stuff.

Before this section Jesus prepared his disciples to take over leadership after he leaves (Matt 14-18). In the events leading up to this speech Jesus demonstrated what they are to do while he is away (Matt 19-23). Now it's time to talk about his absence. I'm going away and while I'm gone take care of the powerless.

His disciples ask three questions about future events. Jesus answered their questions, but his answers are very complicated. But he quickly turns the discussion from *when* this will happen to *what* they should do in the meantime. Be ready! Use your resources to continue the mission. The last story of sheep and goats; righteous and unrighteous summarizes this speech and gives a beautiful answer to this confusion.

Humbly, I'd like to offer this two line summary of Matt 24-25

**Disciples:** When will we see you again?

**Jesus:** When you look in the face of the struggling you will see me again.

This leaves a question in your hands, dear reader. Jesus looked in the face of the destitute and saw worth, value and dignity - the image of God. He loved them and gave all he had. When you look in the face of the poor, hungry, thirsty, naked, homeless or sick - what will *you* do?

**Reading Today:** Matthew 24

10-15 minutes

Day 5

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## **My Life Map**

See the Lifemap activity in the appendix

Come to study group today for your Life map.

**Reading Today:** Matthew 25

10-15 minutes