

Family Worship Guide – Week 23

MEMORIZE

Matthew 23:12 – “Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”

READ

Read Matthew 23:1-39.

This passage is especially important for us to read and understand because we see a side of Jesus that we do not often see. After several confrontations with the religious leaders of his day, Jesus finally makes clear all that he has against them. His primary accusation is that they say one thing and do another: hypocrisy.

But it is deeper even than that. Jesus exposes to them and to everyone listening that God is concerned with why things are done as well as whether things are done. He has given us a way of life to follow, yet if we live a certain way and are doing it only for the praise of those around us, it is all worthless.

Walk through each one of Jesus’ statements together as a family and think through how they might apply to your lives. Are you seeking obedience to God for his sake, or for your own glory?

Jesus’ closing words are powerful. He tells them that he has wanted to gather them to himself so many times but they have been unwilling. The rebellion of man against God is on display. Talk together as a family about whether or not you have been gathered into the arms of God. If not, run to him while time remains, for Jesus makes this clear: there will not always be time to run into his grace and mercy.

Questions:

What does this passage teach us about God? What does this passage teach us about man?

Are there any commands that we need to obey in this passage? Are there any promises that we can hope in?

What sticks out to you in this passage? What is your favorite part? What is your least favorite part? What part of Jesus’ words bring the most joy to you?

Bottom Line: Seek your approval from God, not man. Obey God for your joy and His glory, not for your joy and your glory.

SING

This week we will sing "The Power of the Cross" written by Keith Getty and Stewart Townend. In Matthew 23 Jesus rebukes the Pharisees for putting merit in good works and looking good on the outside while being sinful on the inside. The truth is that works and good cannot save us and atone for our sins. This song is a helpful reminder that Jesus has paid the debt for our sins. The chorus says,

"This the power of the cross
Christ became sin for us
Took the blame, bore the wrath
We stand forgiven at the cross"

That is an amazing truth! Because we have been forgiven through Christ’s work on the cross, we are new creations. We should want our actions to reflect that fact and honor our Savior for the sake of his glory and not the approval of man. As we sing, let’s celebrate our salvation and rejoice knowing that Christ has made us new.

Visit our website for a link to this song: www.brookhills.org/gathering/this_week.html.

SUGGESTIONS

These suggestions were created by the age-group ministry leaders as a way to help parents better communicate the biblical truths discussed in the Family Worship Guide. These suggestions are intended to help parents facilitate God-centered discussions with their children. Parents should prayerfully use these suggestions, and any other means necessary, to help their children discover the truths of God’s word and worship him together.

Preschool

- Before you begin gather some cheerios, crayons or markers, and the attached activity sheet. These materials will help illustrate that obeying our glorious God brings him joy and our obedience brings us joy too.
- Read Matthew 23: 39b with your preschooler. “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.”
- Explain to your preschooler that God created them and that he loves them very much. As our creator, God is in charge over everything. God is great! He is greater and more important than anything. When we obey God we show God that we care about his greatness and how important he is to us. Jesus showed us that he cared about the greatness of God the Father. He cared most about God’s glory and not about pleasing man. When we obey God it pleases God and makes God happy. Obeying God brings us joy and happiness, too. Just like the Bible says in Matthew 23: 39b, “those who come in the name of the Lord are blessed.”
- Decorate your activity sheet. Have your preschooler glue the cheerios onto the letter “O” in the words **O**bey, **G**od, and **J**oy. Then, let them color the rest of the activity sheet.
- Questions: Do you think God wants us to obey him? Yes, it pleases God and makes him happy. Will obeying God make us happy, too? Yes, obeying God brings us joy, too.
- Conclude by praying and asking God to help us to obey him because he is great.

Children

- Read: Matthew 23:1-12 together.
- Ask: Have you ever heard someone be called a “show-off”? What does it mean to be a show-off? Is it a good thing to be called?
- Explain: When we show off we are calling attention to ourselves. We are hoping that others will notice us. We want others to think we are special.
- Discuss: In this scripture Jesus calls a group of religious leaders show-offs. He doesn’t use those words, but that’s what he is saying. He tells them they are doing good things in front of other people, so that people will see them and treat them as special. Jesus tells us that we should live humbly. That means doing good things for God’s eyes only and not so our friends, classmates, teammates, etc. will notice us and think we are special. Jesus reminds us that in God’s eyes we are no more or less important than others.
- Pray that God would help you avoid the temptation to show off. Pray for a humble spirit. Ask God to empower you to do good things in his name because they are the right things to do and not because someone else is watching.

Students

- The scribes and Pharisees knew much about God’s Law. Yet for all of their knowledge, Jesus strongly rebuked them for their hypocritical actions.
 - How is it possible for people to know the Scriptures and still insult God with their lifestyle?
 - Describe a time in your life when your actions did not match what you say you believe.
 - How did God make you aware of this?
 - How did God lead you to change?
- Jesus rebukes those who do good works for the praise of men. He explains that there is no reward in this type of behavior (Mat. 6).
 - Why is it wrong to seek your own glory?
 - Practically, what does it look like to seek the praise of God?
- According to Jesus, the scribes and Pharisees tried to look good on the outside but were full of sin on the inside.
 - Why is outward obedience not enough?
 - Why is Jesus so concerned with the condition of a person’s heart?
- Jesus says in Matthew 5:20, “For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” This would be extremely heavy news for those trying to reach Heaven through their works.
 - How do the words of Jesus point us toward the gospel?
 - How would you explain the good news of the Gospel to a friend trying to work his or her way to God?



God

Obey

Joy