

Through the Bible in 24 Months



WEEK 6 OF 104

Hearing and Doing

Week 6 of 104 · 6% of the way through the Bible

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

General Old Testament	Genesis 37-43
Wisdom Literature	Proverbs 6:20-7:27
Gospels	Matthew 7-8:13
General New Testament	Acts 7:1-53

THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

This week you will watch people hear from God and then decide what to do about it. Ten brothers hear a boy describe two dreams and decide to end him instead of believing him. A young man in Proverbs has his father's warning in his ears and takes the street corner anyway, at twilight, for no reason he could defend. Jesus finishes the greatest sermon ever preached by describing two men who heard exactly the same words, and the only difference between the house that stood and the house that fell was whether the hearing turned into doing. And in a courtroom in Jerusalem, Stephen tells a nation two thousand years of its own history and says, gently and then not gently, that they have been hearing God and resisting Him the whole time.

How to use this guide: Read all four passages during the week. Your teacher will take up two of them in class, one in each session. For the other two, work through the "Extended Class Discussion or Self-Study" questions on your own and write your answers in the space provided.

GENERAL OLD TESTAMENT Genesis 37-43

The Dreamer in the Pit

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

A favored son gets a beautiful coat and two dreams, and his brothers hate him for both. They throw him in a dry cistern, sell him to passing traders for twenty pieces of silver, and hand their father a bloody garment. The story then pauses for the sordid account of Judah and Tamar before following Joseph into Potiphar's house, into prison, past a cupbearer who forgets him, and finally into Pharaoh's court. Seven years of plenty end, a famine begins, and ten guilty men bow down in front of a brother they do not recognize.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Genesis 39 is the record of a man who had every reason to think God had forgotten him. Watch for the phrase that keeps returning in 39:2, 21, and 23. How does Moses want you to read Joseph's slavery and imprisonment, and what does that suggest about a hard season you cannot explain?

2. Genesis 38 interrupts the Joseph story with Judah and Tamar, an account of broken promises, a widow treated unjustly, and a man caught by his own hypocrisy. Why is that chapter placed right here, and what does Matthew 1:3 eventually do with those names?
3. Joseph ran from Potiphar's wife and asked, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (39:9). Notice whom he named as the injured party. Where do you need a sentence prepared in advance like that one, and what would running actually look like in your situation?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Trace the coat, the pit, the twenty pieces of silver, and the bloodied garment through chapter 37. Then count the deceptions in chapters 37 through 39 and note who is deceived each time.
2. Read Genesis 50:20 beside Romans 8:28. The brothers meant evil and God meant good. Explain the difference between saying God caused their sin and saying God overruled it, and why that difference matters.
3. List every position Joseph is placed in through chapters 39 through 41, from slave to prisoner to administrator, and note what happens to the work in front of him in each one.
4. Genesis 42:21–22 records what the brothers say to each other under pressure, twenty years after the fact. What does their conversation tell you about a guilt that was never confessed and never forgiven?
5. Joseph interpreted a cupbearer's dream and then sat in a cell two more years because the man forgot him. Name the place where you are currently waiting and feeling forgotten, and decide what faithfulness will look like there this week, before anything changes.

WISDOM LITERATURE Proverbs 6:20–7:27

A Lamp on a Dark Street

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

A father tells his son to tie his instruction around his neck and keep it close, because a commandment is a lamp and reproof is the way of life. Then come two questions nobody can answer honestly and still argue: can a man carry fire in his lap without burning his clothes, or walk on coals without scorching his feet? Chapter 7 turns the

warning into a scene. Watching through a window at twilight, the father sees a young man with no sense turn down the wrong street, and a woman comes out to meet him with a speech that runs nine verses.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Proverbs 6:27–29 asks two questions everyone already knows the answer to. Read them out loud. Why do we keep quietly believing we will be the exception, and what has to happen in a person before the obvious becomes obvious again?
2. Read 7:6–23 as the scene it is, and notice the details: the hour of the day, the direction he walks, the corner he chooses, and every argument she makes. At what point in that sequence could this have been stopped, and who was in a position to stop it?
3. Verse 6:23 says a commandment is a lamp and reproof is the way of life. In our homes, whose voice is functioning as that lamp for our children, and what are we actually doing this year to make sure the loudest voice in their ears is not the one from chapter 7?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. List everything the father tells the son to do with his instruction in 6:20–22, and note the three times of day or situations in which he says it will be with him.
2. Proverbs 6:30–35 sets a thief beside an adulterer. Trace the comparison point by point. Why does Solomon say the adulterer's case is the worse of the two?
3. Compare the woman's speech in 7:14–20 with the serpent's words in Genesis 3:1–5 and with the categories in 1 John 2:16. What methods do the two speeches share?
4. Trace the young man's route in 7:6–9 and list every choice he made before he ever met her. Notice that not one of those choices, taken by itself, looked like sin.
5. Solomon says her house is the way to the grave (7:27). Write out, in one sentence, exactly what you will say to yourself at the moment of temptation this week, memorize it, and say it out loud to one person who will hold you to it.

Two Gates, Two Houses

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

The sermon ends with a series of pairs that will not let a listener stay neutral: a speck and a plank, a narrow gate and a wide one, good trees and bad, people who say Lord and people who do the will of the Father, a house on rock and a house on sand. In between are the great promises about asking, seeking, and knocking, and the rule that sums up the Law and the Prophets. Then Jesus comes down the mountain and two very different people ask Him for help.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. “Judge not” may be the most quoted and least understood sentence in the Bible. Read 7:1–5 in full, then read 7:6, 7:15–20, and John 7:24. What is Jesus forbidding here, and what is He plainly requiring elsewhere?
2. In 7:21–23 Jesus describes people who prophesied, cast out demons, and did many wonders in His name, and He tells them He never knew them. That ought to unsettle us. What made the difference between them and the people who enter, and how does a person make sure he is not in the first group?
3. The centurion was a Gentile, a soldier, and an outsider, and Jesus said He had not found faith like his in all Israel (8:10). Look at what the man understood about authority. Where would that kind of confidence change the way you pray this week?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. List the contrasting pairs in 7:13–27: two gates, two ways, two trees, two claims, two builders. In each pair, note what the two have in common as well as what separates them.
 2. Compare Matthew 7:7–11 with James 4:2–3 and 1 John 5:14–15. Does “ask and it will be given to you” mean God grants every request? State your answer and your reasons from all three passages.
 3. In 7:24–27 both men hear the same words and both houses meet the same storm. Write down the one difference between them, then read James 1:22–25 and note the picture James uses for the same failure.
 4. The leper says, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean” (8:2). Note carefully what Jesus does before He says anything. Why would that particular action matter so much to a man in his condition?
 5. Jesus ends the sermon by saying the difference is doing. Choose one specific command from Matthew 5, 6, or 7 that you have admired for years without obeying, and obey it this week.
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Stephen Tells Their Own Story

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Accused of speaking against the temple and the Law, Stephen answers with a history lesson, and it is the longest speech in Acts. He walks the council through Abraham in Mesopotamia, Joseph sold into Egypt by his brothers, Moses rejected by his own people and then sent back as their deliverer, the tabernacle built to a pattern, and Solomon's temple with Isaiah's reminder that the Most High does not dwell in houses made with hands. Then, with the story finished, Stephen turns and applies it, and the room changes.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Stephen was charged with speaking against the temple and the Law. Follow his answer and notice where God met Abraham, Joseph, and Moses. What is he demonstrating about where God can be found and worshiped?
2. Stephen tells two stories with the same shape: a deliverer rejected by his brothers the first time and vindicated the second. Read 7:9–10, then 7:23–35, and then 7:51–52. What is he saying about Jesus long before he ever says the name?
3. Stephen ends with, “You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you” (7:51). We resist God in quieter ways than stoning a preacher. Where have you been resisting something you already know God has said?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Make a list of every person Stephen names from Abraham to Solomon, and note for each one where he was when God worked in his life. How many of those places are outside the land of Israel?
2. Acts 7:37 quotes Deuteronomy 18:15 about a Prophet like Moses. Compare it with Acts 3:22–23 and Hebrews 1:1–2. Why does that one Old Testament promise keep appearing in apostolic preaching?
3. Acts 7:44–50 traces the tabernacle and the temple and then quotes Isaiah 66:1–2. Follow the argument, then read John 4:21–24. Where and how is God worshiped now?
4. Stephen says in 7:53 that they received the law by the direction of angels and did not keep it. Read Galatians 3:19 and Hebrews 2:2, and explain what role the Law is playing in Stephen's charge against them.
5. Stephen, under arrest and on trial, preached the whole Old Testament from memory. Choose one Old Testament book you have never read carefully, and read the first ten chapters of it this week.

NEXT WEEK'S READING: Genesis 44-50 · Proverbs 8 · Matthew 8:14-9:8 · Acts 7:54-8:40

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