

Through the Bible in 24 Months



WEEK 10 OF 104

Burdens and Rest

Week 10 of 104 • 10% of the way through the Bible

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

General Old Testament	Exodus 17-23
Wisdom Literature	Proverbs 12
Gospels	Matthew 11:1-12:8
General New Testament	Acts 10:34-11:18

THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

There is a kind of tired that sleep does not touch. Moses knows it. His father in law watches him judge Israel from morning until evening and tells him flatly that he is going to wear out, because the thing is too heavy for one man. Israel knows it too, standing at the foot of a mountain that is smoking and shaking, begging Moses to go up in their place. Proverbs names it in a single line: anxiety in a man's heart weighs it down. And then, in Galilee, a carpenter says the sentence this whole week has been leaning toward, come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Before the week is out, a Roman soldier's household discovers that the invitation was never as narrow as anyone had assumed.

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 Exodus 17-23

The Mountain That Shook

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Israel is thirsty again, and God brings water out of a rock. Amalek attacks, and the battle turns on whether Moses can keep his hands up. Then Jethro arrives, watches Moses work himself to exhaustion, and tells him to share the load. In chapter 19 they reach Sinai, and everything changes: three days of preparation, a boundary around the mountain, thunder, smoke, and a trumpet growing louder. God speaks ten words, the people back away in terror, and the covenant code begins.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Exodus 19:4-6 is God's offer before a single commandment is given. Trace what He says He has already done for them, and then what He asks of them. Why does that order matter for how we understand obedience?
2. At the foot of the mountain the people beg Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die" (20:19). What were they right about, and what were they missing? Read Hebrews 12:18-24 before you answer.

3. Jethro tells Moses that he will wear himself out because the work is too heavy for one man (18:18). Where are you doing alone what God intended to be shared, and who could you actually hand a piece of it to this week?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Write out the Ten Commandments in order (20:1–17) and mark which ones govern our relationship with God and which govern our relationship with people. Where exactly does the list turn?
2. Read Colossians 2:14–17 and Hebrews 8:6–13. Which nine of the Ten Commandments are repeated as binding on Christians in the New Testament, and which one is never repeated?
3. Exodus 21 through 23 contains laws that sound strange to a modern ear. Choose three of them and work out what each one was protecting and from whom.
4. During the battle with Amalek, Aaron and Hur held up Moses' hands until sundown (17:12). Name the person who has held up your hands, and name the person whose hands you are currently holding up.
5. Exodus 23:4–5 requires an Israelite to return a straying ox belonging to his enemy and to help lift the load of a donkey owned by a man who hates him. Name your Exodus 23:4 person, and settle on one concrete kindness you will do for him this week.

WISDOM LITERATURE Proverbs 12

Roots That Hold

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Solomon opens with a jolt: love correction and you love knowledge, hate correction and you are simply stupid. From there the chapter moves through a household and a lifetime. An excellent wife is a crown. The root of the righteous cannot be moved. Words can pierce like a sword or heal like medicine. Anxiety weighs a heart down until somebody says a good word. Diligent hands end up in charge, and lazy hands end up serving. The last verse puts life at the end of the way of righteousness.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Proverbs 12:1 says that the one who hates correction is stupid, which is unusually blunt even for Solomon. Why would he put teachability at the very head of the chapter, ahead of every other trait he names?

2. Verse 18 sets rash words that stab like a sword next to the tongue of the wise that brings healing. Think honestly about the last week inside your own house. Which of those two did your family hear more of, and what made the difference?
3. Proverbs 12:25 says anxiety in a man's heart weighs it down, but a good word makes it glad. Who in this congregation is carrying something heavy right now, and what would a genuinely good word look like for that person rather than a polite one?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Trace every verse in this chapter that deals with truth or lying (verses 5, 6, 17, 19, 20, 22). What picture of God's own character emerges from them taken together?
2. Proverbs 12:10 says a righteous man regards the life of his animal. Read Deuteronomy 25:4 and 1 Corinthians 9:9–10, and consider what a man's treatment of those beneath him reveals about him.
3. Verses 4, 7, and 12 use images of a house and a root. List what this chapter says makes a household stand and what makes one fall.
4. Proverbs 12:16 says a fool's wrath is known at once while a prudent man covers shame. Describe the difference between covering shame and simply being dishonest about what you feel.
5. Verse 25 hands you an assignment. Choose one person, and this week say or send a good word that is specific, true, and about them rather than about you.

GOSPELS Matthew 11:1–12:8

The Easy Yoke

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

John the Baptist is in Herod's prison, and he sends word asking whether Jesus is really the One. Jesus answers with a list of what is happening, then turns to the crowd and pays John the highest compliment anyone ever received. He reproaches three cities that saw more miracles than anyone and repented anyway, thanks the Father for revealing things to babies, and issues the most gracious invitation in Scripture. Then His disciples pluck grain on a Sabbath, and the Pharisees are waiting.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. John the Baptist, of all people, sends from prison to ask whether Jesus is the Coming One (11:2–3). Why might a man in that situation begin to doubt what he had once publicly announced, and how does the answer Jesus sends back actually help him?
2. Jesus says that no one born of women is greater than John, and then says the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he (11:11). Given who John was, what has to be true about the kingdom for that sentence to make sense?
3. Jesus offers rest to people who labor and are heavy laden, and in the next breath hands them a yoke (11:28–30). How is that not a contradiction, and which burden are you carrying right now that He never asked you to pick up?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. List the evidences Jesus tells John's disciples to report back (11:4–5), then read Isaiah 35:5–6 and 61:1. Why would that particular list have settled the question for John?
2. Trace the three cities Jesus reproaches in 11:20–24 and the comparison He draws for each one. What does privilege do to a person's accountability?
3. Jesus says these things are hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed to babes (11:25). Read 1 Corinthians 1:18–29 and describe the kind of person God is actually able to teach.
4. In Matthew 12:1–8 Jesus makes three separate arguments in defense of His disciples. Write them out and identify the Old Testament passage standing behind each one.
5. Verse 29 says to learn from Jesus because He is gentle and lowly in heart. Name one relationship in which you have been neither gentle nor lowly, and take one specific step this week to repair it.

GENERAL NEW TESTAMENT Acts 10:34–11:18

God Shows No Partiality

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Peter opens his mouth in a Gentile house and says something no one expected from him: God shows no partiality. He preaches Jesus of Nazareth, anointed, going about doing good, killed on a tree, raised the third

day, seen by chosen witnesses, appointed Judge, and offering remission of sins through His name. Before he can finish, the Holy Spirit falls on the household, the Jewish believers are astonished, and Peter commands them to be baptized. Back in Jerusalem, the brethren want an explanation.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Peter's sermon is remarkably short. Trace what he actually says about Jesus in 10:36–43, and notice what he does not say. What are the irreducible elements of a gospel sermon?
2. The Holy Spirit fell on Cornelius and his household while Peter was still speaking, and Peter then commanded them to be baptized in water (10:44–48). Why was water baptism still necessary after a sign that unmistakable?
3. The first reaction in Jerusalem was not rejoicing but an objection about eating with uncircumcised men (11:2–3). Where do we respond to God's work the way those brethren did, and what finally changed their minds?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Write out the elements of Peter's sermon in 10:34–43 in the order he gives them, then set them beside Acts 2:22–38. What do the two sermons hold in common?
2. Acts 11:15 has Peter comparing this event to what happened "at the beginning." Which event is he pointing back to, and how many times does Scripture actually record the baptism of the Holy Spirit?
3. Peter says God gave them "the like gift" (11:17). Trace what happened, what it proved, and who needed to be convinced by it.
4. Read Acts 11:14 beside Acts 10:48. State in your own words when this household was saved, and what part each step played in getting them there.
5. Peter asks, "Who was I that I could withstand God?" (11:17). Name one place where you are currently resisting something you already know God has said, and end the resistance before this week is out.

NEXT WEEK'S READING: Exodus 24–30 • Proverbs 13 • Matthew 12:9–50 • Acts 11:19–12:25

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