



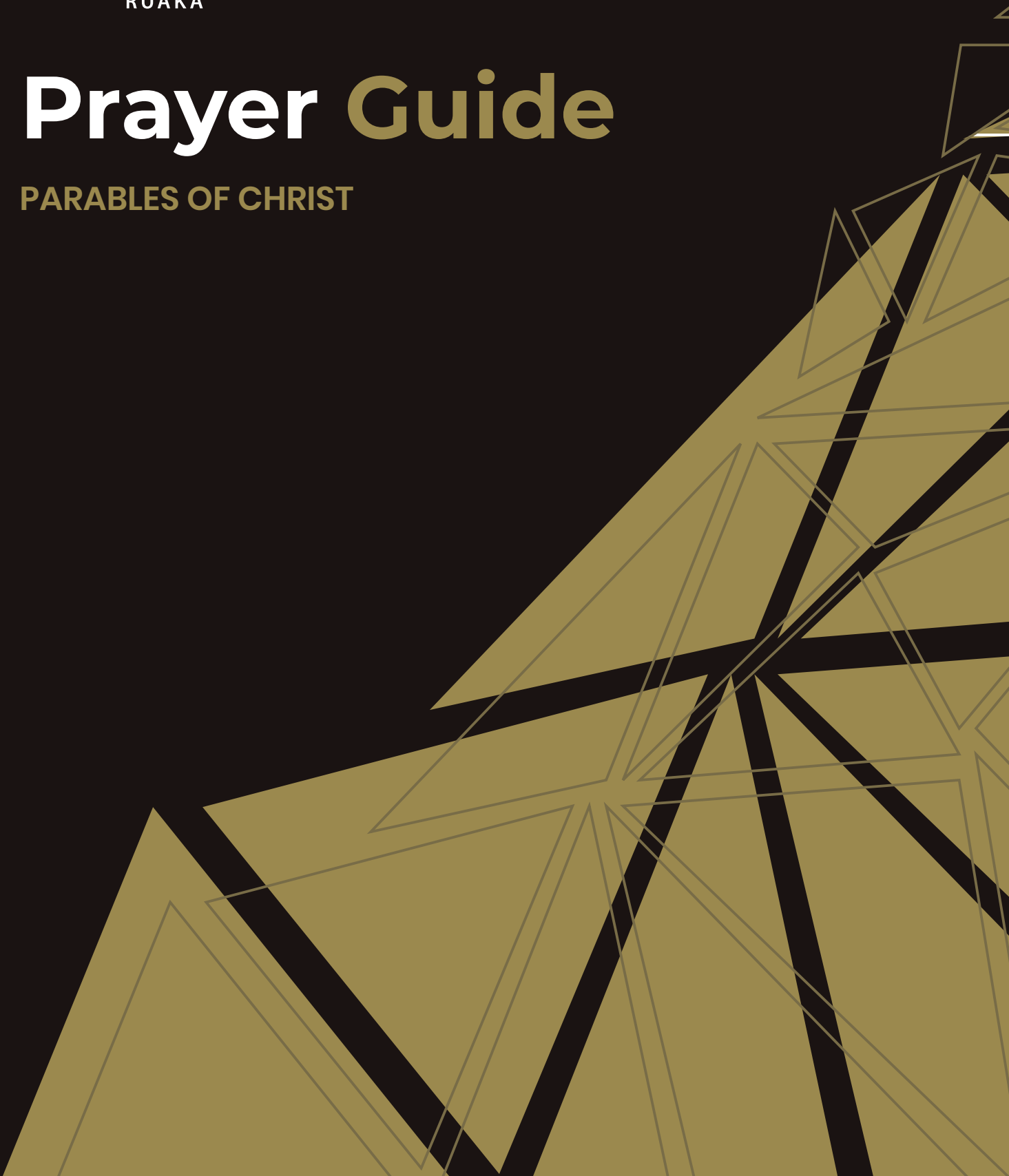
mamlaka Hill chapel

Empowered to Transform

RUAKA

Prayer Guide

PARABLES OF CHRIST





Matthew 6:33

“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

Why speak in parables?

The secrets of the kingdom are given to us and we must find them.

Luke 8: 9–15

“To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that ‘seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.’”

Helpful guidelines:

Journal:

Find a journal that can allow you to honestly reflect on the answers to some of the questions asked in order to more meaningfully interact with God in prayer.

Time:

Plan ahead of time an ideal time and place where you will interact with God in prayer without disruption for at least forty minutes daily.

One another:

If you find it helpful, sync your time of prayer with a friend or REAL group member so that you can encourage one another and keep each other accountable.

Go beyond:

The guide is a helpful aid in your interaction with God but can also be limiting. Faithfully pray through the guide and if you get some more time to pray, go beyond and cry out to God for other issues not herein captured.

Other aids:

Music, sermons and podcasts can be helpful tools to keep you engaged all day. When the hunger begins to bite, you can use them as tools to help you persevere.

Beginning your fast: In the morning, before you run to start your day, find a quiet place (preferably out of bed) for at least 5 mins to commit the fast to God and ask for the strength to fast and pray during the day.

Breaking the fast:

If possible, take a few minutes in thanksgiving to God everyday before you break your fast as a reminder that it is He who sustains you. Then take some water and a light snack before you can have a heavy meal.

Day I

Reading: The Greatest Treasure of All

Devotion

The value of the treasure or the pearl was not a subjective one. It was true value, just like gold in our day. The kingdom of God is like that treasure of infinite value which cannot be equated to anything else. It was worth everything the merchant had. It is worth everything we love, own or desire. Once we find it, we find everything else.

Jesus is the ultimate treasure. To find Him is to find everything. The disciples forsook everything (vocations, families, friends) in order to gain Christ. The apostle Paul says that to him everything else was rubbish compared to the worth of gaining Christ. This was the point Jesus wanted to make when He asked the rich ruler to sell all he owned and follow Him. This means that He may call us to forsake everything for His sake, i.e., our ambitions, pursuits, desires and pleasures, so that He can become to us that great treasure.

Journal Reflection

Jesus says,

“Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”

Matthew 10:39

When you received Christ, what were some of the things that you forfeited as much as you valued them and/or desires that you had to let go of?

As a believer, what do you find most difficult to let go of from what Jesus requires you to forfeit today?

Where your heart is there your treasure is. Where can you honestly say your treasure is today?

What distractions e.g. worldly pleasures or material possessions even now threaten to or have been pulling you away, causing your love for the Lord to wane cold?

Write them down.

Matt 13:44-46

The Parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.”

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.”

Prayer:

1)

Confess before God if you do not see Him as the ultimate treasure and ask Him to open the eyes of your heart so that you can see Him for who He truly is; your greatest treasure.

2)

If you believe Jesus Christ to be the ultimate treasure, confess of all the times that you have loved the world and the things of this world more than Christ and ask God to give you an undivided heart that is fully committed to loving Him.

3)

Ask God to help you be faithful in keeping the disciplines that deepen your love for Him and cause you to reflect a life that is truly committed to Jesus.

4)

Pray for the grace and strength to forsake and forfeit the things of the world and the joy to faithfully take up your cross daily and follow Christ no matter what it costs.

5)

Pray for a believer you fellowship with, either a friend, REAL group member, a family member, your spouse etc. to have an undivided heart in their devotion to God this year.

Further reading:

Mark 10:17–22, Matt 6:19–21

Day II

Reading: A True Heart of Worship

Luke 18: 9-14; The Pharisee and the Tax Collector

He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and treated others with contempt: "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."


Devotion

The contrast that Jesus creates here is epic. First, we have a Pharisee who by every societal standard, stands above everyone else in his piousness and morality. On the other hand, a tax collector well known for his sinfulness. The tax collector acknowledges his moral depravity and makes repentance for it but the drama is in the Pharisee's ignorance to his sin. He does not see that just like the tax collector, he too lacks the moral perfection that God requires of him. He compares himself to the tax collector instead of the true standard of purity which is God.

Jesus here is addressing the hearts when it comes to the worship of God. The Pharisee is deceived that God is fooled by outward appearances. Unknown to him, his ritualistic righteousness does not impress God or grant him true union with God. We have all failed to attain the righteous requirements of God's law and our only hope is admission of guilt before God who solely can justify us. To anyone who comes, He promises to richly pardon, but first we must acknowledge our sin and confess it before Him. The heart of man is what God looks at and not the outward appearances as God tells Samuel.

Journal Reflection

Jesus will caution the Pharisees against paying attention to outward piousness as opposed to the heart's disposition. What defiles a man, He says, is not what goes into his body but what comes from his heart because the heart is the seat of all evil. We are justified by the grace of God through faith. Not by our own works lest we should boast. We cannot please God with outward appearances which is vain worship.



What things do you do or have you done, that mark you out as a righteous person? Are there people in your circles whom you consider more sinful than you? Where do you think you are doing alright in your walk with God and is it possible you are thinking of yourself more highly than you ought to? When you come to prayer before God, how would you describe the state of your heart? Do you feel confident, guilty, unsure?

Prayer

1)

Confess before God areas you feel you are not doing well in living out your faith as a believer. Ask for His pardon for your disobedience and sin.

2)

Recall times you have not been gracious to others or condemned them for their sin. Repent for thinking of yourself as more righteous than they, or discrediting them in your heart.

3)

For times you have paraded your acts of faith as righteousness before men to earn their respect or honor, ask for God's forgiveness.

4)

Pray that God will give you the humility of heart to look to Him for grace to live a righteous life before Him and to have no confidence in your own power or deeds.

5)

Ask God to search the depths of your heart and reveal to you any sin or prideful thought that may lie therein which could keep you from seeing yourself clearly as He sees you.

6)

For those believers you think are living in sin around you, pray that God would open their eyes to see their sin and come to repentance.

Further Reading: [Mark 7:14-23](#), [Psalms 19:14](#), [Matt 7:1-5](#)

Reading: A Place in Our Hearts

Luke 8: 4-8; The Parable of the Sower

And when a great crowd was gathering and people from town after town came to him, he said in a parable, "A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell along the path and was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the air devoured it. And some fell on the rock, and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up with it and choked it. And some fell into good soil and grew and yielded a hundredfold." As he said these things, he called out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

Devotion

The sower was faithful in sowing his seed, but the ground on which the seed fell was varied. The seed on fertile soil grew well to yield bountifully but all other grounds did not give a harvest. The seed, which is God's word of life, when sown in our hearts, either produces a harvest of obedience and life or we are left fruitless and unchanged. When we receive the word, it is prudent that through obedience and faith we cultivate it in our hearts in order for it to bear fruit. But if we pay no attention to it, do not persist in it, or out of many concerns refuse to believe it, we benefit nothing from it.

Jesus Himself said that man cannot live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. God has made Himself known to us through the Scriptures and therefore, when the word is preached, we ought to receive this word and through the practice of it and obedience hide it in our hearts. Remember, the evil one, the cares of this world, trials that life throws at us and the pursuit of material possessions all stand ready to snatch it from us. Therefore, we must steadfastly and diligently hold to the word of God until the end.

Journal Reflection

Jesus is more interested in our obedience than mere excitement about Him and His word. To simply say we will do as His word says and in actual sense not practice it is to deceive ourselves. The value that is in his word is realized through obedience. The devil will deceive you, troubles will frustrate you, the world will distract you, all in an attempt to take away God's truth from you. Have you faced this kind of frustration with regards to your growth in the word of God?

How many sermons preached last year for example can you recall having had significant impact on you? How many things did you resolve to do in obedience to God's word last year that you are still following through with? What tangible change can you point at in your life courtesy of your interactions with God's word? Did you keep any notes from the sermons you heard or your study time, or did you trust your human memory? Are you doing due diligence to hold fast to the word of God and to obey it? Have you set aside a time and place for your quiet reflections on God's word this year? Remember, if you don't plan for it, it won't happen.



Prayer

1)

Thank God for His faithfulness in sowing the seed of His word to us through His church gathered, our fellowship meetings and also in our private time interacting with His word.

2)

Ask the Lord to give you a heart of obedience to His word this year as you learn from it. Ask for the diligence to do what the word says even when it is hard.

3)

Pray that the evil one, the cares of the world, the worries of life, and our share of troubles will not lead us away from God, but instead cause us to all the more hold fast to Him.

4)

The lure of wealth could very easily disguise itself as ambition on one hand or blessings on the other. Remember you cannot serve two masters at the same time, money and God. Pray for the insight to see the luring deception of wealth as it also competes for your heart's affection.

5)

Remember the measure of your fruitfulness in God's kingdom is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Pray that more than anything else, you'll grow in the fruit of the Spirit.

6)

Pray for the ministers of the Gospel to be steadfast and faithful in their duty before God both to preach the gospel in truth and to patiently tend to His sheep.

Futher Reading

Matt 7:21-27, Matt 21:28-32, Jam 1:22-25

Day IV

Reading: Persistence in Prayer

Luke 18:1-8; The Parable of the Persistent Widow

And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.' For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.' And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

Devotion

I always marvel at the faith of the woman in this parable. She knew that the judge did not care the least about her or about justice yet she kept going to him. In a sense, there was really nowhere else for her to go and find help save the judge. After a while, the judge gave the woman justice not because he was righteous but because he didn't want to be nagged. Nonetheless, justice! Jesus in contrast asks, how much sooner and much more joyfully do you suppose our God who cares for us and who loves justice, would answer us when we pray? God does not need for us to nag Him and wear Him out in order to answer our prayers. He is not like this unjust judge but delights to answer us when we cry to Him. Of all the people who cried to Jesus 'Son of David, have mercy on me!' in the Scriptures, not one was turned away. Later, in a loud voice, He made an invitation for all who are heavy-laden and weary, all who are thirsty to come to Him and He'd give them rest and quench their thirsty souls.

Journal Reflection

Even today God calls to us who need His mercy, His forgiveness and His grace to come to Him for help. He delights in answering us when we call and He will not tarry in doing so. Like the woman at the well, all we need is to ask Him and He promises to give streams of living water that will never run dry. He is able to bear our burdens and under His wings we find safety. The world can be cruel to us especially we who profess faith in Jesus, but our consolation is that we have a High Priest before God who pleads our case before Him day and night and He is faithful to hold us up. In our weakness, He has promised to be our strength.

What affliction, grief or trouble have you faced lately or are currently facing today? Which areas of your life have you tried to hold together but you keep failing? How has the evil one launched his fiery darts of persecution at you and what pains has he caused you? What prayer have you made before God but has been seemingly unanswered until now? In what area of your life do you feel like despairing? Please write them down and bring them to God in prayer. Jesus desires to help.

Prayer

1)

Ask the Lord to teach you how to pray, how to trust Him, and to give you faith and patience to wait on Him in your days of affliction or when answers to your prayers tarry.

2)

Pray for faithfulness and persistence in our prayer lives this year. Pray for the resolve to stay faithful in gathering with God's people for prayer and in personal quiet time of prayer before God.

3)

Pray for sweet fellowship and communion with God in prayer. Prayer can be bland and exerting at times but there is joy-filled communion with God available for us if we ask.

4)

Pray that God would deliver us from evil when it pursues us and send us deliverance when we are caught in the devil's snare or in sinfulness.

5)

Pray for confident trust in the heart of God. That He is not malicious, evil or unconcerned for us. But that in Him we have a Father who loves us. Pray that in faith we will keep our gaze on Him as our help and our redeemer.

6)

Pray for believers that you know who are going through trials, to be patient and steadfast in their faith, fully convicted that God will answer and vindicate them.

Further reading

Luke 11: 5-12

Day V

Reading: Good and Faithful Servants

Matthew 25:14–30; The Parable of the Talents

“For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more.

So also, he who had the two talents made two talents more. But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master’s money. Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them.


And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant.

You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant.

You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground.

Here, you have what is yours.’ But his master answered him, ‘You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest.

So, take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’



Devotion

The parable of the talents compares God to a rich merchant who places his wealth in trust to his servants before a long absence. To each servant he gives responsibility over what he knows they can steward, each according to his ability. On his return, the master does not demand from the servants any more than he gave them. What he commends is not even the amount of money in profit they made but their faithfulness to the task left with them. The unfaithful servant who did nothing with his master's gifts to build his wealth is thrown out into "outer darkness" where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth for being slothful.

It might feel a little harsh for this servant to be treated with such severity. There is no mercy or leniency shown him, only judgement. You see, Jesus, in the same way, says He will lock out the virgins who had no oil from His banquet, though with many cries many call to Him, "Lord! Lord!" As was in Noah's day, so will it be then. When the time of grace is elapsed, there will be no more mercy for the disobedient, the unfaithful and the sinner.

For the faithful, however, such bliss! Entry into the master's happiness and an abundance at His table.

Journal Reflection

Today, Christ our master still tarries in coming. Yet to us He has left a task which we must be about. First the commission to evangelize the world with His Gospel of peace, and second, the Gospel, a cure to share with the world that is diseased by sin and death. Faithfulness is what He asks of us, to not be slothful in doing the master's business but to be proactive to make Him known as light in a dark world, as salt of the earth and as His mouthpieces proclaiming that the kingdom of God is at hand.

When was the last time you pursued someone to give their life to Christ? When was the last time you shared the Good News of Christ with a colleague, family member or friend? Have you been faithful in teaching your children about God, and do you have a plan in place to do so this year? Do your nephews, and nieces ever get to hear of God from your mouth? Should Jesus come today, will you be confident to say you fulfilled the work He left behind for you to do? What other unique opportunities, abilities and endowments has God given you for which He'll call you to account? Do you really care about the cause of Christ given to you or the destiny of the unbeliever that you claim to love?

Prayer

1)

Confess your slothfulness and lethargy in doing God's work of evangelism and discipleship. Think of the opportunities you've had and ignored or disregarded and repent.

2)

Pray that God would rekindle in you an urgency and weight to go and make disciples. Ask the Lord to rekindle a fire for evangelism and disciple-making in you.

3)

Pray for strength to fight the distractions of this world that stand opposed to your efforts in this cause. Busyness, convenience, comforts, entertainment, self-preservation, shame, fear, whatever it may be.

4)

Ask God to open your eyes to the opportunities, gifts and resources that He has provided at your disposal for the work of the Gospel, then pray for courage to do the work.

5)

Pray to love those in your circles who are still in the world as much as God loves them. Pray for a burden to joyfully bear the cost and carry the cross in the work of disciple-making.

6)

Pray that you too will be called a good and faithful servant at the return of your master and be found about your Master's business.

7)

Think of and pray for five people in your circles you plan to reach with the Gospel this year. Ask God to prepare their hearts and give you natural opportunities to bring up the Gospel.

Supporting Verses

The Final Judgment, Matthew 25: 31-46 matt 25:1-13

God Bless You!



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