



Study Guide



CHRIST PACIFIC

Introduction

Welcome to the Watchfulness study. This study guide matches with the sermon series by the same title. We are hoping that through this series and study, we will have increased watchfulness for Jesus' return. While some try to figure out the time of Jesus' return, Jesus is much more concerned with how we live *in light of* this future event and hope. These four studies walk through some challenging teachings of Jesus, which are meant to radically reshape our view of God, people, and God's Kingdom. This, in turn, is to reshape how we live.

We will be using the Know-Grow-Go framework for this study. Disciples are those who **know** Jesus as Lord and Savior, who **grow** together to become like Him, and who **go** on mission with Jesus. Keep this framework in mind as you go through each week's questions.

Watch (Matthew 24:36-51)

Jesus uses striking words here to encourage us to *watch* for His return. Jesus' calling is to "stay awake" (24:36-44) and to be ready (24:45-51) for His second coming, because we do not know when this will happen. It is interesting to note that Jesus says that, during His time on earth, He does not know the time of His return. Like Jesus, we are to be focused on doing God's will as we walk with Jesus each day.

KNOW



In Matthew 24:36-51, Jesus makes the astonishing claim that "only the Father" knows about the time of Jesus' return. How will "the coming of the Son of Man" be like "the days of Noah" (24:37-41)? Why is it, therefore, necessary to "stay awake" (24:42-44)?

Jesus also speaks of a "wise and faithful servant" in a particular household. What distinguishes this servant from other servants (24:45-51)? How might these verses give us a picture of what it means to be ready for Jesus' return? How does this passage help us to know Jesus better as our Lord?

GROW



Jesus calls us to “stay awake” as we follow Him and await His return. Two of the fruit of the Spirit are patience and faithfulness (see Gal. 5:22-23). What distracts you from being alive to Jesus’ presence in your life? How would you like God’s Spirit to grow you and awaken you to this reality?

GO



Disciples of Jesus are not lone rangers. The life of discipleship is done as we are rooted among God’s people. Hebrews 10:24-25 encourages Jesus’ disciples to meet together to “stir up one another to love and good works.” How can you do this for other disciples? How can they do this for you?

Ready? (Matthew 25:1-13)

This week's study explores Jesus' "parable of the ten virgins." The focus is on being *ready* for Jesus' return. Jesus often spoke of God's coming Kingdom as a wedding feast of sorts. Jesus speaks of Himself as "the bridegroom" in this parable. Like the virgins in this story, Jesus' disciples are to consider whether or not they are ready for the future return of Jesus.



KNOW



The storyline of this parable revolves around which virgins are ready for the "marriage feast." What situation were all the virgins in when the bridegroom was "coming" (25:1-7)? Why could "the wise" virgins not help the "foolish" ones (25:6-9)?

In this parable, the "virgins" seem to represent those who seek to follow Jesus, and Jesus is like "the bridegroom." Why was "the door" not opened for the foolish virgins (25:10-12)? What seems to be the message of this parable (compare 25:13 with 24:42-44)? What do these verses teach us about who Jesus is as our Lord and Judge?

GROW



The foolish virgins were found unprepared for the bridegroom's becoming, because they lost their focus on what was important for the time. What values, priorities, and commitments compete with your following of Jesus? What are some good things in your life that are not the best things from God? What changes might Jesus be calling you to make?

GO



To take stock of your commitment to Christ, review your weekly schedule. How does this commitment come to expression in your everyday life and relationships? Share this schedule with other followers of Jesus you trust. Ask them to reflect with you about your priorities and commitments and how these line with Jesus' values.

Invest (Matthew 25:14-30)

“The parable of the talents” is the name typically given for this passage. Jesus exhorts His disciples to use the resources God has provided for service in God’s Kingdom. A “talent” is an ancient coinage and represents the time, treasures, and talents God gives to each follower of Jesus. The challenge is to *invest* our lives for the sake of following Christ.

KNOW



According to Jesus, this parable makes known some aspect of what “the Kingdom of heaven” will be like (25:14-15). Life in God’s Kingdom has to do with being a good steward. What did the three “servants” do with their “talents” (25:14-18)? In what ways was the third servant unlike the first two ones (25:19-27)? What do you think of the master’s treatment of the third servant (25:28-30)?

The message in this parable seems to be related to “good and faithful” stewardship of all God has given us. What do we learn here about service to Jesus? What does it mean to be a steward? How can being lazy or sluggish hold us back from being faithful stewards in God’s Kingdom?

GROW



One way the Scriptures talk about human life is in terms of stewardship. If you were to look at yourself this way, what was God given you to steward (e.g., family, friendships, relationships, work, etc.)? What would more faithful stewardship of these resources look like?

GO



A temptation as a steward of God is to hoard or hold on tightly to God's good gifts. How can you have more of an open heart and open hands toward others? What might more radical generosity toward others look like practical terms?

When Lord? (Matthew 25:31-46)

In this week's passage, Jesus tells "The parable of the sheep and the goats." These verses speak of the judgment that will come with the triumphant return of Jesus. All nations will be gathered before Jesus and judged by Him. This depiction of the future is intended to exhort Jesus' followers to have compassion on those in need. Those who show their faithfulness to Jesus in this way are "the sheep" and considered to be part of God's people.

KNOW



All the nations will be gathered before Jesus when He returns (25:31-33). Whom does Jesus consider to be "the sheep" (25:33-40, 46)? What will happen to those Jesus considers to be "the goats" (25:41-46)?

In this parable, Jesus is pictured as the King and Judge of the world. Why is this image unpopular in our culture? What do we learn about what it means to know Jesus as our King? What does Jesus expect of us as His disciples?

GROW



At the heart of this parable is the truth that Jesus identifies with those in great need (see Matthew 25:37-40, 44-45). Why do you think Jesus does this? How much do you notice those who are in a lowly state around you? How might you need to change your view of people and life to match Jesus' way of seeing people?

GO



In the Scriptures, God seems to be very concerned for the poor and needy, such as the widow, orphan, and alien. Why is this so? How can your life be a greater reflection of God's heart for them?

The homeless among us would fit into the category of the poor and needy God cares so much about. How do you struggle with the reality of homelessness in our community? What tangible ways can you seek to help those in need among us? What might Jesus might be calling you to do?

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