

Week 7: Walking with the Family of God Part 1

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Living in the Last Days Life Group

Description: The New Testament gives plenty of conditions on how we live together as Christians. What are some of the ways the Bible calls us to operate with other Christians? How do we deal with sin in the Church? What are some other expectations on us?

Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Teaching (45 minutes)

1. Why Four Gospels?

Why are there four Gospels because sometimes we have what some people would think are contradictions between them. There are three Gospels written first that are called the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke).

These Gospels have closely related material such that you can actually compare them. When we see things that differ between the Gospels, we must consider the purpose of the author, the audience, and the way the author references current events, geography, and cultural matters.

Consider each Gospel to also be an eyewitness account (except for Luke). Luke was written by a Gentile doctor who was sometimes with Paul in Acts. He did his research well.

Most scholars believe Mark was the first Gospel written, followed by Matthew. Each Gospel has its own perspective from the source of the Gospel. Matthew was a disciple of Jesus. Mark is written by John Mark probably with Peter's perspective for much of it.

John writes many years later, and so, much of his Gospel is new material (about 90%). He writes his Gospel so that people may believe Jesus is divine ([John 20:31](#)).

The Gospels present a different perspective of Jesus's ministry, Person, and works. Even though there are different perspectives from four different people, the Gospels are strikingly similar. If you asked for people to describe the same event or experience, you would get four different accounts. It's amazing how similar the Gospels are!

2. Interpreting and Practicing the Parables

The parables are one of Jesus's main teaching tools. They are short stories that pack usually one meaning. Jesus taught in parables because the common person in Israel would have understood what He was teaching.

We actually have a harder time because we were separated by culture, time, and the understanding that would have been intuitive to His hearers.

The parables describe the kingdom of God, why some people accept Jesus and others don't, and principles like being a good steward.

Scholars differ on whether there is only one meaning to each parable or multiple ones. They also differ on how to interpret them. My suggestion is to take the most basic meaning of the parable, look at the context of the parable, and gain the meaning from that.

Once you know what the parable is saying, it is imperative that you do what it says. Apply the parable as much as you can to your life. Resources for interpreting the parables include

- [What Do the Parables Mean?](#) by R. C. Sproul
- [Parables: The Greatest Stories Ever Told](#) by John White
- [The Parables of Jesus](#) by James Montgomery Boice
- [The Parables: Understanding What Jesus Meant](#) by Gary Irving

I will attempt to go over the rest of these 10 areas of the Gospels as quickly as possible. If something sticks out to you that you want me to focus on, remember that the notes will be available and we can address what intrigues you the most.

3. The Cost of Following Jesus. We must count the cost of following Jesus. There are positive and negative aspects to following Jesus (by human understanding). I start with the negatives and then talk about the positives.

Following Jesus will cost you because the world is against Him and you. It requires a commitment from us to serve Jesus well. Be prepared to sacrifice in your service to Him.

Even more so now because we are living in the last days. It will become increasingly harder to separate yourself from the world and honor Jesus.

i. The Cost of Discipleship ([Matthew 8:18-22](#); [Luke 9:57-62](#); [14:25-33](#)). Jesus expects our full allegiance to Him. We cannot put other things about that. He teaches us to count the cost of following Him above other things that are important to us.

ii. The Beatitudes ([Matthew 5:3-12](#); [Luke 6:20-23](#)). We are blessed in all these examples, but the blessing does not come right away. Often times, we are blessed in the heavenly realms more than in each circumstance we display these characteristics.

iii. Persecution ([Matthew 5:10-12](#)), Persecution Will Come ([Matthew 10:16-25](#)), Hatred of the World ([John 15:8-16:4](#)), Enduring Persecution ([Matthew 10:16-25](#)). We are blessed to be persecuted, but we do not experience that blessed now. We can expect persecution to come especially in these last days. Jesus calls us to endure persecution. The world hated Him, and it will hate us for following Him.

iv. Internalizing Sinful Actions to Desires (Anger, Lust [[Mark 9:43-48](#)]) ([Matthew 5:21-30](#)), Oaths and Retaliation [Luke: 29-30] ([Matthew 5:33-42](#)). The Old Testament talked about these things as things that must be verified by others when we are caught doing them outwardly. Jesus teaches us that these are matters of the heart before they are matters of the hands.

v. Love Your Enemies ([Matthew 5:43-48](#); [Luke 6:27-28](#)), Love God with Your Whole Being and Love Your Neighbor As Yourself ([Matthew 22:34-40](#); [Mark 12:28-34](#); [Luke 10:25-28](#)), A New Commandment ([John 13:31-35](#)). Jesus calls us to the same unconditional love He gives us. We must love our enemies, countercultural in our world. We must love God and our neighbor, and our

neighbor is anyone around us. Jesus gives us the new Commandment of loving one another as fellow Christians.

vi. Give to the Needy ([Matthew 6:1-4](#)). We're obligated as Jesus's followers to give to the needy and minister to the down-and-out of society.

vii. Forgive Others ([Matthew 6:14-15](#); [18:35](#); [Mark 11:25](#); [Luke 6:37](#)). Jesus teaches us to forgive others unconditionally. This does not mean we fully trust them, but that we forgive them. We look like Jesus when we do this.

viii. Lay up Treasures in Heaven ([Matthew 6:19-24](#); [Luke 12:33-34](#)). Our treasures are not here on earth. We lay them up in heaven. This is our Christian character, and also the people we can bring with us who become believers because of our example and speech.

ix. Take up Your Cross ([Matthew 16:24-28](#); [Mark 8:34-35](#); [Luke 9:23-24](#)). We must bear the scorn and shame of the world, the suffering, and the afflictions we have in this life. We are looking for the reward Jesus gives us, not the reward we can find in the world.

x. Rich Young Ruler ([Matthew 10:16-33](#); [Mark 10:17-22](#); [Luke 18:18-23](#)). Some people have a hard time accepting what they must give up to follow Jesus. Whatever you have that you hold so dear you cannot follow Jesus will keep you from becoming one of His disciples. It does not have to be riches.

xi. Servanthood ([John 13:1-20](#)). Jesus led by example. He taught us that one of the key characteristics of people He treasures in His Kingdom is to be the servant of others.

xii. Rewards ([Matthew 10:40-42](#)). Jesus will give rewards based on our service to Him. Only He knows what these are and what we will receive. We do not serve Jesus to get a reward. Our reward is knowing Him.

xiii. The Work of the Holy Spirit ([John 16:5-15](#)). These begin the positive aspects of counting the cost of discipleship. The Holy Spirit dwells within us and guides us into truth. That's truth about Jesus, the world, and ourselves. Believe Him above the lies of the world and the enemy.

xiv. Filled with the Spirit ([Acts 2: 1-13](#); [10:44-48](#); [19:1-7](#)). These are not the only places people are filled with the Spirit in Acts. You should be seeking a continual refilling of the Spirit in your life.

xv. Living As the Church ([Acts 2:42-47](#)). The Church shows the things the Church should always be doing. As you read through these, see what you are doing well and not doing so well.

xvi. God's Protection ([Acts 9:19b-22](#); [10](#); [12:4-19](#); [14:19-23](#)). God protects His people from all harm as they serve Him. These are examples in Acts of the God who protects His people as they step out and witness about Jesus, serve, and live for Him.

4. Active for Jesus. Jesus's disciples do not sit on the sidelines. Each of us is called to a ministry the Spirit gives us, witnessing, and worshiping God. We should stick out like sore thumbs to the world.

i. Witnessing

1. The Great Commission ([Matthew 28:18-20](#); [Mark 16:15-18](#)). Jesus gives us His authority to preach the gospel to people and to disciple them as we are going about our lives. He expects us to teach others about Him and baptize them in Him.

2. Harvest Is Plentiful but the Workers Are Few ([Matthew 9:37-38](#); [Luke 10:1-12](#)). Jesus calls us to pray for workers to witness to others. We will need more workers in the world until the end of the last days.

3. Divine Appointments ([Acts 8:26-40](#)). Just like Philip, the Holy Spirit lines of people we need to talk to and tell about Jesus. We must be listening to the Spirit to know who to talk to and when.

4. General Principle: Witness Wherever You Are

ii. Miracles. The New Testament shows us that through our gifts given by the Spirit and as we walk with Jesus, we will see miracles of various kinds happen by our hands for the glory of God.

1. These Signs Will Follow Those Who Believe ([Mark 16:17-18](#))

2. Healings

3. Deliverance from Demons

iii. Deeds. Consider what you can do for Jesus and how you can glorify Him.

1. Salt ([Matthew 5:13](#); [Mark 9:49-50](#); [Luke 14:34-35](#)) and Light ([Matthew 5:14-16](#); [Mark 4:21](#); [Luke 8:16](#)). We are people who bring the flavor of Jesus to every conversation and action. We present a new perspective and preserve the righteousness on the earth until the end times. We also lights like Jesus in the world, and we reveal Him to everyone we meet.

2. Jesus Sends out the Twelve ([Matthew 10:1-15](#); [Mark 6:7-13](#); [Luke 9:1-6](#)). We are expected to do Jesus's works until He returns. He gives us authority to preach the gospel, heal the sick, and stand against demons.

3. Jesus Sends out the Seventy ([Luke 10:1-12](#)), return of the 70 ([Luke 10:17-19](#)). We must not be overly excited about the authority Jesus has given us and that it works in real life examples but that our names are written in heaven and we are saved.

5. Prayer and Fasting ([Matthew 6:9-15](#); [9:14-17](#)). Jesus expects us to pray and fast regularly. He did not say "If you pray/fast" but "When you pray/fast."

i. Prayer

1. Instructions on Prayer ([Matthew 6:5-6](#))

2. The Lord's Prayer ([Matthew 6:7-13](#); [Mark 11:25-26](#); [Luke 11:1-4](#);

3. Ask and It Will Be Given to You ([Matthew 7:7-11](#); [Luke 11:9-13](#))

4. Ask Anything in My Name ([John 14:13-14](#); [16:24](#))

5. Pray for Boldness ([Acts 4:23-31](#))

ii. Fasting

1. Teaching about Fasting ([Matthew 6:16-18](#))

2. Question about Fasting ([Matthew 9:14-17](#); [Mark 2:18-22](#); [Luke 5:35-39](#))

6. God's Kingdom and Human Laws. We must walk the line between obedience to the human laws and governments and obedience to God's laws and Kingdom. The general principle is that God's laws are always higher than man's laws. If one of man's laws goes against God's law, you must obey God's law no matter the consequences.

i. Paying Taxes to Caesar ([Matthew 22:15-22](#); [Mark 12:13-17](#); [Luke 20:20-26](#))

- ii. Traditions and Commandments ([Matthew 15:1-9](#); [7:1-9](#); [Luke 11:37-54](#))
- iii. Anyone Not against Us Is for Us ([Mark 9:38-41](#); [Luke 9:49-50](#))
- iv. Acknowledge Christ before People ([Luke 12:8-12](#))
- v. The Law and the Kingdom of God ([Matthew 5:17-20](#); [Luke 16:14-17](#))
- vi. Follow God's Laws above the Laws of Man ([Acts 4:19-20](#); [5:29](#))
- vii. Use Your Citizenship ([Acts 22:22-29](#); [25:1-12](#))

7. Fear and Anxiety ([Matthew 6](#); [10:26-33](#)). We do not need to be afraid of anything because we have Jesus's presence and Word. He has also taught us that we do not need to be anxious about anything. Prayer and knowing God takes care of our every need helps us to rest in God's peace.

- i. Do Not Be Anxious ([Matthew 6:25-34](#); [Luke 12:22-32](#))
- ii. Do Not Fear Them ([Matthew 10:26-33](#))
- iii. I Have Overcome the World ([John 16:25-33](#))

8. Judging Others. Many Christians misunderstand the balance in judging others. Jesus tells us not to judge others in one part of the Sermon on the Mount and tells us to judge a tree by its fruit in another part of His teaching. The key is to understand that we don't judge people with impunity were critically, but we do judge the character of a person by what that person does.

- i. Judging Others ([Matthew 7:1-6](#); [Mark 4:24-25](#); [Luke 6:37-42](#))
- ii. A Tree Is Known by Its Fruit ([12:33-37](#); [Luke 6:43-45](#))

9. Dangers and Pitfalls. Along the way as we serve Jesus in these last days there are some dangers we must avoid. We must understand that what we say is important, the greatest in God's Kingdom is this servant, there will be sins among believers and we must have a system for dealing with sin in the Church, and that we will not avoid temptation. We must deal with that too.

- i. What Defiles a Person ([Matthew 15:17-20](#))
- ii. Who Is the Greatest ([Matthew 18:1-6](#); [Mark 7:20-23](#))
- iii. Addressing Sin ([Matthew 18:15-20](#))

iv. Temptation Will Come ([Matthew 18:7-9](#); [Mark 9:42-50](#); [Luke 17:1-4](#))

10. Understanding the End of the Age. We have talked about the end times and what will happen in them before. But this is a key part of Jesus's teaching we must have a good handle on so we know what to expect as signs that Jesus is coming back for us.

i. Signs of the End ([Matthew 24-25](#); [Mark 13](#); [Luke 17](#); [21](#); [22](#))

ii. You Must Be Ready ([Matthew 25:1-13](#); [Mark 13:33-37](#); [Luke 12:35-48](#))

Discussion (30 minutes)

Application (10 minutes)