THE TONY EVANS STUDY BIBLE

ADVANCING GOD’S KINGDOM AGENDA
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31. NOTE FROM DR. TONY EVANS
The Tony Evans Study Bible includes extensive study notes and other ancillary resources carefully crafted and curated by Dr. Tony Evans as General Editor and adapted from his sermons, teachings, and writings. These features are strategically placed alongside the biblical text to explain God’s Word in a fresh way. Applying these truths will empower readers to have transformed lives that then transfer the values of the kingdom of God to others.

FEATURES:

- Elegant design with 5 cover options
- Study notes crafted from Tony Evans’ sermons and writings
- 40 inspirational articles
- 50 “Lessons on Kingdom Living”
- 60 “Questions & Answers”
- More than 130 “Hope Words”
- 53 sets of “Personal Application Questions” (128 questions)
- Digital links to over 150 videos of sermons, devotionals, and teaching from Dr. Evans
- 22 audio sermons
- Page-edge cross-reference system
- Black-letter text
- Presentation page
- Introductory front matter
- Special back matter section with key definitions, theological and doctrinal charts, and other study helps
- Concordance
- Bible reading plans
- Full-color maps
Dr. Tony Evans is the founder and senior pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship in Dallas, is the founder and president of The Urban Alternative, served as chaplain of the NBA’s Dallas Mavericks and the NFL’s Dallas Cowboys, and is the author of over 100 books, booklets, and Bible studies. The first African American to earn a doctorate of theology from Dallas Theological Seminary, he has been named one of the 12 Most Effective Preachers in the English-Speaking World by Baylor University. Dr. Evans holds the honor of writing and publishing the first full-Bible commentary and study Bible by an African American. His radio broadcast, The Alternative with Dr. Tony Evans, can be heard on more than 1,400 US outlets daily and in more than 130 countries.

Dr. Evans launched the Tony Evans Training Center in 2017, an online learning platform providing quality seminary-style courses for a fraction of the cost to any person in any place. The goal is to increase biblical literacy and to advance God’s kingdom agenda. Dr. Tony Evans is married to Lois, his wife and ministry partner of over 50 years. They are the proud parents of four, grandparents of thirteen and great-grandparents of two.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT
TONYEVANS.ORG
The Christian Standard Bible is a translation that combines accuracy and clarity for today’s readers. It’s a Bible you can teach from with confidence and a Bible you can share with your neighbor who is hearing God’s Word for the very first time.

Optimal Equivalence

The CSB was created using Optimal Equivalence, a translation philosophy that pursues both linguistic precision to the original languages and readability in contemporary English.

In the many places throughout Scripture where a word-for-word rendering is clearly understandable, a literal translation is used. When a word-for-word rendering might obscure the meaning for a modern audience, a more dynamic translation is used. This process assures that both the words and thoughts contained in the original text are conveyed as accurately as possible for today’s readers.

Bible Translation Continuum

Bible translations shown in the top half of the chart are the original translations directly from ancient languages to English. Versions shown below the line began with the English text of another Bible translation.

Learn more at CSBible.com
WITHIN OUR HEARTS IS A DESIRE TO DISCOVER GOD. TO SEE HIM. TO EXPERIENCE HIM. TO KNOW HIS STORY.
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HOW TO USE THIS STUDY BIBLE

Throughout The Tony Evans Study Bible, there are various features designed to enhance your reading experience. Whether you have questions about a passage, are seeking additional inspiration, or desire a deeper understanding through serious study, these resources will help you.

STUDY NOTES – These notes provide my exegesis, exposition, and exhortation to help you understand and apply a given passage. Words in bold are directly from the Scripture text.

1:1 Most ancient creation accounts chronicle a struggle between good and evil, with earth popping up as an accidental by-product of struggle. In these accounts, the gods who created the world did so out of prior material. They could not truly create. Scripture’s story is different: in the beginning God (Elohim, the Supreme One) created out of nothing. With a mere word he made the entire universe of time, space, and matter.

1:3-5 God made the light, but he also named it: God called the light “day” (1:5). By naming the parts of his creation, God expresses sovereign rule over them. Even the concept of light, which is fundamental to our world, only exists because God sustains it.

1:6-8 God placed some water above the expanse (1:7); this is the basis of our earthly water cycle. God created the atmosphere so what was emanating light for the first three days? God himself was (see Rev 22:5). On day four, God handed over that responsibility to celestial representatives, so that they would provide light on the earth (Gen 1:17) and serve as signs (1:14).

1:20-23 As he had populated the ground with plants (1:11-13), God made birds and fish (1:21). What is unique here is that he blesses them with a commission to be fruitful . . . and fill

KINGDOM LIVING LESSONS – Practical lessons regarding your ability to live your life according to God’s kingdom agenda, the visible manifestation of the comprehensive rule of God over every area of your life. These are divided into five categories: Kingdom, Personal, Family, Church, and Community.

**Kingdom**: This category considers the theology of the kingdom. Throughout the Bible, God reveals how he advances his kingdom, his all-encompassing dominion over all that he created.

**Personal**: God’s Word was written to equip you for every good work. It is sufficient for preparing you for life in his kingdom, both here on earth and in heaven. The personal sphere of God’s kingdom agenda focuses on your self-management and how you use your time, talents, and treasures as his kingdom disciple.

**Family**: God created the family to be the foundation of civilization. As the family goes, so goes the culture. These lessons focus on strengthening family relationships based on biblical principles.

**Church**: The church exists as God’s central governing mechanism through which he enacts his heavenly intervention on earth. I seek to provide you with a spiritual framework for the purpose and power of the church.

**Community**: Christians are to function as kingdom citizens by personally modeling while also influencing government to maintain a safe, just, righteous, and compassionately-responsible society where freedom flourishes.

HOPE WORDS – Brief insights inspired by Scripture to empower and encourage you.

**HOPE WORDS**

*Faith is our positive response to what God has already provided.*
INSPIRATIONAL ARTICLES – Heart-felt articles providing you with knowledge and inspiration as you strive to understand and apply the biblical text in a deeper way.

VIDEO DEVOTIONALS – Brief videos on various topics, which you can access on your mobile device using the provided QR code. Some are devotional, others are segments from sermons. Each video is designed to enhance your study experience by helping you dive deeper on a topic or providing you with encouragement in your study.

Q&A WITH TONY EVANS
My answers to a variety of questions, including questions about my own life and ministry, how to understand various biblical texts and theological issues, and how to apply God's kingdom agenda in your daily life.

BIBLE BOOK INTRODUCTIONS – Each book of the Bible includes an introduction that discusses matters of authorship, historical background, and purpose. Each is accompanied by a video that you can access on your mobile device using the provided QR code. In these videos, I expound briefly on the biblical book’s message and key themes.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS – Questions to help you engage the biblical text and apply God’s Word to every area of your life.

SIDE-MARGIN CROSS REFERENCES – Other Bible passages that are related to the text on which you are focusing.

Tony Evans Bible

Faith Works

I was once battling a cold and couldn't shake it. I called my doctor, told him my symptoms, and he told me I didn't need to come in. He would call in a prescription for me. He told me what medicine he was prescribing and how he wanted me to take it.

To benefit from this conversation, I had to believe that I was talking to the person I thought I was talking to, because I couldn't see him. Ours was just a brief talk over the phone, so I had to listen to and trust his voice. Then I had to respond when he told me how to fix my problem. Now I can't see him in bed.

IN THE MEANTIME Genesis records the angelic conflict now being waged on earth to such an extent that God destroyed the earth with a flood and began again with Noah to establish his kingdom rule—for Genesis introduces us to a kingdom concept. The world after the flood also rebelled against God at Babylon, and God judged the people for trying to establish unity without him. Then God called one man, Abraham, through whom he would reestablish his kingdom reign. Beginning with the chapter in Genesis gives the reader of Daniel

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

READ GENESIS 1:26-27

– What do these verses teach about family?
– How have you experienced God’s provision in your efforts to manage your family and your other spheres of life?
AVAILABLE

VIDEOS & SERMONS

The CSB Tony Evans Study Bible features over 150 videos as well as over twenty audio sermons within the notes of the text, easily accessed by a specific QR Code or typing in the url listed. Below are examples of the types of videos available.

Simply scan using the QR Code reader on your cell phone or type in the web address listed beneath the code into your browser.

- Books of the Bible (66)
- Exposition of Ephesians (8)
- Exposition of Judges (8)
- Intro to Bibliology (8)
- Kingdom Agenda (6)
- New Testament Survey (10)
- Old Testament Survey (10)
- Spiritual Growth (10)
- Spiritual Warfare (8)
- Theology Overview (9)
- Devotionals (35)

Also available throughout are 35 audio sermons to aid with your study of God’s Word.
Cain and his brother Abel. Abel was a shepherd, while Cain was a farmer. Cain was jealous of Abel because God showed favoritism towards Abel. One day, Cain went out to the field, and Abel went to tend to his flock. Cain came upon Abel and killed him in a rage. "You know what I am, and you know what I said," Cain said to Abel. "Why did you do it?" God asked Cain. "Because of my brother," Cain replied. "Why did you kill him?" God asked. "I am innocent. He was my brother," Cain said. God said, "What have you done, Cain? The ground is crying out for the blood of your brother Abel. I will judge you for this, Cain." Cain said, "I am innocent. He was my brother. You know what I am capable of." God said, "What have you done, Cain? You have killed your brother in jealousy. The ground is crying out for his blood, and I will judge you." Cain said, "I am innocent. He was my brother. You know what I am capable of." God said, "What have you done, Cain? You have killed your brother in jealousy. The ground is crying out for his blood, and I will judge you." Cain said, "I am innocent. He was my brother. You know what I am capable of." God said, "What have you done, Cain? You have killed your brother in jealousy. The ground is crying out for his blood, and I will judge you." Cain said, "I am innocent. He was my brother. You know what I am capable of." God said, "What have you done, Cain? You have killed your brother in jealousy. The ground is crying out for his blood, and I will judge you. I will put a mark on you so that no one will kill you again. You will be a wanderer on the earth, and you will not find rest until you die." Cain left the presence of God and wandered about the earth.
AVAILABLE EDITIONS

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Although the author didn’t identify himself by name in the text, the title of this Gospel includes the name “Matthew” in the earliest existing manuscripts. In addition, several early church fathers (including Papias, Irenaeus, and Origen) attributed authorship to Matthew. Papias also said that Matthew originally wrote the Gospel in Hebrew (what we have today is in Greek).

Many critical scholars today deny that Matthew is the author. They claim that the Greek Matthew that we have does not look like it was translated from Hebrew. If Papias was wrong about that, they argue, he was probably wrong about who wrote it. But there are other scholars who think Matthew could be a Greek translation from Hebrew. Regardless, it wouldn’t necessarily mean Papias was wrong about authorship. The early church unanimously claimed that the apostle Matthew penned the Gospel that bears his name.

There is also internal evidence to support this—that is, evidence within the Gospel itself. Mark 2:14 and Luke 5:27 call the tax collector who became a disciple “Levi.” In Matthew 9:9-13, this man is named “Matthew.” Also, in 10:3, the apostle Matthew is identified as a tax collector, and it may be that he had two names like Simon/Peter.

Though we can’t be absolutely certain, it is best to trust the testimony of the early church and affirm that Matthew wrote this Gospel.

**Historical Background**

Most—though not all—scholars today think that Matthew used Mark’s Gospel as one of his sources when composing his own Gospel. If this is true, Matthew must have been written after Mark. It is likely that Mark’s Gospel was written sometime in the AD 50s (see Historical Background in the introduction to Mark’s Gospel). Matthew, then, could have been written any time beginning in the mid to late 50s. The church father Irenaeus, who wrote in the late second century, claimed that Matthew wrote his Gospel while Paul and Peter were preaching in Rome. This would have been in the early 60s.

**Message and Purpose**

Matthew was a tax collector, which means he was unpopular. He left everything to follow Jesus after he concluded that Jesus was the Messiah. Matthew was authorized to write the Gospel that bears his name, and its subject is very simple: it’s about the King and his kingdom. Matthew was introducing, especially to Jews, the message that God had sent his King, his Messiah, who would rule as his Regent on earth by offering the kingdom to his people. In this sense Matthew is the culmination of all the Old Testament’s anticipation of the Messiah who was to come.

The apostle’s concern was giving convincing proof that Jesus was the messianic King whom the Jews were anticipating and whom the world needs so desperately. That’s why he began with Jesus’s genealogy to establish his lineage through David. Matthew also presented Jesus’s kingdom discourses, teaching, and miracles as proof of his messianic claim.

The book leads to a disquieting moment, the crucifixion. If Jesus is the Messiah, how could he be put to death? Thankfully, the scene is followed by the resurrection and the announcement that the King is alive and coming back, and that his kingdom is in this world today. Jesus’s Great Commission at the end of Matthew’s Gospel (28:18-20) means that the book of Matthew is relevant for us as believers today.

**Outline**

I. Genealogy, Birth, and Childhood (1:1–2:23)
II. Baptism, Temptation, and the Start of Ministry (3:1–4:25)
III. The Sermon on the Mount (5:1–7:29)
IV. Healings and Miracles (8:1–9:38)
V. Sending Out the Twelve (10:1–42)
VI. Confusion and Opposition (11:1–12:50)
VII. Parables about the Kingdom (13:1–58)
VIII. Spreading Ministry and Growing Opposition (14:1–17:27)
IX. Greatness, Restoration, and Forgiveness (18:1–35)
X. Ministry on the Way to Jerusalem (19:1–20:34)
XI. Ministry in Jerusalem (21:1–23:39)
XII. The Olivet Discourse (24:1–25:46)
XIII. Suffering, Crucifixion, and Death (26:1–27:66)
XIV. Resurrection and Great Commission (28:1–20)
1 An account of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham.

FROM ABRAHAM TO DAVID

1. Abraham fathered Isaac, Isaac fathered Jacob, Jacob fathered Judah and his brothers, Judah fathered Perez and Zerah by Tamar; Perez fathered Hezron, Hezron fathered Aram,
2. Amminadab fathered Nahshon, Nahshon fathered Salmon, Salmon fathered Boaz by Ruth, Boaz fathered Obed by Ruth, Obed fathered Jesse,
3. and Jesse fathered King David.

FROM DAVID TO THE BABYLONIAN EXILE

4. David fathered Solomon, by Uriah’s wife,
5. Solomon fathered Rehoboam, Rehoboam fathered Abijah, Abijah fathered Asa,
6. Asa fathered Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat fathered Joram, Joram fathered Uzziah,
7. Uzziah fathered Jotham, Jotham fathered Ahaz, Ahaz fathered Hezekiah,
8. Hezekiah fathered Manasseh, Manasseh fathered Amnon, Amnon fathered Josiah,
9. and Josiah fathered Jeconiah and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon.

FROM THE EXILE TO THE CHRIST

10. After the exile to Babylon Jeconiah fathered Shealtiel, Shealtiel fathered Zerubbabel, Zerubbabel fathered Abiud, Abiud fathered Eliakim, Eliakim fathered Azor,
11. Azor fathered Zadok, Zadok fathered Achim, Achim fathered Eliud, Eliud fathered Eleazar, Eleazar fathered Mathan, Mathan fathered Jacob, and Jacob fathered Joseph, the husband of Mary, who gave birth to Jesus who is called the Christ.

12. So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations; and from David until the exile to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the exile to Babylon until the Christ, fourteen generations.

THE NATIVITY OF THE CHRIST

13. The birth of Jesus Christ came about this way: After his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, it was discovered before they came together that she was pregnant from the Holy Spirit.
14. So her husband Joseph, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her publicly, decided to divorce her secretly.
15. But after he had considered these things, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, don’t be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because what has been conceived in

1 The genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham.
2 In Matt 1:8 Joseph is called betrothed to Mary, but Luke 1:27 states that Mary was betrothed to Joseph after the angel appeared to her.
3 Matthew records the genealogy of Jesus Christ back to the father of David, Abraham, to show that Jesus is the divine Messiah who will restore Israel and rule as King.
4 The genealogy extends from Abraham to Joseph, the husband of Mary, who gave birth to Jesus.
5 The genealogy of Jesus Christ is important for understanding the divinity of Jesus.
6 This genealogy is unique to Matthew and was not included in the other gospels.
7 The genealogy includes both Jewish and Gentile ancestors.
8 The genealogy is not intended to be exhaustive, as indicated by the mention of “and his brothers” in verse 3.
9 The genealogy of Jesus Christ is important for understanding his divine nature and his role as the Messiah.
10 The genealogy highlights the lineage of Jesus Christ back to Abraham, who is the father of the covenant people.
11 The genealogy shows Jesus’ descent from the line of David, the Davidic Messiah who would restore the kingdom of Israel.
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23 The genealogy shows Jesus’ descent from the line of David, the Davidic Messiah who would restore the kingdom of Israel.
her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

22 Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

See, the virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they will name him Immanuel,² which is translated “God is with us.”³

24 When Joseph woke up, he did as the Lord’s angel had commanded him. He married her⁴ but did not have sexual relations with her until she gave birth to a son.⁵ And he named him Jesus.⁶

WISE MEN VISIT THE KING

2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of King Herod, wise men from the east arrived in Jerusalem,⁷ saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star at its rising and have come to worship him.”⁸

3 When King Herod heard this, he was deeply disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him.⁹ So he assembled all the chief priests and scribes of the people and asked them where the Christ would be born.

⁴ In Bethlehem of Judea,” they told him, “because this is what was written by the prophet:

⁶ And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah: Because out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.”⁹

⁷ Then Herod secretly summoned the wise men and asked them the exact time the star appeared.¹⁰ He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. When you find him, report back to me so that I too can go and worship him.”¹¹

⁹ After hearing the king, they went on their way. And there it was — the star they had seen at its rising. It led them until it came and stopped above the place where the child was.¹² When they saw the star, they were overwhelmed by joy.¹³ Entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and falling to their knees, they worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.¹⁴

¹² And being warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their own country by another route.

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

13 After they were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, “Get up! Take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. For Herod is about to search for the child to kill him.”¹⁵ So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night, and escaped to Egypt.³ He stayed there until Herod’s death, so that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled: Out of Egypt I called my Son.⁶

THE MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS

16 Then Herod, when he realized that he had been outwitted by the wise men, flew into a rage. He gave orders to massacre all the boys in and around Bethlehem who

¹¹ Or they paid him homage, or they paid him tribute
¹² Or you shall not pay him homage
¹³ Or the firstborn of your sons
¹⁴ Or and went to pay him homage
¹⁵ Or Or and they paid him homage
¹⁶ Or Or and we paid him homage
¹⁷ Or Or and you paid him homage
¹⁸ Or Or and that they paid him homage
¹⁹ Or Or and they paid him tribute

¹:21 Jesus is a Greek name corresponding to the Hebrew name Joshua, which means “the Lord saves.” Thus, according to the angel, the child’s name was to indicate the reason he had come into the world.
¹:23 Immanuel, Matthew tells us, means God is with us. Jesus Christ is incarnate deity. That is the essence of Christmas. All the problems in this world can be traced back to sin, and Jesus Christ entered the world to forgive us for our sins, give us victory over our sins, and give us an eternal home free from sin. That truth is what Christmas is all about. If you miss that, you’ve missed the point.
²:1-2 According to legend, there were three wise men—perhaps from Babylonia or Persia. But while we know they brought three specific gifts, we don’t know how many men there were. Moreover, the wise men weren’t present at the nativity. By the time they arrived, Joseph and Mary were living in a house (see 2:11). Jesus was a toddler when the wise men saw him.
²:3 Herod the Great wasn’t a Jew, but an Idumean whom the Romans had made a ruler of the Jews.
²:4-6 Sadly, while these leaders clearly knew the Scriptures, they never pursued the Savior (see John 5:39-40). They didn’t act on what they studied.
²:8 Herod had ulterior motives. He wasn’t about to let anyone take away his kingdom.
²:9 These men had traveled an incredible distance for perhaps as long as two years to worship this King, but they knew he was worth the journey. How much are you willing to be inconvenienced to worship the King of Kings? How badly do you want him?
were two years old and under, in keeping with the time he had learned from the wise men. ¹⁷ Then what was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled:

A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children; and she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.⁴ ⁵

THE RETURN TO NAZARETH

After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared to a dream in Egypt, ²⁰ saying, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, because those who intended to kill the child are dead.” ²¹ So he got up, took the child and his mother, and entered the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned in a dream, he withdrew to the region of Galilee. ²³ Then he went and settled in a town called Nazareth to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazorean.⁶

THE HERALD OF THE CHRIST

In those days John the Baptist came,²⁴ preaching in the wilderness of Judea,²⁵ saying, “Repent, because the kingdom of heaven has come near! ²⁶ For he is the one spoken of through the prophet Isaiah, who said:

A voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way for the Lord; make his paths straight!²⁷

The children who were persecuted in connection to Jesus. ²²³ That Jesus would be called a Nazorean is not found in the Old Testament. So likely Matthew was thinking of statements like Isaiah 53:3: “He was despised and rejected by men” (see also Ps 22:6; Isa 49:7), because Nazareth was viewed as a despised community from which no good thing could come (see John 1:46).

The wilderness (then and now) is a barren place of preparation and development for what God is planning to do.

Repentance is essential for experiencing the presence and grace of God. It involves changing the mind in order to reverse direction. It is the inner resolve and determination to turn from sin and turn to God.

John’s austere lifestyle, odd wardrobe, and confrontational preaching were reminiscent of another of God’s messengers: Elijah (see, e.g., 2 Kgs 1:3–17).

By confessing their sins and being baptized, the people were making a public declaration that they had changed their minds and agreed with what God said about their sins.

Why did John accept other people but not this group? Because, although they were okay with listening to his message, they wanted their lives left alone. Like some people today, they didn’t mind attending a church service as long as it didn’t affect how they were running their own affairs. They wanted information, but not transformation.

Genuine repentance is confirmed by actions. When I travel, I tell the airline agent, “I’m Tony Evans, and I have a reservation.” The agent then asks, “Can I see your proof of identification?” They don’t want mere communication that I am who I claim to be; they want authentication. Therefore, they want to see something that verifies what I affirm. Similarly, shouting, “Hallelujah! Amen! Praise the Lord!” is fine but insufficient. Repentance shows up in your hands and feet, not just in your lips. Without the fruit, the visible proof of true heart repentance, judgment is coming (3:10).

John’s declaration corresponds to the promise of the prophets (see Ezek 36:27; Joel 2:28), the confirmation of Jesus (see John 14:16–17; 15:26; Acts 1:4–5), and the fulfillment in the early church (see Acts 2:1–4; 10:44–45). ³² A farmer would winnow grain by tossing it in the air. The wind would blow away the chaff—the useless husks—while the wheat would fall to be gathered up.

Since John’s message was about repentance, he considered it inappropriate and inconceivable that he would baptize the Messiah, because Jesus had nothing to repent of. But in his substitutionary death on the cross, Jesus would bear the transgressions of sinners and credit them with his perfect righteousness (see 2 Cor 5:21). As his ministry began, then, he intended to identify with sinful humanity on whose behalf he would perfectly fulfill all the demands of God’s law. This baptism would

⁴ Now John had a camel-hair garment with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ Then people from Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the vicinity of the Jordan were going out to him, ⁶ and they were baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. ⁷ When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?” ⁸ Therefore produce fruit consistent with repentance. ⁹ And don’t presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ ¹⁰ For I tell you that God is able to raise up children for Abraham from these stones. ¹⁰ The ax is already at the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree that doesn’t produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹ “I baptize you with water for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is more powerful than I. I am not worthy to remove his sandals. He himself will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing shovel is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn. But the chaff he will burn with fire that never goes out.”

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him.⁴ ¹⁴ But John tried to stop him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and yet you come to me?” ¹⁵ Jesus answered him, “Allow it for now, because this is the way for us to fulfill all

²⁸ Lit fruit worthy of ³¹ Or in ³³ Or to carry ³⁴ Or to loose ³⁵ Or to burden ³⁶ Or to bear ³⁷ Or to have ³⁸ Or to load ³⁹ Or to lift ⁴⁰ Or to make ⁴¹ Or to spend ⁴² Or to provide ⁴³ Or to store ⁴⁴ Or to cancel ⁴⁵ Or to give
Questions & Answers

Q The reality of Satan’s counter-kingdom and his counter-agenda means that we as believers are engaged in a spiritual battle against Satan and his demons. What do we need to do to be successful in that battle?

A Paul makes it clear that “our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens” (Eph 6:12). Christians are engaged in spiritual conflict that takes place in the spiritual realm. And spiritual battles demand spiritual weapons. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 10:3–5 that our job is to use spiritual weapons to change the thinking that precedes actions. So we are seeking to change the mind. Our goal is to use God’s Word to shape our thoughts and the thoughts of others to bring them in alignment with God’s perspective.

Spiritual alignment gives us authority for our activity in the spiritual realm. When Jesus was battling Satan, the first thing he did was quote Scripture (see Matt 4:4). He started with the Word of God because it carries weight. Satan is allergic to Scripture. One of the reasons why we lose so many spiritual battles is because we turn to Scripture last, not first. So using Scripture while implementing it through our actions gains us the authority for victory in the spiritual realm.

FOR THE NEXT Q&A, SEE PAGE 1104.

Matthew 3:4

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. Then the tempter approached him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”

He answered, “It is written: Man must not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.”

Then the devil took him to the holy city, had him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is said: ‘He will give his angels orders concerning you, and they will support you with their hands so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’”

Jesus told him, “It is also written: Do not test the Lord your God.”

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. And he said to him, “I will give you all these things if you will fall down and worship me.”

Also identify Jesus with John and affirm his kingdom message.

3:16-17 Note that all three members of the Trinity appear here, working simultaneously. The Father and the Spirit publicly endorsed the Son for his kingdom mission.

4:1 Notice that the temptation of the Son was God’s idea: Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness. This tells us God was not on the defensive in this matter. He was on the offensive, demonstrating the superiority of his Son over Satan.

Why did God test his Son this way? The Bible describes Jesus as the “second man” or “last Adam” (1 Cor 15:45, 47). The first Adam was tested in the garden, gave in to Satan, and got the human race kicked into the wilderness. The last Adam went into the wilderness to defeat Satan so that he can escort us back to the garden.

2 To fast is to give up a physical craving to fulfill a greater spiritual need. It prioritizes feeding the spirit with prayer and fellowship with God to over feeding the stomach.

3 Clearly the devil had been watching Jesus go without food. He knows what you’re up to, too, and directs his temptations accordingly.

4 If Jesus, the living Word, needed to use the written Word (Deut 8:3 in this case) to deal with the enemy of the Word, how much more do you? He gave you the Bible so you could wield it like a sword (see Eph 6:17).

5-6 Challenging Jesus to jump to his death doesn’t sound like much of a temptation. But notice that he supported his appeal by quoting (4:6) God’s promise of angelic protection in Psalm 91:11–12. Jesus, then, had an opportunity to demonstrate undeniably that he was the Messiah. The problem was that doing so ignored God’s plan. It would bypass the cross.

The devil knows the Bible, and he uses it. If he can’t convince you to act independently of God, he’ll work through your religion.

6:7 Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:16: Do not test the Lord your God. In other words, he knew we are never to use disobedience to back God into a corner in order to force him to fulfill his plan.

9 Satan wants us to bow to him. He’ll make intriguing offers to get us to do so, but they’re never worth the price.
MINISTRY IN GALILEE

12 When he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. He left Nazareth and went to live in Capernaum by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphthali. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

15 Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, along the road by the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.

16 The people who live in darkness have seen a great light, and for those living in the land of the shadow of death, a light has dawned.

17 From then on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, because the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

THE FIRST DISCIPLES

18 As he was walking along the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter), and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. “Follow me,” he told them, “and I will make you fishers of people.” Immediately they left their nets and followed him.

4:10 If you’re a Christian, you have no obligation to the devil, and you have Jesus’s delegated authority against Satan. “Resist the devil [with the Word and in obedience to God], and he will flee from you [as he fled from Christ]” (Jas 4:7).

4:11 When the fallen angel left, faithful angels came and fulfilled their rightful role: serving Christ and giving him the worship he deserves. Jesus preached in continuity with the kingdom message of John: Repent, because the kingdom of heaven has come near (see 2:3).

4:19 There’s an important principle here. If you’re not fishing, you’re not following. If your Christian life does not involve evangelizing the lost, you’re not functioning like the disciple Jesus intends you to be. Not every believer is called to a full-time Christian vocation, but every believer is called to be a full-time Christian.

4:23 These actions are the hallmarks of Jesus’s ministry. Teaching involves clearly articulating the content of the message. Preaching includes calling for a response to what is taught. Healing consists of a visible demonstration of the power of the message.

5:1-2 Matthew 5–7, delivered on a mountain, is known as the Sermon on the Mount. It’s Jesus’s kingdom manifesto. The first few verses of it are known as the Beatitudes (5:3–10); they set forth the character of kingdom men and women. We could call the Beatitudes antibiotics from God’s pharmacy that can aid life transformation. They are a reminder that Jesus is primarily concerned with what’s happening on your inside, which should be the basis of what you’re showing on the outside.

5:3 To be poor in spirit is to be conscious of one’s continual dependence on God. Kingdom people recognize their own inadequacy and insufficiency apart from him.

God’s kingdom refers to God’s rule. If you’re “poor in spirit,” you will get to see God’s heavenly rule in your earthly life. Only by being desperately dependent on God can you become what he created you to be.

5:4 Blessed are those who mourn refers to being saddened by the things that sadden God. God grieves over the sin and wretchedness of the world (see Gen 6:5–6). Sin and its consequences surround us, tempting us to become numb. Instead, we must pray that God would give us the emotions of his heart, so that we can experience the encouraging, strengthening comfort of God.

5:5 Some translations render the humble as “the meek.” It’s important to understand that meekness doesn’t mean weakness. Consider, for example, the process of breaking a horse. The idea is not to break the horse of its strength or speed; rather, the goal is to break the horse of its self-will. As long as you remain independent and “wild,” you will never maximize God’s intention for you. To be meek is to learn to submit your will to God’s.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

“You are blessed when they insult you and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of me.

Be glad and rejoice, because your reward is great in heaven. For that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

BELIEVERS ARE SALT AND LIGHT

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt should lose its taste, how can it be made salty? It’s no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet.

HOPE WORDS

You will rarely see what God is willing to do in secret until he sees what you are willing to do in public.

You are the light of the world. A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden.

No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, but rather on a lampstand, and it gives light for all who are in the house.

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

CHRIST FULFILLS THE LAW

“Don’t think that I came to abolish the law or the Prophets. I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.” For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, the world and all its values are to be fulfilled.

The solutions to our culture’s chaos do not come from the government; they come from the church.

A: 5:13 Or how can the earth be salted?
5:18-19 Mt 11:11; 24:35; Lk 16:17; Jms 2:10
5:21 Ex 20:13; Dt 5:17
Mt 19:18; 23:31,35; Mk 10:19; Lk 18:20; Rm 13:9; Jms 2:11
5:22 Mt 18:9; Mk 9:43; Jms 3:6; Jn 3:3
5:25 Pr 23:8; Lk 12:28
5:27 Ex 20:14; Dt 5:18
5:28 2Sm 11:2; Jb 31:1; Pr 6:25
5:29 Mt 18:9; Mk 9:47; Mt 10:28; 23:15,33; Lk 12:5;
5:31 Jr 3:1; Mt 19:7; Mk 10:4
5:32 Mt 19:9; Mk 10:11; Lk 16:18; Rm 7:3; 1Co 7:11
5:33 Lv 19:12; Nm 30:2; Dt 23:21; Mt 23:16
5:34-35 Ps 48:2; Is 66:1; Mt 23:22; Ac 7:49; Jms 5:12
5:37 Mt 6:13; 13:19,38; Jn 17:15; 2Th 3:3
5:38 Ex 21:24; Lv 24:20; Dt 19:21

**APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

**READ MATTHEW 5:23-24**

- How do these verses contribute to your understanding of reconciliation?

**MURDER BEGINS IN THE HEART**

21 "You have heard that it was said to our ancestors, **Do not murder,** and whoever murders will be subject to judgment.\(^c\)
22 But I tell you, everyone who is angry with his brother or sister\(^d\) will be subject to judgment. Whoever insults\(^e\) his brother or sister, will be subject to the court.\(^f\) Whoever says, 'You fool!' will be subject to hellfire.\(^g\)
23 So if you are offering your gift on the altar, and there you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, 24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled with your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. 25 Reach a settlement quickly with your adversary while you’re on the way with him to the court, or your adversary will hand you over to the judge, and the judge to\(^h\) the officer, and you will be thrown into prison.\(^i\) 26 Truly I tell you, you will never get out of there until you have paid the last penny.\(^j\)

27 Sexual purity involves more than avoiding a physical act. It involves the heart, too. Pornography is a huge stumbling block to moral purity and a clear example of the kind of sin that Jesus warned against (5:28). Jesus calls not for physical mutilation (again, sin is a matter of the heart), but for a radical approach to avoiding sin.

28 The Jewish religious leaders had varying understandings of divorce. Some thought one could divorce for any reason. But marriage vows are to be viewed as sacred and permanent.

29 Jesus didn’t deny the legitimacy of all oath-taking. We find oaths in the Old Testament, such as when covenant relationships were established. So Jesus was warning against careless, profane, and flippant uses of oaths in everyday speech. An oath shouldn’t be used to convince someone of the truthfulness of what you’re saying; that might only be a cover-up for deception.

29-32 But I tell you, everyone who divorces his wife, except in a case of sexual immorality, causes her to commit adultery. And whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.\(^j\)

**TELL THE TRUTH**

30 “You have heard that it was said to our ancestors, **You must not give your oath,** but you must keep your oaths to the Lord.\(^k\)
31 But I tell you, don’t take an oath at all: either by heaven, because it is God’s throne; or by the earth, because it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, because it is the city of the great King.\(^l\) 32 Do not swear by your head, because you cannot make a single hair white or black. 33 But let your ‘yes’ mean ‘yes,’ and your ‘no’ mean ‘no.’ Anything more than this is from the evil one.\(^m\)

**GO THE SECOND MILE**

34 “You have heard that it was said, **An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.**\(^n\)
35 But unless, as a disciple of Jesus, you are committed to growing in righteousness, the heavenly kingdom will not be expressed in your earthly history. The scribes and Pharisees were concerned only with external righteousness.
36 God not only considers our actions but also our thoughts and words. He’s concerned with the motives of the heart.
37 In order to have a healthy vertical relationship—intimacy and fellowship with God—you must maintain your horizontal relationships with others. Make peace with your adversary inasmuch as it depends on you.

**ADULTERY BEGINS IN THE HEART**

27 “You have heard that it was said, **Do not commit adultery.**\(^o\)
28 But I tell you, everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.\(^p\) 29 If your right eye causes you to sin,\(^q\) gouge it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of the parts of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.\(^r\) 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of the parts of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

**DIVORCE PRACTICES CENSURED**

31 ‘It was also said, Whoever divorces his wife must give her a written notice of divorce.’\(^s\)
32 But I tell you, everyone who divorces his wife, except in a case of sexual immorality, causes her to commit adultery. And whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.\(^j\)

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\(^a\) Mt 5:20 Or not one iota; iota is the smallest letter of the Gk alphabet.\(^b\) Mt 5:21 Ex 20:13; Dt 5:17
\(^c\) Mt 5:22 Other mss add without a cause\(^d\) Mt 5:22 Lit Whoever says ‘Race’; an Aramaic term of abuse that puts someone down, insulting one’s intelligence\(^e\) Mt 5:22 Lit Sanhedrin
\(^f\) Mt 5:22 Lit the gehenna of fire\(^g\) Mt 5:25 Other mss read judge will hand you over to\(^h\) Mt 5:26 Lit quadrans, the smallest and least valuable Roman coin, worth 1/64 of a daily wage\(^i\) Mt 5:27 Ex 20:14; Dt 5:18
\(^j\) Mt 5:31 Dt 24:1\(^k\) Mt 5:33 Lv 19:12; Nm 30:2; Dt 23:21
\(^l\) Mt 5:38 Ex 21:24; Lv 24:20; Dt 19:21

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23
I tell you, don’t resist an evildoer. On the contrary, if anyone slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. 40 As for the one who wants to sue you and take away your coat, let him have your coat as well. 41 And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two. 42 Give to the one who asks you, and don’t turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

LOVE YOUR ENemies
43 “You have heard that it was said, Love your neighbor 4c and hate your enemy. 44 But I tell you, love your enemies c and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be children of your Father in heaven. For he causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward will you have? Don’t even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what are you doing out of the ordinary? 48 Don’t even the Gentiles d do the same? 49 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

HHow TO GIVE
6 “Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. Otherwise, you have no reward with your Father in heaven. 2 So whenever you give to the poor, don’t sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be applauded by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. 3 But when you give to the poor, don’t let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

HHow TO PrAY
5 “Whenever you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. 6 But when you pray, go into your private room, shut your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. 7 When you pray, don’t babble like the Gentiles, since they treat them. As Paul says, it means not repaying “evil for evil . . . but conquer[ing] evil with good” (Rom 12:17, 21).

5:43-45 To love your enemies (5:44) is to reflect the character of your Father in heaven (5:45). There are certain blessings that he gives to all people. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good (5:45). You don’t have to be a Christian to feel the sunshine and to breathe oxygen.

A building might look like a saloon from the front, but there was nothing on the other side of its door. Similarly, hypocrites (6:2) are play actors, giving an external appearance of spirituality without an accompanying internal reality. If, like a hypocrite, you give for the applause of people, that’s all the reward you’re going to get. But give and pray in secret, and your Father will reward you (6:3–6).
they imagine they'll be heard for their many words. 8 Don’t be like them, because your Father knows the things you need before you ask him. 9

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

READ MATTHEW 6:9–13

– What do you like best about Jesus’ prayer? Why?
– How does this prayer compare to the way you normally pray?
– How will you intentionally submit to God’s will this week?

THE LORD’S PRAYER

9 “Therefore, you should pray like this:

Our Father in heaven, your name be honored as holy. 10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us today our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. 14

For if you forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will forgive you as well. 15 But if you don’t forgive others, your Father will not forgive your offenses.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

READ MATTHEW 6:25–34

– What are the main benefits or desirable things mentioned in these verses?
– What do these verses teach about anxiety?
– What are the main causes of anxiety in your life?
– Identify one change you’ll make this week to place God and his kingdom first in your life.

THE CURE FOR ANXIETY

25 “Therefore I tell you: Don’t worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. 26 For the life of a person is not measured by what he eats and drinks, but by his righteousness. 27 For where your riches are, there your heart will be also. 28 No one can serve two masters, since a person will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

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KINGDOM LIVING

Seeking First the Kingdom

God’s kingdom is lived out from the perspective of heaven, not earth. That’s why Jesus said, “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you” (Matt 6:33). Far too many Christians, though, think they can mix a little of God with a lot of the world. They’re willing to follow several isolated fragments of what they find in God’s Word—going to church for fellowship, giving money when it’s convenient, not stealing, and so on—but they’re not willing to submit to God’s comprehensive plan and purpose for their lives. They’re not willing to be part of his kingdom agenda.

That’s a big problem. Because when you bring the world into the Word, you’re asking God, the King, to bless something that’s contrary to his kingdom. He won’t do that. In the end, your efforts to keep hold of only a little piece of God actually prevent you from experiencing any wear. Isn’t life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 Consider the birds of the sky: They don’t sow or reap or gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Arent you worth more than they? 27 Can any of you add one moment to his life span 28 by worrying? 29 And why do you worry about clothes? Observe how the wildflowers of the field grow: They don’t labor or spin thread. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was adorned like one of these. 30 If that’s how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and thrown into the furnace tomorrow, won’t he do much more for you — you of little faith? 31 So don’t worry, saying, ’What will we eat?’ or ’What will we drink?’ or ’What will we wear?’ 32 For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God 34 and his righteousness, 35 and all these things will be provided for you. 36 Therefore don’t worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble 9 of its own.

DO NOT JUDGE

7 “Do not judge, so that you won’t be judged.” 2 For you will be judged by the same standard with which you judge others, and you will be measured by the same measure you use. 3 Why do you look at the splinter in your brother’s eye but

impossible to obey as “Don’t breathe.” Worry and anxiety over life are commonplace. But to this Jesus said in effect, “When was the last time you saw a bird with an ulcer?” Birds don’t worry about where they’re going to get their next meal, and the heavenly Father feeds them (6:26). Flowers don’t agonize over looking pretty, but not even Solomon in all his splendor could match the beauty in the fields of God’s creation (6:28-29). If God gives this kind of attention to birds and flowers, won’t he do much more for you. (6:30)? Trust him.

6:33 How do you know if you’re putting God’s kingdom first? Ask yourself this question: When I need guidance to make decisions, where do I go first? For many Christians, God is like a spare tire. He’s the One they run to when all else fails. So, do you seek God’s perspective first (through his Word and godly counsel), or do you seek the world’s perspective? Kingdom Christians appeal to God’s view and his righteous standards first. Do this, and all these things will be provided for you. Align yourself with his agenda, and your Daddy will take responsibility for meeting your needs.

6:34 Focusing on living for God’s kingdom today is the antidote for worry. 71 To illegitimately judge is to create your own standard of what is acceptable and measure everyone against it, hypocritically critiquing others. Not surprisingly, people who do this typically find no problems with their own behavior. That’s because when a sinner creates a standard, he becomes the standard. When my son was eleven years old, he wanted to show me how he could dunk a basketball in the gym. The problem was that he had asked a janitor to lower the rim so that he could dunk it. Those who hypocritically judge others use a standard, but it isn’t God’s. It’s been lowered.

7:3-5 Imagine straining to see a nearly invisible speck while being oblivious to a board protruding from your eyeball! Instead of being judgmental toward others, allow God’s standard to be applied to your own life. If you’re honest, you’ll discover that you fall short. When you’ve addressed your own sin, you’ll be more understanding, compassionate, and righteous in your assessments and better able to help a brother or sister address his or her own sin.
Why does Jesus’s command to “seek first the kingdom of God” (Matt 6:33) accompany his teaching on worry? How does worry impact our ability to seek God first?

**Worry is one of the great distractions of life, and it is more than mere concern.**

Concern involves controlling how much time and attention you give to an issue. Worry occurs when the issue controls you. And when the issues in our lives are controlling us, then the kingdom goes to the back of the line in terms of our priorities, because we’ve given our worries too much clout.

**Legitimate concern is necessary. But we must control what we think about, how much we think about it, and how we allow it to influence us.**

When the kingdom is pushed to the background because an issue in your life has assumed control, then that issue has become an idol and a god, thus hindering the true God from meeting the need that is causing you to worry.

FOR THE NEXT Q&A, SEE PAGE 1134.
23 Then I will announce to them, ‘I never knew you. Depart from me, you law-breakers!’

THE TWO FOUNDATIONS

24 “Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain fell, the rivers rose, and the winds blew and pounded that house. Yet it didn’t collapse, because its foundation was on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and doesn’t act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27 The rain fell, the rivers rose, the winds blew and pounded that house, and it collapsed. It collapsed with a great crash.”

28 When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astonished at his teaching. 29 Because he was teaching them like one who had authority, and not like their scribes.

A MAN CLEANSED

8 When he came down from the mountain, large crowds followed him. 2 Right away a man with leprosy came up and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.” 3 Reaching out his hand, Jesus touched him, saying, “I am willing; be made clean.” Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. 4 Then Jesus told him, “See that you don’t tell anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.”

A CENTURION’S FAITH

5 When he entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, pleading with him, “Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, in terrible agony.” 6 He said to him, “Am I to come and heal him?” 8 “Lord,” the centurion replied, “I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed.” 9 For I too am a man under authority, having soldiers under my command. I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes; and to my servant, ‘Do this!’ and he does it.”

10 Hearing this Jesus, was amazed and said to those following him, “Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with so great a faith.” 11 I tell you that many will come from east and west to share the banquet with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. 12 But the sons of the kingdom will be thrown out into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” 13 Then Jesus told the centurion, “Go. As you have believed, so let it be done for you.” And his servant was healed that very moment.

HEALINGS AT CAPERNAUM

14 Jesus went into Peter’s house and saw his mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever. 15 So he touched her hand, and the fever left her. Then she got up and began to serve him. 16 When evening came, they brought to him many who were demon-possessed. He drove out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick, 17 so that what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

He himself took our weaknesses and carried our diseases.

7:24-27 I once had a crack in a wall of my house. No matter how many times I fixed it, the crack came back. Finally, I learned the problem wasn’t with the wall; the problem was a shifting foundation. Many of us have “cracks” in our lives—emotional, relational, financial—but we address the symptoms and not the source of the problem. If you want stability in your personal life, your family, your ministry, and your community, you need the strong, sturdy foundation of God’s Word—which includes both knowledge of the Bible and applying it to life. Wisdom is the ability and willingness to apply spiritual truth to life’s circumstances. Foolishness is unwillingness to do so.

8:2 There’s nothing wrong with seeking a doctor’s help when you’re sick. The problem in neglecting to seek God’s help and treating the doctor as if he’s a god. 8:8-9 This Roman officer understood how authority works. He had men under his command, and he didn’t need to be present for his soldiers to obey his orders—any more than he needed Caesar to visit him personally to get him to jump. A subordinate only needs to know that a superior has issued an order (8:9). The centurion knew that Jesus possessed authority to heal. Therefore, he trusted that Jesus didn’t have to be physically present but only say the word (8:8).

8:10 What made the centurion’s faith so great was his total confidence in Jesus’s word. Great faith comes when we truly understand the greatness of the object of our faith.

8:12 The sons of the kingdom refers to unre-generate Jews. Unfaithful believers will lose rewards in Jesus’s millennial kingdom rule while faithful believers will be rewarded with rich inheritance. Outer darkness and weeping and gnashing of teeth are pictures of profound regret due to loss of rewards at the judgment seat of Christ because of their unfaithfulness. The context determines whether this phrase is referring to believers (see 25:29-30) or to unbelievers (see 13:47-50).

8:15 Notice what this woman did as soon as she got up from her sickbed. Likewise, when the Lord ministers to you, it should be reflected in your service to him.

8:16-17 The point here is that Jesus’s healing ministry validated prophecy regarding the Messiah. A day is coming when, because of his death on the cross, sickness, pain, and death will be abolished forever (see Isa 53:5; Rev 21:4).
THE COST OF FOLLOWING JESUS

18 When Jesus saw a large crowd around him, he gave the word to go to the other side. A scribe approached him and said, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.”

19 Jesus told him, “Foxes have dens, and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.”

20 “Lord,” another of his disciples said, “first let me go bury my father.”

21 But Jesus told him, “Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.”

WIND AND WAVES OBEY JESUS

23 As he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. 24 Suddenly, a violent storm arose on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves — but Jesus kept sleeping. 25 So the disciples came and woke him up, saying, “Lord, save us! We’re going to die!”

26 He said to them, “Why are you afraid, you of little faith?” Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.

27 The men were amazed and asked, “What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the sea obey him!”

DEMONS DRIVEN OUT BY JESUS

28 When he had come to the other side, to the region of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men met him as they came out of the tombs. They were so violent that no one could pass that way. 29 Suddenly they shouted, “What do you have to do with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?”

30 A long way off from them, a large herd of pigs was feeding. 31 “If you drive us out,” the demons begged him, “send us into the herd of pigs.”

32 “Go!” he told them. So when they had come out, they entered the pigs, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the water.

33 Then the men who tended them fled. They went into the city and reported everything, especially what had happened to those who were demon-possessed. 34 At that, the whole town went out to meet Jesus. When they saw him, they begged him to leave their region.

THE SON OF MAN FORGIVES AND HEALS

9 So he got into a boat, crossed over, and came to his own town. 2 Just then some men brought to him a paralyzed lying on a stretcher. Seeing their faith, Jesus told the paralytic, “Have courage, son, your sins are forgiven.”

3 At this, some of the scribes said to themselves, “He’s blaspheming!”

4 Perceiving their thoughts, Jesus said, “Why are you thinking evil things in your hearts?” 5 For which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’? 6 But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins — then he told the paralytic, “Get up, take your stretcher, and go home.”

7 So he got up and went home. When the crowds saw this, they were awestruck and gave glory to God, who had given such authority to men.

THE CALL OF MATTHEW

9 As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the toll booth, and he said to him, “Follow me,” and he got up and followed him.

8:18 Other mss read saw large crowds
8:20 In other words, he asked the would-be disciple, “Are you sure you understand what you’re getting yourself into? Will you follow me when there’s no Hilton, no Holiday Inn?” Are you committed to Jesus, even when times are hard?
8:21-22 The man’s request (8:21) was another way of saying he wanted to receive his inheritance before he committed himself to discipleship. Once his father died and left him sufficient funds, he’d be all in. But Jesus permitted no postponement: Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead (8:22) — that is, let those who are spiritually dead worry about such things. Are you willing to risk discipleship even when it doesn’t fit with your economic plans?
8:27 That the disciples were amazed at Jesus’s lordship over creation suggests they hadn’t fully known who was in the boat with them. The storms and trials of life are designed to give you a bigger view of God and a more precise understanding of who Jesus is, too. The size of your faith is ultimately tied to the size of your God.
8:29 Demons clearly know that a day of judgment is coming. But they refuse to live in light of it. People do that too (see Rom 1:32).
8:33-34 Did the Gentile herdsmen rejoice that two men had been miraculously set free of their oppression? No. Jesus was responsible for a negative impact on their livelihood. So, sadly, financial loss took priority over spiritual gain.
8:35 At
While he was reclining at the table in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came to eat with Jesus and his disciples. *11* When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” *12* Now when he heard this, he said, “It is not those who are well who need a doctor; but those who are sick.”  

Go and learn what this means: *I desire mercy and not sacrifice.*  

A QUESTION ABOUT FASTING

Then John’s disciples came to him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples do not fast?”  

Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests be sad while the groom is with them? The time will come when the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.” No one patches an old garment with unshrink cloth, because the patch pulls away from the garment and makes the tear worse. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the skins burst, the wine spills out, and the skins are ruined. No, they put new wine into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved.

A GIRL RESTORED AND A WOMAN HEALED

As he was telling them these things, suddenly one of the leaders came and knelt down before him, saying, “My daughter just died, but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live.” So Jesus and his disciples got up and followed him.  

Just then, a woman who had suffered from bleeding for twelve years approached from behind and touched the end of his robe. For she said to herself, “If I can just touch his robe, I’ll be made well.”

Jesus turned and saw her. “Have courage, daughter,” he said. “Your faith has saved you.” And the woman was made well from that moment.

When Jesus came to the leader’s house, he saw the flute players and a crowd lamenting loudly. “Leave,” he said, “because the girl is not dead but asleep.” And they laughed at him. After the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. Then news of this spread throughout that whole area.

HEALING THE BLIND

As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, “Have mercy on us, Son of David!”  

When he entered the house, the blind men approached him, and Jesus said to them, “Do you believe that I can do this?” They said to him, “Yes, Lord.”

Then he touched their eyes, saying, “Let it be done for you according to your faith.” And their eyes were opened. Then Jesus warned them sternly, “Be sure that no one finds out.” But they went out and spread the news about him throughout that whole area.

DRIVING OUT A DEMON

Just as they were going out, a demon-possessed man who was unable to speak was brought to him. When the demon had been driven out, the man who had been mute spoke, and the crowds were amazed, saying, “Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel!”

But the Pharisees said, “He drives out demons by the demons.”

THE LORD OF THE HARVEST

Jesus continued going around to all the towns and villages, teaching in their

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A: 9:13 13:6 B: 9:13 Other ms add at the table  C: 9:15 Lit the sons of the bridal chamber  D: 9:15 Lit days  E: 9:17 Lit And they do not put  F: 9:18 Lit daughter has now come to the end  G: 9:21 Or be saved  H: 9:22 Or has made you well  I: 9:22 Lit hour

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9:10 Matthew had found grace and refused to keep it to himself because he knew others needed the same. That’s why he threw a party at his house and invited other tax collectors and sinners to it.

9:11 The Pharisees couldn’t conceive of upstanding, religious Jews socializing and eating with tax collectors and sinners. Tragically, many modern believers turn all of their focus inward to their Christian club and forget the reason Jesus came to earth: to invite new members into the family. When was the last time you connected a sinner to the Savior?

9:13 By quoting Hosea 6:6, Jesus essentially told the Pharisees to go back and study their Bibles: *I desire mercy and not sacrifice.* The Pharisees offered plenty of religious sacrifices, but their hearts weren’t merciful. Similarly, if your praise and worship isn’t making you more compassionate toward the lost, you’ve missed the point of church.

9:15 The kingdom of God had come near because the King of the kingdom—the Messiah—had arrived. A time for fasting would come later when the groom (King Jesus) was taken from them. As sure as you don’t grieve at a wedding feast, you don’t fast at a celebration.

9:22 According to Leviticus 15:25-27, the woman’s flow of blood would’ve made her and anything she touched ceremonially unclean. But instead of uncleanness flowing to Jesus through her touch, healing flowed to her.

9:27 The prophet Isaiah had much to say about the Messiah, God’s Servant, the King who was to come. He would be a descendant of David (of the “stump of Jesse,” Isa 11:1), and he would bring healing (see Isa 42:6-7). These men, recognizing Jesus as the Messiah, knew what Jesus could do.

9:28-29 It’s not enough to have faith: that faith must be declared publicly.

9:33 When the Lord drove out the demon, the man who had been mute could speak. This tells us that in the realm of God’s kingdom, Satan’s power is restrained; thus, you want to be living under God’s kingdom rule.
A NOTE FROM DR. TONY EVANS

This study Bible is based on a simple yet profound biblical worldview: the glory of God through the advancement of his kingdom. This is the unifying theme of Scripture, from Genesis through Revelation. The concept of God’s kingdom is what ties all of the Bible together. When this central point of connectivity is lost to the reader, it is easy for Scripture to seem like a series of disconnected stories, events, personalities, and doctrines that do not strategically and thematically connect to one another.

The word "kingdom" means “rule” or “authority.” When linked to God, it refers to the rule of God in both heaven and earth encompassing both eternity and time. It is therefore comprehensive in nature. This kingdom is composed of a ruler (God), subjects (angels and people), a realm (creation), and regulations (laws).

The Bible unfolds how God’s kingdom operates in the affairs of the world and how God receives glory through his kingdom rule, even when that rule is being opposed by both angels and human beings. While God’s kingdom rule takes various forms with varying laws through varying administrations (i.e., dispensations), it nonetheless maintains its central goal of bringing God glory whether through blessing or judgment.

The kingdom agenda, then, is the visible manifestation of the comprehensive rule of God over every area of life. God’s kingdom agenda is carried out through four covenantal spheres: the individual, the family, the church, and the government (i.e., nations). A covenant is a divinely created relational bond through which God administers his kingdom program. It establishes a legal relationship in the spiritual realm that is to be lived out in the physical realm. To operate and function underneath the umbrella of God’s kingdom covenants and guidelines is to position the specific covenantal relationship (i.e., individual, family, church, government) to experience God’s greatest involvement and benefits within that covenantal sphere.
Conversely, to operate outside of and in opposition to God’s kingdom covenant is to experience the negative consequences of not being aligned and covenantally covered.

This study Bible is designed to reflect this kingdom perspective. My goal is that it will serve as a valuable study resource for serious students of the Bible by combining exegesis, exposition, and exhortation that creates a relevant kingdom mindset.

As you use this study Bible, remember:

I. Study the Scriptures with a view to meeting with God, not just learning about him.

II. Study the Scriptures by routinely asking, “What should I do in light of what I have learned?”

III. Study the Scriptures in their context in order to be accurate in your understanding of what the biblical authors are saying.

IV. Study the Scriptures in prayer and in dependency on the Holy Spirit to open up your mind and heart to the meaning and contemporary relevancy and application of the text.

V. Study the Scripture with a kingdom mindset, seeking to identify God’s rule over every area of life.

While nothing can be added to or subtracted from God’s inerrant Word, it is my sincere hope that the notes and features in this study Bible will aid you in your understanding and application of the Bible to your life. For additional exposition and application of the Scriptures, see also The Tony Evans Bible Commentary: Advancing God’s Kingdom Agenda. Most importantly, it is my prayer that your reading, studying, and obedience to the written Word will lead you into a deeper, more intimate relationship with the living Word, Jesus Christ, as kingdom disciples as you live all of life under his kingdom rule.