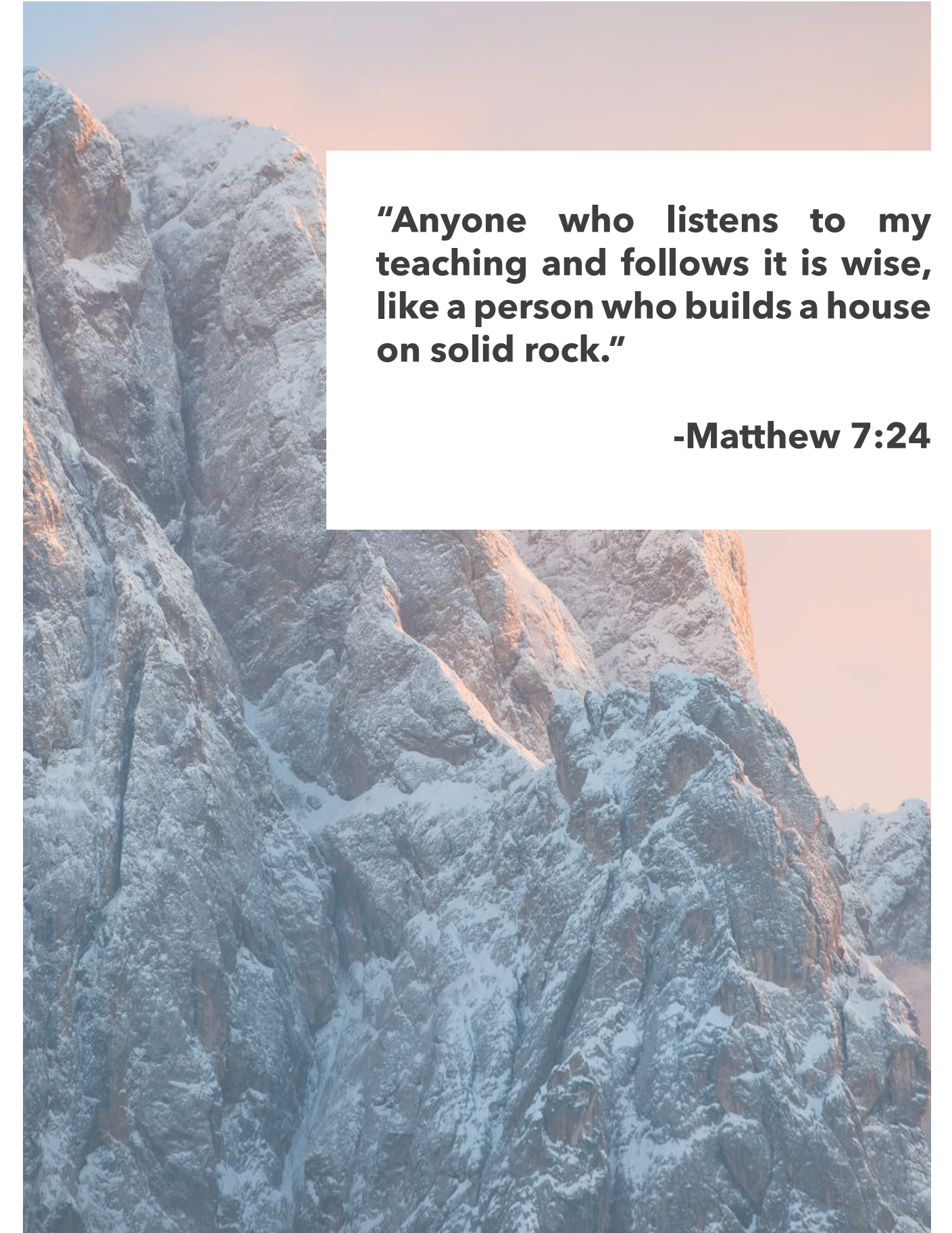




RESPONDING IN OBEDIENCE

WEEK 6





“Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock.”

-Matthew 7:24

DAY 1 - MONDAY

MATTHEW 7:24-29, LUKE 6:46-49

Reflection:

What do you think needs to change for you to begin walking in obedience to God?

Why do you think God cares about our obedience?

End your time today by sitting silently and reflecting on what you think your foundation in life is built on. (Is it your dreams being achieved, your family being happy and healthy, your success at work or school, your relationships and legacy?) Ask God to expose the foundation your life is being built on, and ask Him to help you to begin to replace it, piece by piece, day by day, with a foundation in Him and obedience to Him.

Foundation of Our Lives

"These two builders seem to have been equally well skilled in architecture. The one could build a house without receiving any more instruction than the other. I do not find that there was halt or pause on the part of either because he could not turn an arch, or fix a truss. Evidently they were both skilled workmen, well acquainted with their art. So is it with many here. They know as far as the theory goes what the plan of salvation is, as well as I do. Yet, where the knowledge is the same, the ultimate result may vary; two men may be equally well instructed in the Scriptures, yet one of them may be wise and the other foolish. To know what faith is, what repentance is, what a good hope in Christ is, may all be yours, and yet it may but increase your misery for ever. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. It is not the hearer, but the doer of the word, that is blessed. Knowledge puffeth up; love alone buildeth up. My dear friends, I am most earnest that those of you who are desiring to find everlasting life in Christ Jesus, may not be content with anything short of a true, deep, and real work of grace in your hearts; for no clearness of head knowledge, no natural earnestness of purpose or eagerness of desire can save you; without an interest in Christ Jesus you are lost to all eternity. "Ye must be born again;" ye must be brought into vital union with the living Saviour, or your hopefulness will end in overwhelming destruction." -Charles Spurgeon *The Two Builders and Their Houses*

DAY 2 - TUESDAY

NEHEMIAH 9, HEBREWS 12:1-15, 2 CORINTHIANS 7:1,
PHILIPPIANS 2:1-18

Reflection:

In what areas of your life do you have the most difficulty obeying God?

What steps can you take today toward obedience?

Obedient Lives

Over and over in scripture, the Israelites violated their covenant with God and the many ways He remained faithful in return. We see the people of Israel, having repented of their sins, renew their specific obligations under the Mosaic Covenant. In other words, they vow to get it right this time around. Their repentance leads to renewed obedience. Isn't that the way it should be? Is repentance without renewed obedience really repentance at all? We want some easy-to-remember formula that enables us to obey every single time. But the truth is, the gospel is not about formulas; it is simply about putting our trust in Jesus. It is about turning to Him again and again. And again.

The people of Israel are renewing their covenant with the Lord. They are doing so publicly and as a community. They are putting it in writing; they are signing on the dotted line. They are making specific, practical promises to God and his Church. Even though their history is full of disobedience and disappointment, they dare to name their offenses aloud before the Lord and pledge new obedience to Him. God's law asks more than our human brokenness can give. It did then, and it does now. And so there is Christ. There is the One who fulfills the law on our behalf. Let us renew our covenant with Him today and believe He will meet us. As a community, let us pray earnestly and with new fervor with the Psalmist:

*Create in us a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within us.
Cast us not away from your presence
and take not your Holy Spirit from us.
Restore to us the joy of your salvation,
and uphold us with a willing spirit. Amen.*
(adapted from Psalm 51:10-12, ESV)

Written by Amanda Williams, *She Reads Truth*

DAY 3 - WEDNESDAY

LUKE 9:18-27, TITUS 2:11-15

Reflection:

If someone were to ask you to answer the question, "who do you think you are?" What would you say? What are the things that make you who you are? What are the things that influence your life and decisions?

What do you think it means for you to begin to deny yourself, respond in obedience to God, and start looking more like Jesus?

Denial of Self

In a society that prizes individualism as much as ours does, perhaps one fear looms largest when we hear "deny yourself": the fear that we will lose ourselves. We will be deprived of everything that makes me me. Our dreams will be trashed, our desires blunted, our personality erased. We will become one more drop in a sea of endless gray.

The fear is understandable. "Deny yourself" requires, after all, self-denial. We must lay the axe to the root of every tree that bears bad fruit in us. Every sin must be slain, every part of me that does not reflect him must be renounced – and not just once, but "daily" (Luke 9:23). "See," the serpent says, "lose yourself."

To which Jesus responds, "No, find yourself – your true self." He says, "Whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it" (Mark 8:35). The kingdom of heaven holds secrets of which the devil knows nothing. Where Jesus reigns, the way up is down, the first are last, and the only way to save your life is to lose it for his sake.

The life we find on the other side of self-denial may look far different from the life we've always known. But it will not – it cannot – be worse. It is a life where we gain a hundredfold more than we ever give up (Mark 10:30). It is a life where we are no longer a broken note in the symphony of the universe, but are rather sounding the part God created us for. It is a life with Jesus: maker of all beauty, redeemer of all brokenness, fountain of all joy.

When you deny yourself, you will not lose yourself – not ultimately. You will find yourself.

- Written by Scott Hubbard, *Denying Yourself is Loving Yourself*

DAY 4 - THURSDAY

ROMANS 2:12-13, JAMES 1:19-25, EPHESIANS 2:1-10

Reflection:

How does God's Word impact your daily life?

Do you struggle to take your knowledge of Scripture and apply it to your life?

Doer of the Word

We receive salvation solely by God's grace through faith. But our faith is demonstrated by our actions. When we genuinely believe something, we act on that truth. If we believe a chair will hold us, we sit in it. The same is true with God's Word. If we believe it, we act on it. To be a doer of the Word is to put our knowledge of God and His ways into action. Being a doer of the Word is not about achieving salvation through our works. It is about abiding in Christ and fully allowing His Word to affect our lives. When we are doers of the Word and not just hearers, we experience more of the abundant life we have been given in Christ. We reflect God's glory in more profound ways to the hurting world. We better understand and appreciate God's ways and His character. Being a doer of the Word means putting into action the truths God has given us. But we cannot be doers of the Word if we don't know His Word. So we must both intentionally learn the truths of God and be faithful to apply them to our lives. We do this out of gratitude for what Christ has done for us. We shine our good deeds to proclaim the Lord's glory, not to gain His favor. We prove by how we live that we have repented of our sins and turned to God.

Taking action and being a doer of the Word can make people take notice because we are living differently; we are radiating Christ's love to the world in a noticeably different way. As we internalize God's truth, we are compelled to live those truths out and teach them to others. We should let that light shine to illuminate the way for others. Lord, let us soak in your Word, internalize Your Truth and let that influence our thoughts, words, and actions in a way that honors you. May we be faithful students of Your Word and meditate on it day and night so that it seeps into everything we do!

DAY 5 - FRIDAY

JOHN 14:15-26

Reflection:

What do you think it looks like to love obedience to God?

What would need to change for you to begin to love obedience to God?

Loving Obedience

A snowball-down-the-hill effect happens to us when we begin to practice the beliefs we've looked at in this study. When we first believe in the messages of the gospel (you can come to Christ as you are, you are forgiven, and there's real hope for change), then we begin to want to put these beliefs into practice (receive from God, repent to God and others, and respond to Him in obedience). In other words, the more we believe in Him, the more we want to reflect Him.

When we get to the place where we are so in love with Christ that it affects how we live, we start living obediently, then we will begin loving obedience. To a child, obedience sounds like chores or work that limits or takes away our joy, but to the believer who loves and has faith in the gospel beliefs, they will see obedience for what it truly is, freedom. Over the last six weeks, we have taken time to do a deep dive on gospel beliefs and practices, and what it all comes down to is answering the question: am I willing to believe these truths so profoundly that it changes how I live and respond? Am I willing to obey Him and His call for my life? This is the gospel at work within us if we're willing to lovingly obey the message.

DAY 6 - SATURDAY (REFLECTION DAY)

MATTHEW 7:24-29

Reflection Notes and Questions:

This week we spent time studying the final gospel practice of this Grace in the Word study. The final practice is all-encompassing towards everything we've looked at in this study. We looked this week at responding to God in obedience. If what we've discussed in this study is true, if we believe it and put it into practice, then we are responding to Him in obedience. The life that fully believes and receives the Lord is one that is changed, that lives obediently to Him.

As we wrap up week 6 of this study, reflect on what responding to Christ in obedience looks like. Seek to understand and live a new life for Him in obedience. Follow the reflection practices below:

- › Write down what you learned about who God is this week.

- › What do you feel that God has been calling you to respond in obedience to Him? What would it look like for you to begin to respond in obedience to Him in that thing?

- › End your time with this study by spending an extended time alone with God. Get away from family, work, and busyness, and sit quietly with the Lord. Seek Him and invite truth into your heart. Ask Christ to help you believe what you've learned in this study so fully that it impacts, influences, and changes how you live. Ask Him to help you put these beliefs you have about Him into practice.

DAY 7 - SUNDAY

REST DAY

Use today to rest, pray, and catch up on any of this week's reading you missed. Use today as a rest and preparation for your heart towards next week's time with God in this study.

