

WEEKLY GUIDE

DECEMBER 5, 2021

1 GATHER! SUNDAY AND THURSDAY

2 TALK! DISCUSS THE LESSONS

3 DO! PUT THE LESSONS INTO PRACTICE

4 PRAY! MAKE YOUR REQUESTS KNOWN TO GOD

BIBLE READINGS:

Luke 12:35-39; John 1:6-14; Mark 1:1-3; Matthew 2:1-2, 10-11; Hebrews 11:8; Romans 13:11-14; Galatians 5:24; Colossians 3:1-2; 2 Corinthians 10:5; Philippians 4:8; Luke 14:28-33; Matthew 25:31-34; Revelation 13:8

LUKE 12:35-36

Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, like servants waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him.

MARK 1:1-3

The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, as it is written in Isaiah the prophet: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way"— "a voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'"

MATTHEW 2:1-2, 10-11

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

ROMANS 13:14

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

LUKE 14:28, 31

Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won't he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand?

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DISCUSSION:

What are some activities that you do every day or each week? What kind of preparation do you do for each? Do you agree with the quote by Benjamin Franklin about failing to prepare? Why is preparation a key to success in life and faith?

What is the result when we fail to properly prepare? What does it mean to "make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts?" How do you make preparations to gratify your selfish desires? What does the Bible say about this? How can we refuse to be tempted to vice and instead pursue virtue and character?

Which Bible characters serve as examples of the importance of preparation? In what ways does the Christmas story relate to this topic? How can we be ready to receive and worship Christ? What does "let every heart prepare Him room" mean? How can we prepare our heart for worship and service?

APPLICATION:

What impacted you the most from this lesson? What were your big takeaways? What will you apply to your life? How will you put what you learned into practice in your life this week?

SUMMARY:

Benjamin Franklin said it so well: "By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail." Preparation is a key to success in life and faith. It is also an important theme in Scripture. Preparation is the action or process of making something ready for use or service or of getting ready for some occasion, test, or duty. Think of the things you do each week: work, hobbies, relationships, activities. Most of them require some amount of planning and preparation. We prepare for the work day, a trip, a meal, severe weather, a wedding, and even church. The list is unending. There is even preparation before we go to sleep.

We must put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts. The word for "provision" in the original language carries the idea of "thinking about what you will do in advance." If we think about pleasing our flesh, we furnish the fuel to make it happen. It's as though our thoughts gather the necessary provisions to move forward and act upon our sinful desires. We must not give any forethought or make any preparations as to how we can gratify our selfish desires.

Many characters in the Bible serve as example of people who took preparation seriously... Noah, Abraham, Moses, John the Baptist, and most of all Jesus. Jesus is the Lamb that was slain before the creation of the world (Rev. 13:8). God has been preparing His Kingdom since the creation of the world for those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life (Matthew 25:34). If God takes preparation so seriously, shouldn't we? The wise men made preparations for a long journey, fully expecting to find the promised Messiah. They didn't show up emptyhanded. They came ready to worship, bearing gifts to offer the Christ child. We too should prepare our heart to receive our King and worship Him!

PRAYER REQUESTS:

