

Christian student ministry workers in Sweden developed a series of questions to ask when reading a Bible passage. Called the “Swedish Method” because of its origins, these questions can be used when reading the Bible by yourself or with others.

The daily readings in this family worship guide have a few questions. However, we encourage you, as appropriate for your family, to ask the following general questions of the text each day.



Is there something that ‘shines’ from the passage—whatever impacts most, or draws attention?



Is there something you don’t understand, or a question the passage raises in your mind?



Is there a personal application to your life?



Is there something you plan to share with someone else – and who will you share it with?



How do ideas in the passage interrelate? Or with other passages in this book – or in the whole Bible?

Worshipping Together is part of the vision and is a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Frankston, Victoria, Australia. frankstonrp.org.au bit.ly/WTrpcaf

The concept and layout draws heavily from *Let’s Worship God*, a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Airdrie, Scotland. airdrierpcs.org

The readings are from Tim Chester’s 3-year weekly reading plan. bit.ly/WkBbl or bit.ly/3yrBbl

The quote on the cover is from the article *What Shampoo and Family Worship Have in Common*, Written by Randy Greenwald, (Quoted from *Tabletalk* magazine, Nov 1997.)

Notes this week are drawn in part from commentaries on Matthew by John Calvin, William Hendriksen, and Iain Campbell

Worshipping Together



We love God because He first loved us.

And we love to tell God that we love Him.

Joyful and faithful worship together twice each Lord’s Day is the highlight of our week. We are glad that they said, “Let us go to the House of the Lord.” Corporate worship prepares us for the week and prepares us for Heaven.

In addition, we regularly worship God as families and as individuals.

One father put it this way:

The back of my shampoo bottle says, “Lather, rinse, repeat.” Simple enough that even I can do it. Though family worship may be a bit more complicated than shampooing hair, it ought not to be rated with “home dentistry” in the scale of difficulty.



If you could buy family worship in the store, it would come in the form of a Bible, and the directions would simply say, “Read, pray, repeat.” Men should gather their families at least once daily. They should read a portion of the Scriptures to them. And they should pray with them. There need be no fireworks or pizzazz to keep the kids interested. There needs to be only a father* with a heart-love for God – who desires to see that love appropriated by his children.*

Read, pray, repeat.

* Fathers leading their family in worship is always the goal. When, in the Lord’s providence, the father is absent or uninterested a godly mother will lead her children

Reading Matthew 13:1-3, 10-17, 34-35 I will open My mouth in parables

Notes (See back page for authors) Jesus teaches in this chapter 7 parables about the Kingdom. Hendriksen says that *in its broadest connotation the terms “the kingdom of heaven,” “the kingdom of God,” or simply “the kingdom” (when the context makes clear that what is meant is “the kingdom of heaven or of God”) indicate God’s kingship, rule or sovereignty, recognized in the hearts and operative in the lives of his people, and effecting their complete salvation, their constitution as a church, and finally a redeemed universe.*

These parables tell us something the Kingdom’s nature, how it grows, its value, and its King. But before we look at the particular parables, let’s briefly consider parables in general. Hendriksen directs us to see two reasons this chapter gives for these parables. *Jesus now, more than ever before, begins to speak in parables, in order a. to further reveal the truth to those who accepted the mysterious, and b. to conceal it from those who rejected the obvious.*

Might our hearts and minds be open to accept the mysterious as we learn from our Saviour and King. Might we not be those who hear but do not understand. Instead, may God graciously bless our eyes and ears for seeing and hearing.

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. How many parables did Jesus teach in this chapter?
 2. What are these 7 parables all about?
 3. Why did Jesus speak in parables?
 4.     

- Praise Pray** Psalm 78a²
1. Ask God’s help for you and your family to hear and understand
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

¹ You will notice we only have a printed guide for 6 days. We recommend each Lord’s Day you review the previous week’s readings and/or the previous or current week’s sermons and pray together

² Psalm selections are taken from the *Book of Psalms for Worship*. We encourage our congregation to sing the same selection each day for a week to gain familiarity with the selection

Reading Matthew 13:47-58 Parable of the dragnet

Notes (See back page for authors) Again Jesus tells us of the mixed nature of the Kingdom until the end of time. To these disciples, some fishermen by training, he uses a common image. The weighted down net is thrown into the sea or lake and dragged back to the boat. The weighted opening catches and keeps fish. But, when they are brought to the boat or to shore, not all are “keepers”. Some are thrown back.

Hendriksen notes that *not all of those that enter the kingdom in its visible manifestation—for all practical purposes we might as well say not all those who enter the church visible—are truly saved. This will become evident in the great day of judgment when the angels will separate the wicked from the righteous.*

This parable, quite similar to the Sower and the Tares, may not be a “new treasure.” But Jesus reminds us that we need reminders of “old treasures” too. He teaches, Calvin points out, that *Jesus’ object, in taking so much pains to instruct them, was not merely that they might be well informed, but that they might communicate to others what they had received... that the teachers of the Church ought to be prepared by long study for giving to the people, as out of a storehouse, a variety of instruction concerning the word of God, as the necessity of the case may require*

Immediately after Matthew records Jesus telling these parable, he illustrates how they conceal - as many from Jesus’ own town rejected him. What about you?

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. What sort of fish were caught?
 2. What did they represent?
 3. How are we to fish for men??
 4.     

- Praise Pray** Psalm 78a
1. Pray that you and your family will fish for men, with God’s help
 2. Pray for your family
 3. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member
 4. Pray for the reading and preaching of God’s word tomorrow

Reading Matthew 13:44-47 Hidden Treasure and Pearl of Great Price

Notes
(See back page for authors)

How important is the gospel to you? To me? Calvin notes that these two parables teach us *that the Gospel does not receive from us the respect which it deserves, unless we prefer it to all the riches, pleasures, honours, and advantages of the world, and to such an extent, that we are satisfied with the spiritual blessings which it promises, and throw aside every thing that would keep us from enjoying them; for those who aspire to heaven must be disengaged from every thing that would retard their progress.*

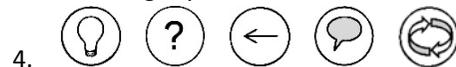
Hendriksen suggests that *an excellent commentary on this parable is Paul's experience as recorded in his autobiographical note:... (Phil. 3:8, 9a). Paul had come upon this treasure suddenly, unexpectedly (Acts 9:1-19). ...we should grasp [the parable's one important lesson: the incalculable preciousness of salvation for those who discover it and obtain possession of it!*

Campbell tells us that *Jesus is reminding us that some people (like Matthew himself, perhaps?) find salvation in Jesus Christ when they are not looking for him; others make the same discovery through their careful use of the means appointed for that purpose.*

Have you found the Kingdom? Does the King rule over you? Does that fill you with immeasurable joy? You will find ultimate value in no one and nothing else.

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. How did the man find the hidden treasure? What did he do?
2. How did the merchant find the great pearl? What did he do?
3. How might you show how valuable the Kingdom is to you?



Praise PSalm 78a

- Pray**
1. Confess, with your family, the value of Christ's Kingdom over all else
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23 Parable of the sower

Notes
(See back page for authors)

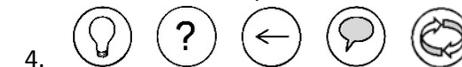
We might be inclined to call this parable "the parable of the soils," except that our Saviour Himself called it the parable of the sower. Multitudes came to Jesus to hear him preach (v2). Calvin suggests we need to remember *that if those who ran from distant places to Christ, like hungry persons, are compared to an unproductive and barren soil, we need not wonder if, in our own day, the Gospel does not yield fruit in many, of whom some are lazy and sluggish, others hear with indifference, and others are scarcely drawn even to hear.*

The same seed – God's Word – is sown. Four different responses are shown. Campbell says that *Jesus is reminding us that not all our gospel labour has a positive effect, ... that the effectiveness of our gospel witness might not be immediately apparent, ... [and] that opposition is to be expected, and that there are different ways in which the gospel of the kingdom can be rendered ineffective.*

How have you responded to the gospel? Is your heart unresponsive? Or shallow? Or distracted by the world? Or are you bearing fruit? Are you now also sowing? That is, are you faithfully proclaiming the message of the word of God? Persevere in sowing, and praying, that God may raise up a harvest in due time.

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. Who is the sower in this parable?
2. What is the seed?
3. What are the responses to the seed sown?



Praise Psalm 78a

- Pray**
1. Commit yourself and your family in prayer to sow the gospel seed, with God's help.
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 Parable of the Tares (Weeds)

Notes
(See back page for authors)

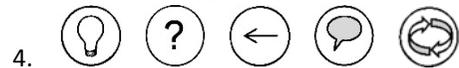
Another sower goes out to sow good seed. Yet his enemy also sows bad seed. What is the result? What is the lesson?
This sower, Jesus tells us, is the Son of Man – that is, Jesus Himself. This time the seeds are different rather than the soil. In fact, both types of seeds grow well in this parable. The good seeds are sons of the Kingdom, as Hendriksen puts it, *those who gladly own Jesus as their Lord and King*. However, bad seeds are also planted. These are, as Hendriksen says, *sons of the evil one, Satan’s children and followers*. Notice again, both types of seeds grow well. In God’s world, followers of Jesus produce followers of Jesus and followers of Satan produce followers of Satan. Now, that reproduction is not mechanical and is not absolute but is the normal way.

So when these plants begin to grow – wheat and weeds side by side – the servants of the King are concerned and offer to pull up the weeds. The Sower says to leave them for now. A time will come – a final judgement, in which the followers of Satan will be cut down and cast into Hell for eternal judgement.

Like the others, this parable is not just a nice story. Hendriksen points out that Jesus expects the hearer to *take to heart the meaning of the parable, not only by being attentive, patient, hopeful, and trusting, but also by examining himrself, and [asking], “Am I represented by the wheat, or by the tares?”*

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. Who is the sower? Who is the enemy?
2. What will happen to the wheat at the end?
3. What will happen to the tares/weeds at the end?



Praise Pray

- Psalm 78a
1. Commit yourself and your family in prayer to reproduce followers of Jesus, with God’s help.
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Matthew 13:31-33 Mustard seed and Leaven (yeast)

Notes
(See back page for authors)

Now, Jesus turns to the extent of the Kingdom with two short parables. Both speak of significant growth from a tiny beginning. Campbell comments that *the mustard seed may be the smallest of all seeds, and the yeast may be almost indiscernible in the baking mixture, but the effects produced in both cases are far-reaching and thorough*.

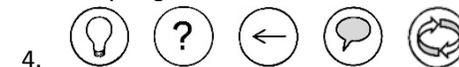
This thoroughness, Hendriksen says, shows that *the citizen of the kingdom demands that every sphere of life shall contribute its full share of service, honor, and glory to him who is “King of kings and Lord of lords” (Rev. 19:16). Not as if on a sinful earth, before the return of Christ, this state of perfection will ever become a reality. Scripture clearly reveals that this will not be the case (Luke 17:25–30; 18:8; 2 Thess. 1:7–10; 2:8). But nothing less than the ultimate realization of this goal can ever be the aim of the believer*

Calvin notes that *by these parables Christ encourages his disciples not to be offended and turn back on account of the [weak] beginnings of the Gospel. ... [The] Lord opens his reign with a feeble and despicable commencement, for the express purpose, that his power may be more fully illustrated by its unexpected progress*.

So, dear fellow citizen of the Kingdom, be confident in your King and in His Kingdom. Don’t be discouraged by small evidences, but also don’t be content with those same small evidences. Seek to bring every sphere, every thought, captive to Christ.

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. How do these two parables show the small beginning?
2. How can we bring every sphere/thought captive to Christ?
3. Why might small evidences of the Kingdom discourage us?



Praise Pray

- Psalm 78a
1. Rejoice with your family in prayer that Christ builds His Kingdom
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member