

BIBLE CHALLENGE 2019

Week 26: June 23-29

How Can I Become More Like Jesus?

Read: Exodus 15:2; 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 4:29; 5:6-21; 10:12; 11:1; Joshua 22:5; 1 Samuel 2:1; Psalm 16:8; 18:2; 37:16-17; 39:7; 40:8; 92:12; 119:6,20,24,97,111,127-128,131,162,167; Proverbs 29:27; Isaiah 12:2; Ezekiel 44:23; Daniel 9:4; Jonah 2:8; Micah 6:8; Matthew 6:12,14-15; 7:15-23; 18:21-35; Mark 9:7; John 1:47; 8:47; 13:35; 14:15,21,23-24; 15:10,16,19; Acts 4:32; Romans 7:22; 8:28-29; 11:20-21; 12:9-13:10; 14:1-12; 1 Corinthians 4:12-13; 13:4-8; 2 Corinthians 1:12; Galatians 2:20; 5:16-26; Ephesians 4:32; Philippians 2:1-11; 4:4-9; Colossians 1:22-23; 3:12; 1 Timothy 1:19; 2 Timothy 3:12; Titus 2:11-12,14; James 1:27; 2:13-20; 4:6-10; 1 Peter 2:9; 4:12-14; 2 Peter 1:5-11; 2:20-22; 1 John 1:5-10; 2:3-6,9-10,19,22-23; 3:4-10,19-24; 4:1-6; 5:3,5,19,21; Revelation 12:17. Read Exodus 21-22 and Psalm 1 in full.

What is God's purpose in saving you? It's not just so you can have a joy-filled eternity in heaven. God saved you to make you holy and to conform you into the image of Christ. In essence, he is restoring his image in you — an image that has become distorted, twisted, and mangled not only by the Fall of Man, but also by our continual sins. The term we use for this process is "Sanctification," which comes from the Latin term, *sanctus*, meaning "holy." In other words, sanctification is that process by which God takes us from the sinful wretches we once were and makes us holy.

A Process wherein we Participate with the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit empowers sanctification; he makes it possible. Yet, we are called to participate in this process, working to put sin to death and to live our lives in a way that honors Christ. Thus, sanctification is not a "sit back and enjoy the ride" kind of thing and it is not the kind of thing where God waves a magic wind and changes you in an instant. It takes work, it is not always pleasant, and God expects you to participate. And, it won't be complete until you leave this world and enter into glory. And remember, in many cases, your "old man" — your flesh — won't let go of its favorite sins too easily. There is a reason that this is called warfare in the Bible.

The Third Use of the Law

Most of the church is in agreement that the Law of God has at least two uses in the Bible: 1) to establish guidelines by which people can live safely in community together and 2) to drive us toward Christ because we recognize how sinful we really are based on God's standards.

Calvin pointed out that there is a third use of the Law as well... that is for the Christian to use as part of his sanctification process. In other words, use the Law as a standard and ask yourselves, "Am I doing that" or "Am I keeping the spirit of that"? Since we are all sinners, our failures should abound in our minds and we should then say to ourselves, "These are things I need to work hard at so that I can please God with my life."

A Petrine Taxonomy

In Peter's second letter, he gives us a list of things to build upon if we want to make our calling and election "sure." For those of you who might not know what a "taxonomy" is, think about a kind of pyramid with different levels, one built on the other. Thus, when Peter says to add knowledge to virtue...what he is saying is that knowledge only makes sense when built on the foundation of virtue. Peter says we ought to add virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly love, then agape love.

A Johanine Testing

John writes in his first letter to "test every spirit." But what does he mean by that? John doesn't leave us hanging. In his letter he lists a series of things that one can ask regarding one's attitudes and beliefs. For example, if someone says that they are not a sinner, that is probably an indication that they are not a Christian. Or, he goes on, if people practice sin and not righteousness, then they are sinners. At the same

time, if people try and keep the commandments of God and practice righteousness, they are probably a Christian. John goes on to say that if people are unwilling to sacrificially love the brothers and sisters in the church, they are most definitely not a Christian. Also, if they deny the divinity of Christ or pursue idols, they are not Christian.

Judging by the Fruit

Jesus says that we are to judge every tree by its fruit. Paul then gives us some guidance as to what that fruit looks like in someone's life. Paul writes that the fruit of an unbeliever is: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and "things like these." But the fruit of the Christian is: Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. When people ask me if I think that "so-in-so" is a Christian, I typically come here and ask, "Which category of fruit best describes the way that so-in-so lives their lives?" Indeed, only God knows the heart, but he gives us indications as to the state of a heart when we look at the fruit that is borne.

Forgiveness

One of the biggies that Christians often struggle with is that of forgiveness. Someone hurts them and they want to hold onto that hurt and hold that hurt against another person. Yet, Jesus says that we should forgive because God has forgiven us first and more greatly. In fact, we ask God to forgive us in the same way we forgive others when we pray the Lord's Prayer. And so, if you are refusing to forgive anyone of their actions, you have basically asked God to refuse to forgive you.

Love of the Brethren

We are told that we must love the brothers (other Christians). Jesus says it is how we are to show the world that we are his disciples. John says that if we do not love the brothers, the love of God is not in us. That's pretty strong language. And, if you want to know what this kind of love looks like, we need to look to 1 Corinthians 13. Do we love each other like that? How would the church be different if we did love like that?

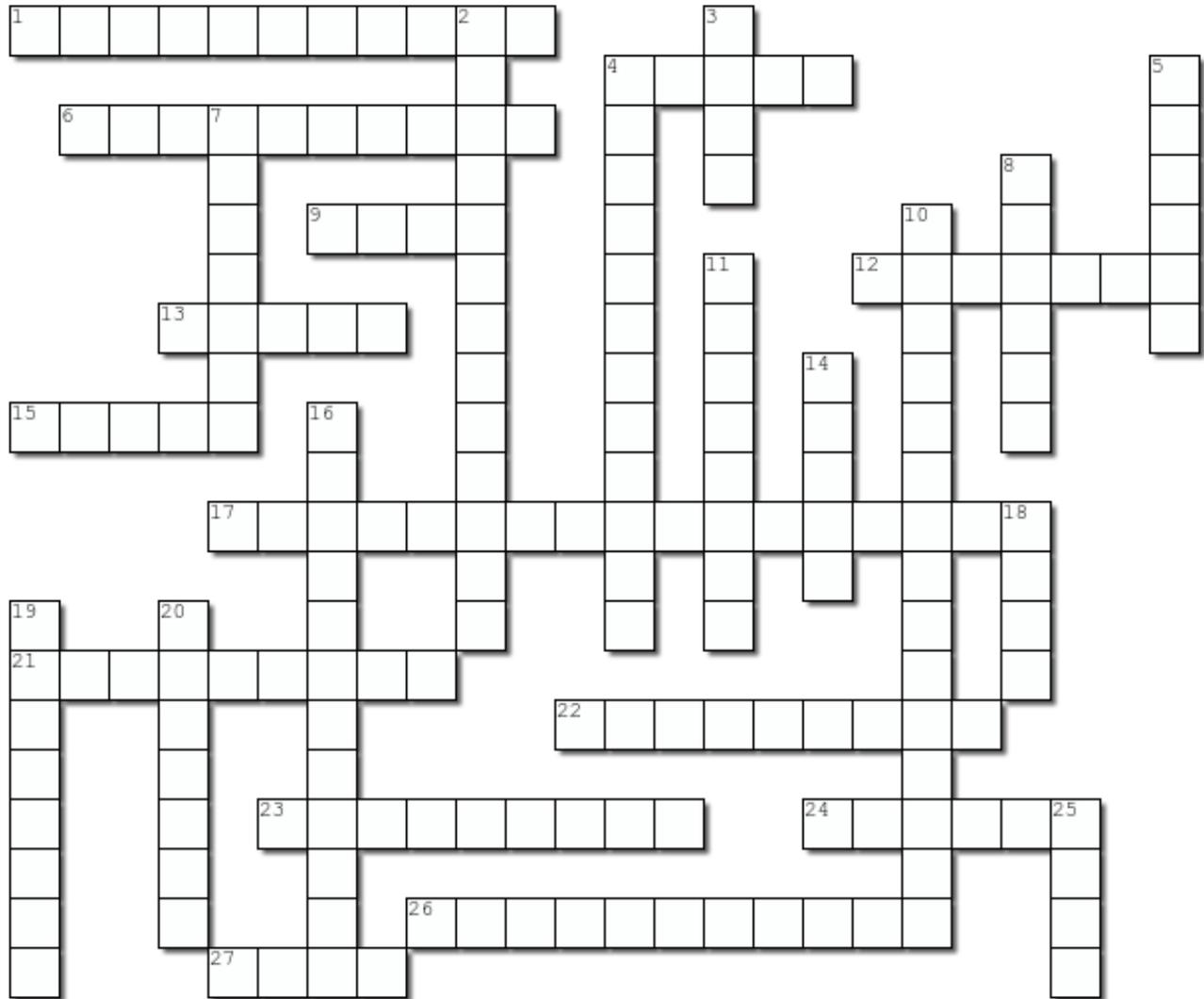
Blessedness

In the introduction to the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus lists a number of character traits that are common amongst true believers. These attributes are called "The Beatitudes." The last of these is not so much an attribute as it is the world's response to the life of a true believer — persecution for the sake of righteousness.

Obedience

Jesus expects that we are obedient to God and to his commands...that is the most basic way that we demonstrate that we love Christ. If we do not submit ourselves to the teachings of the Bible then we are no better off than our fallen first-parents, Adam and Eve. Just as children obey their parents out of love for them, so we are called to show our love for Christ by our obedience to God.

Week 26 - Sanctification



Created using the Crossword Maker on TheTeachersCorner.net

Across

1. 'Sin is _____.'
4. 'They shall teach my people...how to distinguish between unclean and _____.'
6. 'All who seek to live a godly life in Christ will be _____.'
9. James says that faith without works is _____.
12. According to Hannah, we should _____ in God's salvation.
13. 'I hate every _____ way.'
15. 'You shall honor your father and your mother' is which commandment?
17. This is how the world is to know that we are Jesus' disciples -- that we have _____ (4 words).
21. 'Whoever resists authorities, resists what God has _____.'
22. 'A healthy tree bears _____.' (2 words)
23. 'Bless those that _____ you...'
24. 'Walk by the _____ and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.'
26. 'The unjust man is an _____ to the righteous...'
27. 'The Lord is my strength and my _____.'

Down

2. 'Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of _____.' (2 words)
3. 'Now , Israel, what does the Lord require of you but to _____ the Lord and walk in his ways'
4. According to the Psalmist, we should keep our eyes fixed on these.
5. 'This is my beloved Son, _____ to him.'
7. 'Remember the _____ and keep it holy.'
8. 'The arms of the wicked shall be _____, but the Lord upholds the righteous.'
10. Do nothing from _____, or conceit, but in humility count others as more significant than yourselves. (2 words)
11. Love is not _____.
14. 'Outdo one another in showing _____.'
16. Jesus tells Peter that he needs to forgive this many times. (not seven -- two words)
18. The Lord is my _____ and my fortress and my deliverer...'
19. 'For I delight in the _____ in my inner being...' (3 words)
20. '_____ us our debts as we have forgiven our debtors.'
25. '_____ the spirits to see if they are from God.'