



TOUGH TALKS

WEEK 1

DAY 1: READ MATTHEW 23:1-12

How is it with your heart? Where are your priorities? Do you enjoy the aesthetics and peripheral things of Christianity or is your heart firmly convinced of your need for the crucified, risen Savior? To be a follower of Christ, we must actually follow Christ; that means keeping our attention and focus on Him and intentionally pursuing Him above all else. Take some time today to pray and ask God to reveal the disingenuous parts of your heart that don't fully follow or represent Christ.

DAY 2: READ MATTHEW 23:13-15

Just like the Pharisees and scribes buried the refreshing mercy of God beneath their extra-biblical rules and regulations, when Jesus is no longer the focus of our faith or the desire of our hearts, we set a bad example to the rest of the world. People fail to see the work of the Living God in our lives and instead see the name of Jesus stapled onto dead hearts doing broken things. Does your relationship with Jesus manifest into refreshing, edifying words, actions and disciplines or does it compel the lost to continue searching somewhere else for relief?

DAY 3: READ MATTHEW 23:23-36

Our pride, whether in feigned legalism or sinful lawlessness, tries to distract us from our need for Jesus. Jesus had harsh words for the Pharisees and scribes, who spent all their effort, focus and time on appearing righteous. They were so fixated on the prideful minutia that they failed to see Jesus as the fulfillment of scripture and Savior of God's people. Christ must have sole lordship over our lives or we, too, are just fancy tombs full of spiritually dead, dry bones pretending we don't actually need Christ. Is Jesus Lord of your life?



DAY 4: EPHESIANS 1-2

Keeping our eyes on Jesus means consistently remaining keenly aware of who God is and what He has done for us through Christ Jesus. We've been saved by God's grace, not our own. God loves us because He's rich in mercy, not because we impressed Him with some shoddy stunts. We've been saved only because of Jesus. Reflect on your time as a Christ-follower. What have you noticed about God's character based on what you've seen Him do in and around you?

DAY 5: READ ROMANS 12

When we forget our identity in Christ, we can mistake our place in the Body and harm others from serving where and how God called them. Are you struggling to understand your calling? Seek Jesus and ask the Father in prayer and with fasting, but remember: Jesus has accomplished your salvation. The call is simple and immediate: love God, love others and proclaim the good news of Jesus to the world. Our individual roles within the body of Christ become clearer as we grow in our submission to Christ, pursuit of Him and obedience to the mission He gave us.

DAY 6: READ 1 JOHN 3

This week, we've talked a lot about the hypocrisy of our hearts and what scripture says is our actual identity in Christ. Do our actions line up with our identity in Christ? Do our actions line up with the mission and calling of Christ? Let's stay obedient and persistent in our pursuit of Christ and, in doing so, abide in Him. Let's be servants of Jesus willing to have the hard conversations with ourselves to give up everything that is not of Christ.

