

**Living or Dead?**

*While interviewing a college applicant, the dean of admissions asked, "If you could have a conversation with someone living or dead, who would it be?" The student thought it over and said, "The living one."*

Fortunately for us, we have a living God who calls us into a life that will last for all eternity. This week we will learn about living in God's will and not for ourselves. We will see what it means to reject a lifestyle of sin, even if it means ridicule from those around us. And we will learn of the blessings God has for us as we pursue the godly life he desires us to live.

**Monday – Living for God**

*"We look for final approval only from one audience – the Audience of One."* Os Guinness, The Call

1. Please read 1 Peter 4:1-6. What do verses 1-2 say about living for the will of God and not yourself?

**Text Insight:** When Peter wrote of living for God's will, he did not mean that this is a way to achieve salvation. Rather, he focused on Christ's sacrifice which makes it possible for us now to be able to live for God.

2. Read Matthew 6:1-4, 5-15 and 16-18. What do you find there about the difference between living so as to impress others as opposed to living out your faith in a way that honors God?

**Making it Personal:** How does it impact you knowing that your heavenly Father sees all you do, and that God rewards you depending on what you do in secret (Matthew 6:4, 6 & 18)?

**Tuesday – Living for Sin**

*"One great power of sin is that it blinds men so that they do not recognize its true character."* Andrew Murray, 19<sup>th</sup> c. South African missionary

1. Please read 1 Peter 4:1-6. Has your lifestyle ever resembled the one listed in verse 3? Peter is describing a life in which "pleasure" is foremost. Think back on a time in your life when you lived for pleasure. What did such a lifestyle result in?
2. Which of the things listed in Galatians 5:16-21 have you struggled with at one time or another? When have those struggles been the most difficult?

**Text Insight:** The Bible's caution against continuing in sin does not mean that committing a sin leads to loss of salvation. Instead, it means we are to move away from a lifestyle of sin and into a life with God.

3. In 1 John 1:8-10, what support do you find for the notion that those who are believers in Jesus still struggle with sinful acts? What assurance does John provide for us regarding our relationship with God?

**Digging Deeper (optional):** According to Romans 1:16-32, what can result when God allows people to make their choices and live with the consequences?

**Wednesday – Living Strangely**

*"Subtlety may deceive you; integrity never will."* Oliver Cromwell, 17<sup>th</sup> c. English political leader

1. Please read 1 Peter 4:1-6, concentrating on verse 4. Have you ever been abused, ridiculed or teased for choosing not to join in ungodly activities with others? How did you handle it? Are there any insights in this passage about how to handle this?
2. According to Jesus in Matthew 5:14-16, what is the point of behaving as God intends? How has God been calling you to be a light to others recently?
3. In Matthew 5:43-48, Jesus gives a practical example of how to live in a way that will leave an impression on others. How does this encourage you now?

**Putting it All Together:** Compare Jesus' caution in Matthew 6:1 with his command in Matthew 5:16. What does this tell you about living a godly life?

**Thursday – Living under Judgment**

*"Heaven is above all yet; there sits a judge that no king can corrupt."* William Shakespeare, Henry VIII, Act 3, scene 1

1. Please read 1 Peter 4:1-6. What does verse 5 say about the responsibility people have to God?
2. In Genesis 18:20-25, what is God set on doing? Why does Abraham trust God's judgment so much?
3. What does Psalm 96:1-13 reveal about God as judge? How does this affect your ability to trust his judgment?

**Making it Personal:** Spend time considering why you can trust God's judgment, and ask him to guide you in doing so in all circumstances.

**Friday – Living in the Light**

*"And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light."* Genesis 1:3

1. Please read 1 Peter 4:1-6. Considering what Peter has said about living in sin, what do you think it means in verse 6 to "live according to God in regard to the spirit" (NIV)?
2. According to John 8:12, 1 Corinthians 2:10 and James 1:16-18, where does true light come from?
3. How does John 1:1-18 support Jesus' statement that he is the light of the world?

**Making it Personal:** What types of good and perfect gifts have you received from the Father of lights?

**For the Weekend:** Re-read 1 Peter 4:1-6 and consider what it means to live as Christ did, following the will of our heavenly Father. Pray that God will work in you to develop this as a lifestyle of living in the Spirit.