

JUST FOR STUDENTS



SUMMER 2023

Please do not send this newsletter back to Crossroads.

**“Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”
– Psalm 90:12 (NIV)**

Greetings from your Crossroads family! We pray daily for all of you, your families, your mentors, and all the faithful Christians that support you and this ministry.

As we enter this summer season, it is a good opportunity to look back in thankfulness and forward in hope. As we thank God for what He has brought us through in our past, we can also look forward to the future, knowing that God loves us and that we belong to Him. Nothing can separate us from Him (see Romans 8:38–39). It may be difficult for you to look hopefully to the future. The circumstances of your life might seem hopeless to you. Maybe you put your hope in something that is not going to happen, or maybe someone has let you down. If so, hope in the Lord! Sooner or later, each of us will be disappointed by the world, by ourselves, or even by other Christians. But the Lord will never let us down. You will never be ashamed of putting your hope in Him (see Psalm 25:3).

When the psalmist asked the Lord to “teach us to number our days,” he was asking the Lord for a greater awareness of how much he depended on God. He was asking the Lord to teach him that every day is a gift from the Lord. It may be hard to thank God on some days. Remember that God loves you just as much on the bad days as He does on the good days. Remember that nothing can snatch you out of His loving hand (see John 10:28).

Whatever you are facing this summer, know that God loves you and that we here at Crossroads love you as well! Keep looking to the Lord!

Spread the Word!

“And I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ.” – Philemon 1:6 (ESV)

We encourage you to invite others to join you in studying the Bible through Crossroads. If allowed by your facility, we have included some Spread the Word enrollment cards with this edition of *Just for Students*. As a Crossroads student, you know how encouraging and meaningful it is to receive letters from your mentors. You can probably think of some people in your facility who would appreciate encouragement and prayer from fellow Christians on the outside. Ask God to show you someone to share Crossroads with so they, too, can grow in their faith while studying alongside caring mentors. Please do not fill out the card for someone else—they will need to fill it out on their own and then send it to us.

A Message from Crossroads’ President, Joe Pryor

“The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him.” – Psalm 28:7 (NIV)

I love the single focus of the Christian faith. When we are troubled, stressed, sad, or fearful, we need only to turn to God, who is the singular focus of our trust. In difficult times, God Himself will provide what you need from His storehouse of grace. At just the right moment, He may send a friend, an encouraging letter, or a sense of the peace and tranquility of His presence. There are times when our faith is put to the test, and we may doubt the presence of God. Job 23:9–10 says, “When he is at work in the north, I do not see him; when he turns to the south, I catch no glimpse of him. But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold.”

(Continued on next page)

Even during those difficult times, have faith. God is faithful and will never leave you. My prayer for you is that God will grant you faith in challenging times.

Need Encouragement?

Our partner Victorious Living delivers hope through its bilingual *Victorious Living* magazine, VL Broadcasts (on prison tablets), and VL correspondence program. Ask your chaplain to call (352) 478-2098 to request bulk copies of VLMag. You can also write to them at PO Box 2751, Greenville, NC 27836, or hope@vlmag.org.

Fun Facts About the Bible

- The Bible contains approximately 611,000 words (in the original languages in which the Bible was written—Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek)
- The longest book in the Bible is Jeremiah. The book of Psalms has the most chapters, but Jeremiah is longer!
- The shortest book in the Bible is 3 John.
- The Bible was penned by more than forty people, in three different languages, on three different continents.

Scripture Reading and Prayer Guide: The Gospel of Matthew

The following reading and prayer guide is designed to help you in your walk with God each day. Crossroads' staff and mentors are also invited to use this guide. This June and July, we will be reading and praying through the Gospel of Matthew, the first book in the New Testament. Matthew was most likely written by Jesus' disciple Matthew, and it was probably originally intended for a Jewish audience. Matthew references the Old Testament often in his writing, pointing out how Jesus fulfills God's promises to His people. We hope you are blessed as you read and pray through this wonderful Gospel.

A Note About Jesus' Family Tree: If you have never read Matthew, you might be surprised by how it begins: with the family tree of Jesus' adoptive father, Joseph. It seems like an odd place to start, doesn't it? Why does Matthew, who is about to describe the most exciting and significant event in human history, begin his book with a list of names? Be careful not to read over these names too quickly. Matthew is showing us who Jesus identifies with and is legally related to through Joseph. Notice that the dishonorable people Jesus is related to are not hidden in the background. In fact, outcasts and sinners are featured heavily in the list of names. Even when Matthew gets to David, the great king of Israel to whom the promise of the coming Messiah was made, he reminds us of David's adultery and murder (Matthew 1:6).

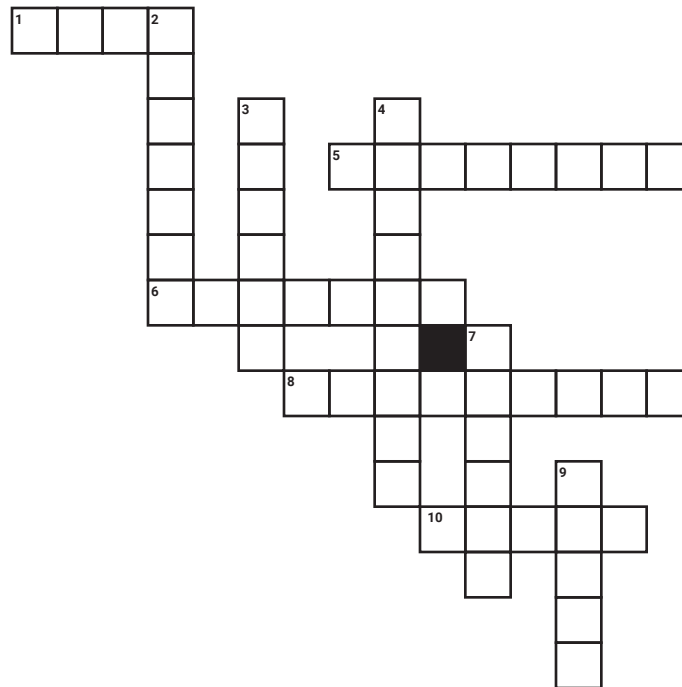
Date	Passage	Reading Topic	Prayer Focus
Jun. 1	Matt. 1:1–17	Jesus' family tree	For a family member who does not know Jesus
Jun. 2	Matt. 1:18–25	Joseph obeys the Lord	For a heart that is obedient to the Lord
Jun. 3	Matt. 2	The Magi visit Jesus	For boldness and gentleness to share about Jesus
Jun. 4	Matt. 3	John the Baptist prepares the way	For those working to make Jesus known
Jun. 5	Matt. 4:1–17	Jesus is tempted by Satan	To be strengthened against temptation
Jun. 6	Matt. 4:18–5:12	Jesus begins His ministry	For God to show you how to bless someone else
Jun. 7	Matt. 5:13–30	Jesus is the fulfillment of God's law	For a heart that is quick to forgive
Jun. 8	Matt. 5:31–48	Love your enemies	For those you may consider enemies
Jun. 9	Matt. 6:1–18	Jesus teaches about prayer	That your prayer life may be joyful and powerful
Jun. 10	Matt. 6:19–34	Treasures in heaven	That you will store up treasure in heaven
Jun. 11	Matt. 7:1–20	Ask, seek, knock	For boldness to seek after God
Jun. 12	Matt. 7:21–8:13	The wise and foolish builders	For the wisdom to build your life on Jesus
Jun. 13	Matt. 8:14–27	Jesus calms the storm	For those who need the peace only Jesus brings
Jun. 14	Matt. 8:28–9:8	Jesus forgives and heals	For someone who needs healing
Jun. 15	Matt. 9:9–26	Jesus calls Matthew	For God to be glorified in your life
Jun. 16	Matt. 9:27–38	The harvest is ready	For those who bring the Gospel to the lost

Jun. 17	Matt. 10:1–20	Jesus sends His followers ahead	For the willingness to fearlessly follow Jesus
Jun. 18	Matt. 10:21–42	Jesus instructs His followers	For wisdom and strength to follow Jesus
Jun. 19	Matt. 11:1–19	Jesus and John the Baptist	For more patience
Jun. 20	Matt. 11:20–30	The Father revealed in the Son	For a closer walk with Jesus
Jun. 21	Matt. 12:1–21	Jesus is Lord over all	For rivers of living water to flow in and from you
Jun. 22	Matt. 12:22–37	Jesus confronts His accusers	For more humility
Jun. 23	Matt. 12:38–50	Jesus is greater than Solomon	To trust in God for your daily needs
Jun. 24	Matt. 13:1–23	The parable of the sower	For a heart ready to receive God’s Word
Jun. 25	Matt. 13:24–43	The parable of the weeds	For a greater love for the truth
Jun. 26	Matt. 13:44–58	The parable of the net	That many will come to faith in Jesus
Jun. 27	Matt. 14:1–21	Jesus feeds the five thousand	For those who are poor and hungry
Jun. 28	Matt. 14:22–36	Jesus walks on water	That you will not doubt the works of God
Jun. 29	Matt. 15:1–20	We need clean hearts	For those who are struggling with temptation
Jun. 30	Matt. 15:21–39	Jesus feeds the four thousand	That God will supply all your needs
Jul. 1	Matt. 16:1–20	Peter declares Jesus is the Messiah	To grow in your knowledge of the Lord
Jul. 2	Matt. 16:21–17:13	Jesus predicts His coming death	For the strength to take your cross and follow Jesus
Jul. 3	Matt. 17:14–27	The temple tax	For our government and our leaders
Jul. 4	Matt. 18:1–14	Parable of the wandering sheep	For those who are no longer following Jesus
Jul. 5	Matt. 18:15–35	Parable of the unmerciful servant	That you will be merciful like Jesus
Jul. 6	Matt. 19:1–15	Jesus welcomes the little children	For a childlike faith that relies daily on the Lord
Jul. 7	Matt. 19:16–30	The danger of riches	That you will be content with what you have
Jul. 8	Matt. 20:1–16	Parable of the workers	For a heart that is free from jealousy
Jul. 9	Matt. 20:17–34	Jesus again predicts His death	For those struggling in their faith
Jul. 10	Matt. 21:1–17	Jesus enters Jerusalem as King	That the Gospel would be preached globally
Jul. 11	Matt. 21:18–32	Parable of the two sons	For those who feel despised or rejected
Jul. 12	Matt. 21:33–46	Parable of the tenants	For those who are angry or bitter toward God
Jul. 13	Matt. 22:1–22	Parable of the wedding banquet	For more joy in your walk with the Lord
Jul. 14	Matt. 22:23–40	The greatest commandment	For more love for God and your neighbor
Jul. 15	Matt. 22:41–23:12	Warning against hypocrisy	That you will not be double-minded or hypocritical
Jul. 16	Matt. 23:13–39	Jesus condemns the religious leaders	To be clean, inside and out
Jul. 17	Matt. 24:1–14	Jesus teaches about His return	That you will be ready for Jesus to return
Jul. 18	Matt. 24:15–35	Further teaching about Jesus’ return	For those being persecuted for their faith in Jesus
Jul. 19	Matt. 24:36–51	No one knows the day or the hour	For more faith in God’s plan
Jul. 20	Matt. 25:1–13	Parable of the ten virgins	For less love for the things of the world
Jul. 21	Matt. 25:14–30	Parable of the bags of gold	To be faithful with what God has given you
Jul. 22	Matt. 25:31–46	The sheep and the goats	For the salvation of the lost
Jul. 23	Matt. 26:1–16	The plot to kill Jesus	Thank God for His plan of salvation
Jul. 24	Matt. 26:17–30	The Last Supper	That your faith may be strengthened
Jul. 25	Matt. 26:31–46	Jesus prays in the garden	For faith and wisdom to follow God’s will
Jul. 26	Matt. 26:47–68	Jesus is arrested and tried	For those who seem far from God
Jul. 27	Matt. 26:69–27:10	Peter disowns Jesus	For strength against temptation
Jul. 28	Matt. 27:11–26	Jesus before Pilate	For peace where there is conflict
Jul. 29	Matt. 27:27–44	Jesus is crucified	For the ability to share the Gospel
Jul. 30	Matt. 27:45–66	The death of Jesus	For those who feel hopeless or forsaken
Jul. 31	Matt. 28	Jesus rises from the dead!	To know God’s power in your life

Crossword Puzzle: The Gospel of Matthew

Use the clues below to fill in the words.

- Words can go across or down.
- Letters are shared where two words cross each other.
- Scripture quotations are taken from the NIV Bible.



ACROSS

1. After Jesus' baptism, the Holy Spirit came down to Him in the form of a _____. (Matthew 3:16)
5. The place where they crucified Jesus. (Matthew 27:33)
6. He was the son of David, and his mother was Uriah's wife. (Matthew 1:6).
8. After His resurrection, Jesus said, "All _____ in heaven and on earth has been given to me." (Matthew 28:18)
10. He was searching for baby Jesus to kill him. (Matthew 2:13)

DOWN

2. Jesus said, "Love your _____." (Matthew 5:44)
3. Jesus said, "I am _____ and humble in heart." (Matthew 11:29)
4. Jesus said, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be _____." (Matthew 5:4)
7. "See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a _____." (Matthew 21:5)
9. Jesus said, "You cannot serve both God and _____." (Matthew 6:24)

From the Operations Department

- Please don't send *Just for Students* or the crossword puzzles back to Crossroads. They are yours to keep!
- If you move to a new facility or go home and want to continue your lessons, please let us know. To continue studying from home, please wait until you are living there to send us a note with the address.
- We will send the next *Just for Students* newsletter to you in September.

