

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW ROLE-MODELS AND CHALLENGES

The pages of Matthew contain life-lessons and role-models of faith—people who challenge believers to put their faith in action.

1. JOSEPH (1:18-25; 2:13-15) displayed integrity, compassion and mercy-obeying God despite the personal cost to himself. If God is calling you and me to a thankless or difficult task, how can Joseph inspire us to trust God’s guidance?
2. JOHN THE BAPTIST (3:1-12; 11:1-19) lived an unusual lifestyle that pointed people to Jesus. How can we live in a way that intentionally points others to Christ?
3. THE ROMAN CENTURION’S (8:5-13) faith impressed Jesus who used the comments of this representative of the foreign occupation as a teaching moment for the disciples. What models of faith or exemplary living outside the believing community or your social group have impressed you? What have they taught you?
4. MATTHEW (9:9) followed Jesus immediately when he was called. What has been your response when you have sensed God calling or directing you?
5. MARY OF BETHANY (26:6-13) revealed her deep love for Jesus in an extravagant act of worship. Have you been criticized for openly expressing your devotion to Jesus? What has His response been to your love?

CHALLENGES

1. Look for opportunities for God to use us, an “ordinary” people, to be “Salt” and “light” (5:13-16) to those around us.
2. Be open to new ways where we can show our love for God (22:34-40).

3. Compassionately care for, protect, and affirm the defenseless and vulnerable—children, the poor, the elderly and the marginalized (25:34-36).
4. Allow God to challenge our attitude towards our enemies, so we can “turn the other cheek” (5:38-42) and serve even those we think don’t deserve it.
5. Be alert to what we can learn about faith from people we might normally write off—those outside our ethnic group, social circle or the fellowship of believers.
6. Be open to unique mission God has for us as Christ’s disciple. Follow the Spirit’s leading as we join others in advancing God’s Kingdom (4:18-20; 19:16-22).